

THE DIVINE NAME

by

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śrī śrī gaura-nityānandau jayataḥ

vande 'ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurun vaiṣṇavaṁś ca
śrī-rupaṁ sāgrajātaṁ saha-gaṇa-raghunāthānviṭaṁ taṁ sa-jīvam
sādvaitaṁ sāvadhūtaṁ parijana-sahitaṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṁ
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānviṭāṁś ca

namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namah

yad advaitaṁ brahmopaniṣadi tad apy asya tanu-bhā
ya ātmāntaryāmī puruṣa iti so 'syāṁśa-vibhavaḥ
ṣaḍ-aiśvaryaīḥ pūrṇo ya iha bhagavān sa svayam ayam
na caitanyāt kṛṣṇāj jagati para-tattvaṁ param iha

rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyaḥkhyam prakāṣtam adhunā tad-dvayaṁ caikyam āptam
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam

cirād adattaṁ nija-gupta-vittam
sva-prema-nāmāmṛtam aty-udāraḥ
ā-pāmaram yo vitatāra gaurah
kṛṣṇo janebhyas tam aham prapadye

gauraḥ sac-caritāmṛtamrita-nidhir gauram sadaiva stove
gaureṇa prathitaṁ rahasya bhajanaṁ gaurāya sarvaṁ dade
gaurād asti kṛpālur atra na paro gaurasya bhṛtyo 'bhavaṁ
gaure gauravam ācarami bhagavan gaura prabho rakṣa mām

madhuryair-madhubhiḥ sugāndhi bhajana-svarṇāmbu-jānām vanam
kāruṇyāmṛta-nirjarair-upacitaḥ sat-prema-hemācalaḥ
bhaktāmba-dhara-dharaṇī vijayinī niṣkampa-śampā-valir-
devo naḥ kuladaivataṁ vijayatām caitanya kṛṣṇo hariḥ

namo 'stu nāma rupāya namo 'stu nāma jalpine
namo 'stu nāma śuddhāya namo nāma mayāya ca

**ājānulambita bhujau kanakāvadātau
saṅkīrtanai kapitarau kamalāyatākṣau
viśvambharau dvijavarau yugadharmā pātau
vande jagadpriya karau karuṇāvatārau**

I bow Ye! O Divine Brahmin Twins!
With arms extending to the knees,
And splendour as of sparkling gold;
O Sole Progenitors of Sankirtan old!
Twain Descents of Divine Mercy! I bow Ye again!
Universe's Supports and Benefactors Twain!
Lotus-Eyed Brahmin Gems! O Purest Rages!
Divine Fulfillers of the laws of all ages!

**anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ puraṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba sandīpitaḥ
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanāḥ**

Out of Mercy alone the Glories of the Divine Name,
Unprecedented in epic history to spread Krishna Prem,
and to relish Its luscious sweetness with gay abandon
Sri Krishna graced this earth as Sri Sachinandan.
Twas ne'er given before in history's chequered record
And was tasted anew by Him with Bhaktas in gay accord.
May Gaur-Hari of the splendour of molten gold
Illumine the hearts of us all - both young and old.

PREFACE

Sri Krishna is ever dallying as an exemplary lover of Himself as Sri Gauranga. Sri Krishna, the essential nature of the Supreme Being, is the only Real and Eternal truth. He is the only object of Love. Sri Gauranga is the possessor and distributor of that Love. He was Himself singing Krishna's Name and was teaching others how to Love Krishna and sing His Name. In so doing He distinguishes pointedly the Real Name which is identical with the object Himself from the apparent or false one which is taken profanely, blasphemously or in vain. He emphasised that in Kali-yuga worldly people indulge in (1) duplicity, (2) intoxication, (3) sensuality and (4) killing animals and so are unable to meditate upon or worship Vishnu and perform Vedic sacrifices. So the chanting of Krishna's Name is the only meditation, the only sacrifice, the only worship in this Kali-yuga. Name is the means, Name is the end. But it should be noted with utmost care that Krishna's Name is not mere combination or utterance of letters. A similarity in utterance and appearance are not identical. The minutest spark of fire set consciously or unconsciously, seriously or playfully, will instantaneously burn an inflammable thing; whereas thousand glow-worms will not act in thousand years. Krishna's Name is identical with Krishna Himself and pregnant with all the properties and attributes of Krishna. So His Name unlike all other names is full of energy, perfect, eternal, pure, devoid of illusion and eternally free. Aurora is sufficient to dispel the darkness of night and to drive the wild animals to their lairs and thieves and dacoits to other resorts; it enables us to distinguish the various objects of senses and ushers the advent of the glowing lamp of heaven. So does Namabhas (the utterance of Name avoiding the ten profanations) stop poverty, destroy our worldly hankerings and dispel the illusory gloom, so that we may see the Name face to face.*

Through the blessings of our Divine master 108 Sri Paramahansa Jagadguru Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaj, the learned scholar Sripad Raghava Chaitanya Prabhu has collected quotations from Vedas, Upanishads, Smrities and Authorised Scriptures for his 'Divine Name' which is Bhakti Rasamrita Sagar for the needy devotee. English knowing people or devotees will be benefited and pleased to acquire a copy of this super spiritualised publication. My sincere thanks are due to Spd. Ambarish Brahmachari, Spd. Trivikram Maharaj and Sri Kali Charan Panda to publish the Book within a short time. May the Divine Lord Sri Krishna bless them.

Invoking the blessings of
Srila Sarasvati Gosvami, The Divine Master,
Tridandi Bhiksu Bhakti Vaibhava Puri

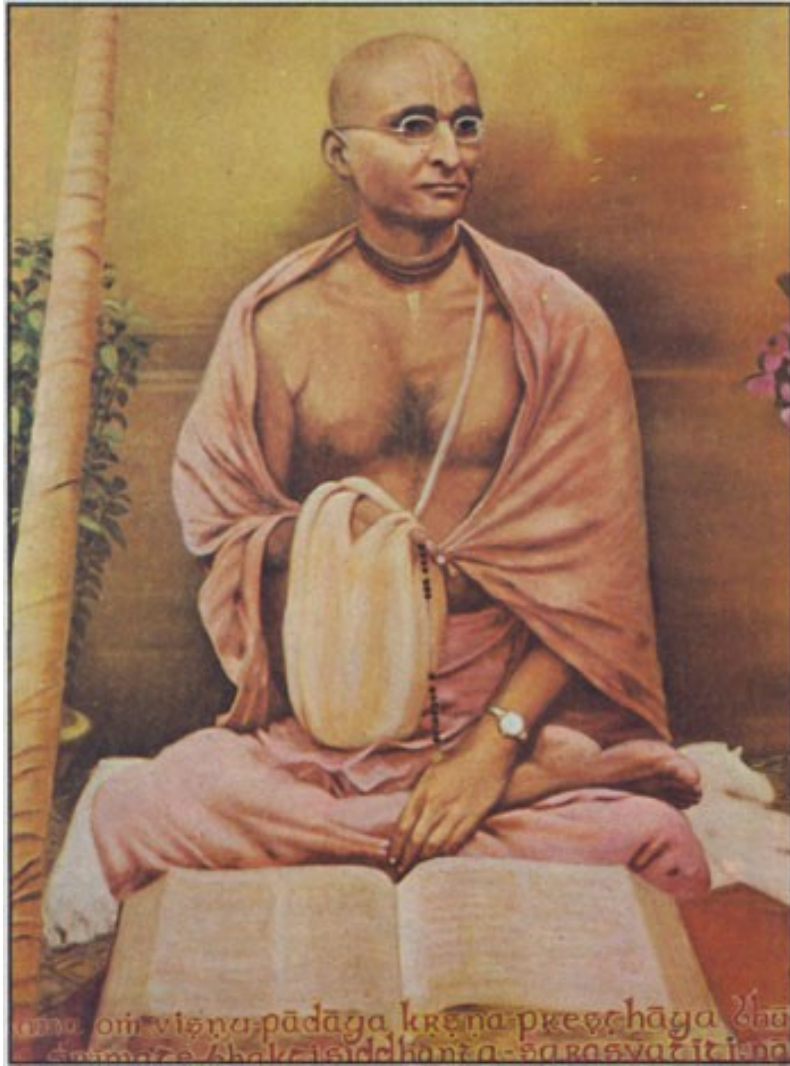
* Excerpt from Nam-bhajan



Sripad Raghava Chaitanya Das



Srila Bhakti Vaibhava Puri Gosvami Maharaja



Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Prabhupada



Sri Sri Gauranga Radha Vinoda Bihari

DIVINE NAME AND ITS EFFICACIES

Divine Name - The sweetest of all

"THE Name 'Krishna' is sweeter than all the sweetest sounds, more auspicious than the most auspicious things, the best fruit of the creeper like Vedas and Transcendental by nature. This Name if uttered even once, with faith or without it, will deliver any one, be he just a man and nothing more, from worldly bondage."¹

Inexpressible is the Transcendental Glory of the Divine Name. Who on the face of the earth can estimate Its efficacy? How many books are written on the subject and how many souls have experienced the thrilling joy and marvellous benefits of the same! How many have even turned divinely mad after the Ever-Blissful Lord on hearing the inspiring results of repeating the Holy Name! Millions and millions indeed, have crossed this ocean of never-ending miseries trusting on the Glory of the Divine Name. It is as unfathomable as the Glory of the Divine Lord Himself. The All-Merciful Lord, out of His compassion to His fallen children, manifests Himself in this mundane world as the Divine Name. All the Sastras unanimously and emphatically agree on the Infinite Glory of the Holy Name.

"The Name of Hari, the Name of Hari, O! The name of Hari alone and nothing else, nothing else in Kali Yuga, nothing else can lead us to our Final Goal."²

-
- 1 madhura madhuram etan maṅgalam maṅgalānām
sakala nigama vallī sat-phalam cit-svarupam
sakṛdapi parigītam śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛguvara naramātram tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma
(śrī-hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11.451; padyāvalī 26; skanda purāṇa, prabhāsa
khaṇḍa)
 - 2 harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā
(bṛhad-nāradīya-purāṇa 38.126)
kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra
nāma haite haya sarva-jagat-nistāra
dārḍhya lāgi 'harer nāma'-ukti tina-vāra
jaḍa loka bujhāite punaḥ 'eva'-kāra
'kevala'-śabde punarapi niścaya-karaṇa
jñāna-yoga-tapa-karma-ādi nivāraṇa
anyathā ye māne, tāra nāhika nistāra
nāhi, nāhi, nāhi — e tina 'eva'-kāra
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 17.22-25)

Divine Name - The sole remedy for all ills

In the age of Kali, Sri Krishna Manifests Himself as the Holy Name. The whole world is liberated by the chanting of this Holy Name. In the above Sloka Sri Hari's Name is repeated thrice for the purpose of emphasis. The use of the article 'Eva' in the verse is to convince those ignorant of the efficacy of Sri Hari-Nama by positive assertion. The idea is strengthened further by the addition of the word 'Kevala'. It informs us about the futility of the numerous existing methods of religious practices, such as knowledge, Yoga, austerities, Karma, etc., in this age of Kali. The word 'Nasti' by negative assertion, supported by the word 'Eva', has been repeated in the Sloka thrice to signify that the non-believers in the Holy Name will in no case attain salvation - never, never, never.

Different Divine Dispensations

The topic - what constitutes service of the Supreme Godhead, is a very tough one. It lies beyond Tarka or man's reasoning. The Sastras declare in unambiguous words that the methods followed in different ages vary from one another. "In Krita Yuga or Satya Yuga, there was a different set of religious methods to be followed by human beings, in Treta Yuga they were changed into another form, the Dharma of Dvapara Yuga is said to be still different from that of the other Yugas and the Dharma of Kali Yuga too is stated to be a different one."³

The Supreme Lord Himself has settled the nature of His worship for every age and proclaimed the same for the information of all. For this purpose He comes down into this mundane world in each of the four ages. The establishment of the form of worship appropriate to every age is a Divine Deed. The form of worship laid down in the Sastras and established by the Supreme Lord for the current age Kali Yuga is the chanting of the 'Holy Name' or 'Nama-Sankirtan'.

"That which is achieved through meditation of Sri Vishnu in the Satya Yuga, performance of religious sacrifices in Treta Yuga and ritualistic worship in Dvapara Yuga, can be attained in Kali Yuga through mere chanting of the Divine Name."⁴

Thus there are four different forms of spiritual practices to be followed by the souls in the four different ages. The object of all the forms of worship is the same. **Chanting of Sri Hari's Name is the declared Divine Dispensation (Yuga Dharma) for the current age.**

3 anye kṛta-yuge dharmās-tretāyāmapare matāḥ
dvāpare anya evoktaḥ kalāvanye prakīrtitāḥ
(mahābhārata)

4 kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ tretāyāṁ yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyāṁ kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 12.3.52)

Divine Name - The best in Kali Yuga

Hence, in the words of the Sastras, **the performance of the chanting of the Holy Name is the only method of worship that is suitable to the people of the present Kali Yuga.** Everything is attained by means of this Divine Dispensation. Recourse to the Name of the Lord is the sole efficacious method in this age, suitable for all kinds of people after God-realization. The other methods, though prescribed in the Sastras, are not effective in this Kali Yuga. One cannot get total deliverance from the influence of Maya in this age by any other form of worship. By this statement the Sastras do not denounce other methods. They have got their own place and utility. They can help humanity in attaining many other achievements. They can make one the richest man in the world, a great monarch, an eminent scholar, a leader over a vast number of people and an enjoyer of various luxuries. The realization of Transcendental Bliss or 'Prem' to the Supreme Godhead is unattainable by methods other than Sri Hari-Nama-Sankirtan in this dark age of Kali.

"O King! Though Kali, being a repository of all evils, is condemned as worse than all other ages, it possesses one great virtue not found in other ages, viz., in this age a person can attain freedom from worldly bondage and secure Supreme Bliss solely through Kirtan of Sri Krishna's Name (even if he does not pursue any other form of spiritual method)."⁵

Age of Machines

The condition of man in this age is lamentable. At every moment he is crushed down under the iron heels of rampant materialism. In spite of the various advancements claimed in the field of scientific inventions, he is getting day by day worse in character. All the pomp and show of the workaday world in this age has only made man a slave of baser objects. Man has become an unfortunate victim to various unhealthy habits and circumstances, with the result that he is merely hunting after creature-comforts. He is in the midst of many an unnatural want which promote selfishness, and lacks badly in the nobler traits of humanity. Kali Yuga is the black age of all sins, sorrows, torments, tortures, calamities and other sufferings of the like. Scientists have called the present age 'the age of machines'. Science is making rapid progress. Fresh inventions, dazzling the eyes of the people of the world, are appearing very often. Marvellous dreadful destructive weapons are one of the prime objects of human research now. Factories and workshops, various locomotives of modern types, high power steamships, submarines, radios, electric trains, telephones, aeroplanes, wireless, talkies, television, x-ray, motor cars, printing machineries, gramophones, atom bombs, rockets, neon-lights, many effective drugs like penicillin, etc., and a host of similar wonderful

5 kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 12.3.51)

inventions, are the achievements of science. Being proud of these few triumphs, science now boasts that it has made a successful conquest of nature even.

Age of free controversy

But alas! Really it has not yet pierced even the outer veil of nature. Philosophers have described the present age as 'the age of free controversy'. The word 'controversy' is a synonym for the word 'Kali'. Hence, the authors of the great Puranas have termed the present age as 'Kali Yuga'. Freedom of Speech is a characteristic feature of the present age. It claims numerous philosophies propounding views diametrically opposite to each other. Dry intellectual wranglings or irreligious rivalries are the order of the day. Even a lay man on the road would not hesitate to deliver a sermon to a public audience and pick up an unnecessary and senseless argument with best of brains in the world.

Abodes of Kali

The legacy of hatred, jealousy, disease and starvation is incalculably on the increase. Kali has mercilessly exercised its influence on the vast population of the world. All its vices springing from the fivefold abodes of Kali, the bosom companions of irreligion, are followed with pleasure by the present day people, young or old, literate or illiterate, Hindu or non-Hindu, without any distinction. Srimad Bhagavata declares the following places as the abodes of Kali (Kali Sthanas)⁶:- (1) Gambling in any form, such as playing cards even without stakes, dice, speculation, betting, horse race, etc., and also trading in the name of religion, (2) addiction to intoxicants and stimulants, such as drinking, smoking, chewing, snuffing, etc., (3) illicit connection with women or too much attachment to one's own wedded wife, (4) cruelty to animals; this includes the habit of living upon the flesh of animals. Indifference to the attainment of one's own spiritual welfare as this is cruelty to one-self, proclaiming as truth what one knows to be an untruth, advising people on all ways and ends, excepting the everlasting and soul-stirring principle of religion and love of God, and (5) improper ways of earning wealth and wasting the same lavishly on materialistic pursuits. The last one is the worst amongst the lot. Possession of wealth is often the root cause of many of the evils that occur in the domestic life. A wealthy person becomes blind with the riches and falls an easy prey to all sorts of vices. He carelessly gambles, becomes a habitual drunkard and a chain-smoker, falls a victim to the sensuous passions, freely mixes with members of the other sex, dances to their tunes, turns a moral wreck and finally, living upon unholy and objectionable food, brings ruin to himself, ruled by arrogance, lust, hatred

6 abhyarthitas tadā tasmai sthānāni kalaye dadau
dyūtaṃ pānaṃ striyaḥ sūnā yatrādharmaś catur-vidhaḥ
punaś ca yācamānāya jāta-rūpam adāt prabhuḥ
tato'nṛtaṃ madaṃ kāmāṃ rajo vairam ca pañcamam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.17.38-39)

and other baser traits of humanity. Alas! The defects of Kali, described in the Sastras with reference to distant future, can be noticed even now in the earlier part of the age.* In spite of these faults or inabilities of Kali Yuga, **the one good quality that offsets all its drawbacks is the marvellous efficacy of the Kirtan or the chanting of the Name of the Supreme Lord.**

Divine Grace - Essential

Human beings are weaklings in all respects. Their achievements may be many in the material sphere, but they can attain very little by their own efforts in the spiritual sphere. The path for God realization is very difficult to tread and the weak human beings have neither the required strength nor the necessary patience to achieve their goal. At every point humanity is carried away by strong currents of temptations. A man is often caught in a whirlpool of hardships. But, **all his hardships and obstacles vanish in no time, if he is fortunate to possess one thing, and that is Divine Grace.** A Jiva cannot free himself from the bondage of Maya by his own efforts. It is only the Grace of the Beloved Lord that saves man from the thralldom of Maya.

Self-surrender - Way to Divine Grace

How could we, pulled up as we are with the vanities of the world, deserve Divine Grace? **An earnest longing in all humility from the depth of our heart is the only course, open to us for the present, to attain the Mercy of the Lord.** We must weep from the bottom of our hearts, with absolute self-surrender at the Feet of the Lord and we are sure to be listened to. Let us - little men, forget our ego and feel the vanity of the transitory pleasures of this fleeting world. Let us relinquish all the pride and vainglorious attempts and admit our helplessness. Surely the Merciful Lord will come to our rescue. Did He not rescue a host of His devotees who surrendered themselves to Him and afford eternal shelter to them? Yes! Certainly He did. Our Sastras are full of such glorious instances. **Chanting of the Divine Name is the most efficacious method to invoke the Grace of the Divine Lord.**

Divine Name - The sole path for all

"O King! For those devotees who have lost all their attachments to worldly objects, for those seeking salvation from fear and afflictions, for those desirous of enjoying the various fruits of their actions and also for those men of wisdom delighted in themselves (Atmaram), **the only certain course for success declared unanimously by all the sages of yore is the hearing, chanting, and meditation of the Glory of the Divine Name of Sri Hari.**"⁷

* See footnote 113

Divine Name - The Elixir of Life

The Holy Name of Sri Hari is the only refuge for all types of persons, be he a follower of the path of Karma, Jnan, Yoga, Tapasya or Bhakti. For those practicing devotion or Bhakti, it is the most potential factor, the main source of inspiration. To devotees who have advanced in this path, it is the life of their lives, the most coveted object, the very pith and marrow of their existence. **The Divine Name has a unique position. It is both the means as well as the end. It is the greatest benefactor both before and after God-realization. It enables one to have the attainment of the Highest Goal, viz., Divine Love or Sri Krishna Prem, and It is also the manifestation of Sri Krishna Prem.** Though we have often heard about the Holy Name, we know very little of Its Real Nature.

Divine Name - Its true nature

"The Name 'Krishna' is Chintamani - the Bestower of all objects of desire. It is an Embodiment of Divine Intelligence, Spiritual Ecstatic Bliss, All-Pure, Ever-Perfect, absolutely free from any material nature and fully identical with the form or Svarupa, i.e. Bhagavan Himself."⁸

In the Transcendental Realm there is no difference between the Lord, His Body or His Name. They are one and the same in all respects. The Name is identical and equipotent with the Lord. Like a philosopher's stone, the Name grants all the wishes of Its servitors. It is not an object of the material world, and hence It is entirely outside the sphere of all empiric approach and is also incapable of any adulteration with Maya. In this material world, however, there is always a difference between an object and its name, form, attributes and actions.

Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Who flooded the whole of India

7 etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akutobhayam
yoginām nṛpa nirṇītam harernāmānukīrtanam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 2.1.11)

8 nāma-cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś-caitanya-rasa-vigraḥ
nityaḥ śuddhaḥ pūrṇamukto 'bhinnatvān nāma nāminoḥ
(padma purāṇa; viṣṇu-dharma)
deha dehī vibhāgo 'tra neśvare vidyate kvacit
(mahā varāha purāṇa; bṛhad-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī)
kṛṣṇa nāma cintāmaṇi anādi cinmaya
yei kṛṣṇa sei nāma eka tattva haya
caitanya vigraha nāma nitya mukta tattva
nāma nāmī bhinnanaya nitya śuddha sattva
kṛṣṇa rūpa kṛṣṇa haite sarvada abheda
nāma rūpa eka vastu nāhika prabheda
śrī nāma smarile rūpa āise saṅge saṅge
rūpa nāma bhinnanya nace nānā raṅge
(śrī hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi, pr. 17-18)

by His unique Message of Divine Love and Nama-Sankirtan and Who is accepted by one and all as the Promulgator of the cult of Sankirtan speaks thus:-

Name and Form identical

"The Name of Sri Krishna and the Transcendental Form of Sri Krishna are identical. The Name, Form, the Holy Image, all the three are exactly the same. All these three are Transcendental by nature and hence there is not the least difference between Them. Sri Krishna's Body is Sri Krishna Himself. There is no categorical difference between the Body and the Being in the Transcendental Plane. So also with respect to the Name and the Form or Svarup denoted by the Name." ⁹

The above theory is not applicable to the material world. Here the word 'fire' is different from the object, i.e., fire denoted by the name. Hence, even if you repeat the word 'fire' any number of times, it never burns any portion of the body. The word 'water' is similarly different from the object water. Repetition of word 'water', lacs of times, does not quench a thirsty man, nor will it serve the purpose of putting out fire, etc. But, the case with the Holy Names of the Supreme Lord is altogether different. The Name 'Rama', or the Name 'Krishna' is not in any way different from the Divine Form denoted by these Names. The identity of the Name with the Divine Form, i.e., Bhagavan Himself, is not a monopoly of a section amongst the Hindus alone. It is supported even by the other religions like Christianity, etc. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John, 4th Gospel, ch. 1, 1)." Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu further adds on this issue thus: "Therefore, the Name, the Body and the Sportive Deeds of Sri Krishna are not subject to the understanding of human senses. They are Self-Effulgent and Self-Revealing Truths."¹⁰

While corroborating the above statement, Sri Rupa Gosvami, in his celebrated work 'Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu' quotes the following Sloka from Padma Purana:

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- 9 *** 'kṛṣṇa-nāma', 'kṛṣṇa-svarūpa' — duita 'samāna'
'nāma', 'vigraha', 'svarūpa' — tina eka-rūpa
tine 'bheda' nāhi, — tina 'cid-ānanda-rūpa'
deha-dehīra, nāma-nāmīra kṛṣṇe nāhi 'bheda'
jīvera dharma — nāma-deha-svarūpe 'vibheda'
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, m. 17.130-132)
- 10 ataeva kṛṣṇera 'nāma', 'deha', 'vilāsa'
prākṛtendriya-grāhya nahe, haya sva-prakāśa
kṛṣṇa-nāma, kṛṣṇa-guṇa, kṛṣṇa-līlā-vṛnda
kṛṣṇera svarūpa-sama — saba cid-ānanda
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, m. 17.134-135)

Divine Name - Beyond human conception

"Hence, Sri Krishna's Name, Form, Qualities and Lilas are beyond the comprehension of human senses. **When a Jiva actually realizes that in his spiritual nature he is the eternal servant of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, then and then alone the Transcendental Name, etc., spontaneously manifest Themselves in his spiritual sense-organs, such as the tongue, eyes, ears, etc.** Sri Krishna's Qualities and His Sportive Deeds, the characteristic traits of His servitors, being eternal, spiritual and full of Transcendental Bliss, are not comprehensible by the material forms, pleasures, odours, sounds and touch of fallen Jivas, slaves of the triple qualities of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas."¹¹

Lord Chaitanya - His method of propaganda

The Glory of the Transcendental Name and Its practice is inspiringly exemplified in the life of a great saint, who was one of the most favourite devotees of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. His marvellous life was the practice of the chanting of the Holy Name in living form before us. His ideal life in this field has won for him the epithet 'Namacharya' (practicing teacher of the chanting of the Divine Name). By following the great events of his career attentively, we are enlightened with full details on the above subject. The establishment of the Divine Dispensation for this age of Kali, i.e., 'Nama-Sankirtan' was one of the purposes of the Advent of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu into this world. Though He was the inspiring Fountain behind the activities of all His devotees, He fulfilled many of His purposes through the agency of His favourite agents. Thus, through the career of Namacharya Sri Haridas Thakur, He taught the world the Transcendental Glories of the Holy Name, the way to practice the same and the final realization of such practices.

Saint's lives - Humanity's guiding stars

The ideal lives and teachings of saints are a precious heritage for guiding the destinies of men and for inspiring them in their march forward to the attainment of Divine Bliss. We all know that the lives of great men carry with them magnetic influence from which we cannot often escape. Both in the mundane as well as in the spiritual realms, lives of great personalities, the hardships and the selfless sacrifices that they underwent for their respective causes, generate in the minds of men an impetus to emulate them. Our country is flooded with the biographies of many eminent persons who have achieved their greatness both in the physical and intellectual regions. These biographies somehow do not help humanity to achieve peace and happiness, nor do these settle the discord and chaos that are on the increase. Without the lives and teachings of saintly personages the achievements of humanity must indeed be very poor. God-

11 ataḥ śrī kṛṣṇa nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
 sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ
 (padma-purāṇa)

loving saints or Bhaktas who come down and move in this world, not for any selfish purpose of their own, but solely for the welfare of humanity, are none other than the agents of the Lord, deputed by Him for the express purpose of regeneration and uplift of all fallen souls. Thakur Haridas, a celebrated devotee of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, occupies a prominent position amongst the long line of devotees India can boast of.

NAMACHARYA SRI HARIDAS THAKUR

His advent

THIS great devotee made his appearance in this world at the village of 'Budhan' in the district of Jessore in East Bengal, somewhere towards the middle of the 15th century. It is roughly estimated that he was born thirty to thirty-five years prior to the Advent of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. There are no authentic records of his antecedents, his parents, boyhood, education, etc. He was born in a Muslim family. We know him under the name of 'Haridas', which literally means 'a servant of Sri Hari'.

Thakur at Benapol

Though born of a Muslim family, he possessed an inexplicable aptitude for taking the Name of Sri Hari. Hence, violating the rules of Muslim society, he incessantly repeated Sri Hari's Name. He felt it was the sole support of his life. Having lost all attachment to worldly life even when very young, Thakur Haridas left his native village. He came to another village 'Benapol' in the same district and took up residence in a small solitary cell situated in a forest. He spent the whole of his time in repeating loudly the Name of Sri Krishna.

Thakur and Tarak-Brahma-Nama

The 'Tarak-Brahma-Nama', a formula composed of the sixteen names of the Lord and formed of thirty-two syllables was the one that Thakur Haridas adopted for his usual chanting.¹² No doubt this was a grave violation of his social order. But, the broad-minded saint Thakur Haridas was never given to such narrow sectarian feelings. Living upon alms, he continued staying at Benapol in the same solitary cell taking resort to loud chanting of the Name of Sri Hari.

Thakur and his adversaries

Though a genuine saint, the great Thakur Haridas could not escape the scathing criticism and vilification of a section of people there. Their actions and expressions were such that one is forced to believe that such persons are born in this world only for similar purpose. The very sight of Haridas Thakur kindled wrath in their hearts which went on burning with wild flames. A malicious section of the Hindu society proved undilutedly hostile towards this great saint. His simple unostentatious living, utmost sincerity and single-minded devotion, did not move the granite hearts of

12 hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

his opponents. He had to face oppositions of numerical odds. Vehement criticisms were afloat which he patiently tolerated. These qualities of Haridas Thakur could not, however, improve the situation; on the contrary, they stirred up all the demoniac propensities of his opponents to the maximum. But to the pure hearted, simple and devoted inhabitants of the village, Thakur Haridas was a never-ending fountain of spiritual inspiration. They were extremely delighted to see his matchless devotion. They felt that they were highly blessed to have the presence of such a great devotee of the Lord in their midst. But neither the devotional achievements of Thakur Haridas, nor the humble suggestions of the religious-minded people of the locality, could bring about an improvement in the hostile attitude of the rowdy section of the people. Their evil impulses and mischievous suggestions, on the contrary, were on the increase. Thakur Haridas too was equal - nay, stronger than all these forces put together. Their activities did not disturb his unflinching and spontaneous attachment towards his Lord and His services even to a slightest degree. No, he did not fall a victim to these ungodly and antisocial elements. He worshipped the sacred Tulasi, chanted daily, day and night, the Name of the Lord, three lacs of times, and ate food cooked in the houses of Brahmins, which he obtained by begging.

Thakur and Ramachandra Khan

All the virtuous inhabitants of the village regarded Thakur Haridas as a great saint. They were greatly impressed by the various marks of devotion which they had never witnessed and his extra-ordinary love for the Holy Name. He gained within a short time great popularity amongst the local people. His reputation spread even to distant places. People from different places collected there to have a sight of the saint. They rendered him various services and tried to follow his soul-stirring instructions. The enemies of Thakur Haridas could not tolerate the increasing influence that he was gaining day by day. Among these enemies Ramachandra Khan, a local Hindu chieftain, was the foremost. He was puffed up with the vanities of wealth and a following. He was an uncompromising atheist, a terrible hater of devotion and a noted leader of a group of sceptics. He became awfully jealous of Haridas Thakur and his reputation in the village and nearabout. He wanted to bring discredit to the noble character of the great Haridas Thakur. He devised various plans to gain his ends. He became persistent and behaved like a venomous serpent trampled under foot. He lost all his patience and could not feel quite at home till something substantial was done to disgrace Haridas Thakur. Ramachandra Khan would not hesitate to commit the meanest of deeds to bring about the disgrace of Haridas Thakur. Accordingly, he conspired with his evil-minded friends and decided to carry out a certain plan that would pull down Haridas Thakur from the esteemed position he was occupying.

Ramachandra Khan's evil plots

Being a great devotee, Haridas Thakur was a living example of all

the excellent virtues. Even the worst critic could not detect a weak spot in his character. Ramachandra Khan knew this very well. He thought that he could bring about a moral disgrace of Haridas Thakur before his admirers. Unfortunately Ramachandra Khan took Sri Haridas Thakur to be a mere beginner in the devotional field - a weak-minded emotionalist who could be made an easy victim to the temptations of the world. Puffed up with the vanities of wealth, youth and rank, he did not understand the marvellous glories of the devotees of Sri Hari. Having full faith in his newly invented plan, Ramachandra Khan secured the help of the best prostitutes of the locality, and asked them to spoil the character of Thakur Haridas. He promised them with huge rewards. All these prostitutes, except one, did not accept the offer and retired; but one of them, a young and most beautiful amongst the whole lot, ventured to accept the offer and assured him success by bringing ruin on the character of Haridas Thakur in three days' time. Ramachandra Khan was immensely pleased. He awaited the moment of his forthcoming success with great impatience and offered all help that he could muster to the young woman. He pressed her to take an armed sentry with her, so that Thakur Haridas could be caught red-handed. But the young harlot declined this proposal and said that she would go first by herself and that on her winning over Haridas Thakur, she would take the sentry to capture him on her second visit. Ramachandra Khan, who wanted the ruin of Haridas Thakur, willingly accepted the harlot's plan and left her to her own way, he himself being absorbed in building castles in the air.

Thakur and the young harlot

The young harlot, tempted by the huge offer of Ramachandra Khan, started on her great adventure. She made a selection of the best of costumes and putting them on reached the solitary cell of Thakur Haridas. It was an opportune time. The sun had set on the western horizon. The solitary cell of Haridas Thakur, surrounded by forest and the approaching darkness, appeared lonelier than ever before. An extraordinary calm atmosphere prevailed, surcharged with the holiness, both inside and outside the hut of Haridas Thakur, who remained totally lost in the eddies of Transcendental Bliss. He was chanting incessantly the Name of Godhead with deep concentration. There is no need to mention that he had lost all consciousness.

It was exactly at this time that the young harlot reached him. However, she was not a stranger to certain etiquettes to be observed before holy personages. Hence, first, she made her obeisances to the sacred Tulasi that was grown in front of the hut and then bowing down to Thakur Haridas, she stood there awhile. She then slowly sat down at his door-step. She exhibited her body to Haridas Thakur in various gestures and postures, like one mad with sensuous passions. She tried her best to make Haridas Thakur a prey to her wishes. She finally requested him: "O holy sir! You are a miracle of beauty and in the prime of youth. Which woman can resist her passions by your sight? I do not feel there is any such lady in the world. I have fallen immoderately a slave to passions by

the sight of your charming appearance. I have no power to check this. If you do not accept me, it will be impossible for me to live." Haridas Thakur did not totally disappoint her. He had, by the Divine Will, his own plans ready for her. He said, "I shall certainly accept your prayer. Till I complete my due number of chanting the names I would not be in a position to oblige you. In the meantime be seated here listening to the chanting of the Holy Name. As soon as I complete my fixed quota of Names I shall fulfil your wish." The young woman was highly satisfied. She felt that her efforts were sure to yield her a triumph soon, and waited for the moment listening to the Sankirtan of Haridas Thakur, who continued his chanting of the Holy Name till morning.

The young woman too waited listening to the chanting. Even by the approach of the early morning she could not notice any sign of its coming to an end. So, at daybreak she returned home utterly disappointed. She apprised Ramachandra Khan of all the details of her meeting with Haridas Thakur. She assured him that her prayer would be certainly fulfilled when she would meet Haridas Thakur the next night. To Ramachandra Khan her words were an oasis of hope and the young harlot waited for her next opportunity.

Harlot's second memorable night

On the second day, the young woman with all fresh hopes of success reached the solitary hut of Thakur Haridas. She reached the place just after sunset. As on the previous day, after bowing down to the sacred Tulasi and Thakur Haridas she approached him. Haridas Thakur consoled her by soft words. He said, "Yesterday you had to return disappointed; please do not be displeased with me. Unfailingly, I will accept you. You need not have the least doubt about it. Till I finish the requisite number of Names you be listening to it. As soon as the number is completed your wish will be fulfilled." The woman followed the instructions of Haridas Thakur. Time rolled on rapidly; the young woman became more and more impatient as dawn was approaching; she became restless. Noticing this impatient attitude of the woman, Haridas Thakur gently spoke to her thus: "I have taken a vow of chanting a crore of the Names of the lord during this month. The number is nearing completion. I expected the same to be completed this night and hence chanted the names throughout, but could not succeed. By tomorrow I am sure, the number will be completed and my vow also would be fulfilled. Then I will be able to enjoy your company freely." That night too, the young harlot returned by sunrise utterly disappointed. She reported all that happened to Ramachandra Khan and the assurance of hope she got from Haridas Thakur.

Full of hopes of success in her plan and with renewed enthusiasm, the harlot reached the lonely hut of Haridas Thakur on the third night. As on the previous two days, she bowed to the sacred Tulasi and Haridas Thakur, and sat at the entrance of the cell listening to the chanting of the Name and repeating the same by herself. Haridas Thakur confirmed his previous assurances and said that he would definitely complete the

number the same night and fulfil her wish.

Third attempt - Harlot converted

She was happy that she would have her wish fulfilled on the same night. She too repeated the Name on that day. What a tremendous change! Is it a miracle or a dream? By chanting the name all the night in the holy company of Thakur Haridas the sinful heart of the young woman was completely changed. She fell prostrate at his feet and confessed to him frankly all about the evil plan of Ramachandra Khan. She said: "I am the worst of sinners. Being a harlot by profession there is hardly any sin that I have not committed. I could now understand that you are not an ordinary person. You are a jewel amongst the devotees of the Lord. Under the sinful instructions of this villain Ramachandra Khan, I have shamelessly turned all my efforts to contaminate your devotional heart. For three consecutive days I continued my efforts. Your spotless and ever-devoted nature has worked marvels in my sinful heart. By singing the Holy Name in your company all my evil propensities are totally destroyed. Now have mercy on this wretch. Please extricate this sinner from this deplorable condition." Haridas Thakur was ever kind and sympathetic to all fallen souls. The sudden metamorphosis of this young prostitute and her truly repenting words moved his merciful heart to pity. He never thought even for a moment of the loathsome activities of this young woman. He pardoned her completely and said: "I am fully alive to all the evil plots of Ramachandra Khan. He knows not what he does. I wish him well. It is only for your sake that I continued my stay in this village for all these three days. If not, I would have left the place on the very first day." The young woman before Haridas Thakur was a thoroughly changed person. She was not there for satisfying her evil passions. She no longer saw in Haridas Thakur a person who would gratify her sensuous appetites; on the contrary, she saw in him her spiritual guide and her saviour from the thralldom of Maya, her sole support of life. She requested him in all humility, to enlighten her as to how she could overcome the miseries of this transitory life. She had by then proved herself to be a worthy aspirant for spiritual enlightenment. Haridas Thakur was fully convinced of her fitness to receive initiation into the secrets of devotion. He said: "Distribute freely all the wealth that you have to Brahmins. Take shelter in this hut. Chant the Holy Name constantly and worship the sacred Tulasi. In a short time, I am sure, you will attain the Feet of Sri Krishna."¹³ The merciful Haridas Thakur now initiated her with the Divine Name and repeating the Name of the Lord left the place forever.

13 ṭhākura kahe, — "gharera dravya brāhmaṇe kara dāna
ei ghare āsi' tumi karaha viśrāma
nirantara nāma lao, kara tulasī sevana
acirāt pābe tabe kṛṣṇera caraṇa"
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 3.136-137)
hari nāmāmṛtametat pibantu śatadhāvagāhantam
(śrī hari-nāmāmṛta)

Thakur - Invulnerable to sense-allurements

Let Haridas Thakur, whose heart was ever addicted to drinking deep the nectar of Divine Name, be glorified! Let all praises be unto him who in spite of the repeated efforts of the young prostitute did not fall a victim to her lustful desires, but remained as hard as a mountain-rock pursuing his activities undisturbed. There is a world of difference between a genuine devotee of the Lord and an ordinary man. Yes, they are opposite poles. Those who are treading on the path of devotion ever engaged in taking the Holy Name of the Lord, do not fall a prey to sins even when such sins gather close to them. They are beyond the influence of the various temptations, however irresistible they may be to others.

The young woman, who had become the recipient of the causeless mercy of Haridas Thakur, obeyed the instructions of her Guru to the last word. By the boundless mercy of her master, she could understand the position of beauty, wealth, etc., in this changing world.

Adieu, farewell earth's bliss!
This world uncertain is;
Fond are life's lustful joys;
Death proves them all but toys.

Rich men! Trust not in wealth
Gold cannot buy your health;
Physic himself must fade;
All things to end are made.

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour;
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair.
(Nashe)

Harlot - a faithful disciple and saint

Without the least hesitation she fulfilled the wishes of her eternal guide. All her wealth was distributed to the Brahmins. Though of young age and beautiful complexion she got her head shaved, and with a single piece of cloth for covering her nudity stayed in the cell offered by Thakur Haridas - her merciful master. Obeying the command of her saviour, she repeated three lacs of Names in the course of the whole day and night. She worshipped the Tulasi every day unfailingly. Avoiding delicious meals she was satisfied with uncooked food. Often she resorted to fasts. These methods helped her considerably to have perfect control over all her senses within a short time, and unalloyed love for Bhagavan sprouted in her pure heart. To the great surprise of all, she became a famous devotee of the Lord. She gained the position of a spiritual teacher. Her reputation spread like a wild conflagration, throughout. Devotees of great eminence

from different parts often visited her hut for a sight of her.¹⁴

Glory of the Divine Name

The inhabitants of the surrounding villages were greatly astonished by the wonderful capacity of Thakur Haridas that brought about a miraculous change in the life of a mere prostitute of sinful actions. Those very persons who once hated her felt it now a great privilege to meet her. What a wonder! She, who was once the cause of the downfall of many and a repository of many foul deeds, was now fit to release others from the terrible grips of vices to a plane of perfect purity - the Eternal Plane of Transcendental Service of the Supreme Lord, and all this happened by the mercy of Haridas Thakur. People bowed with great reverence whenever they spoke of him.

Ramachandra Khan's doom

Meanwhile, Ramachandra Khan, who was building castles in the air, had to meet with utter disappointment. He had to pay a heavy price for this crime of his. His cruel heart grew all the more wicked and his hatred for Godhead and His devotees increased very much. He brought down terrible destruction on himself. Once again, he committed an unpardonable offence to Sri Nityananda Prabhu, the eternal companion of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. All his foul deeds began to recoil on him. The offensive actions made him an irrepressibly arrogant man. He stopped paying regular revenue to the Ruler. Hence, the Muslim Ruler got offended and raided his house. He halted in the Durga Mandap of his house. He polluted the place by butchering animals. He cooked objectionable food there. Ramachandra Khan and all his family members were taken prisoners. The Ruler and party remained there for three days, and all his property was plundered including his village, and he was forced to take objectionable food consisting of blood and flesh of animals. Ramachandra Khan lost his caste, his wealth, his relations and everything he possessed as his own. Offences, when committed against the devotees of the Lord are not forgiven even by Bhagavan Himself. They are the worst impediments in the path of God-realisation. Offences committed against the Bhaktas bring along with them manifold sufferings, not only to the person concerned, but even to many others. Over and above this, it brings complete destruction of the place, i.e., the village or township itself.

14 tabe sei veśyā gurura ājñā la-ila
 gṛha-vitta yebā chila, brāhmaṇere dila
 māthā muḍi' eka-vastre rahila sei ghare
 rātri-dine tina-lakṣa nāma grahaṇa kare
 tulasī sevana kare, carvaṇa, upavāsa
 indriya-damana haila, premera prakāśa
 prasiddhā vaiṣṇavī haila parama-mahāntī
 baḍa baḍa vaiṣṇava tānra darśanete yānti
 (śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 3.139-142)

Divine Name - Redeems worst of sinners

The above incident of converting that young woman of bad character to the position of a spiritual preceptor has got in it many lessons to teach us. In the first instance, it establishes the Glory of the Divine Name. The repetition of the Divine Name does deliver even the worst of sinners. The chanting of the Name delivered her from all sins and created in her real penitence for her past sinful deeds. It has awakened subsequently an earnest longing for taking shelter in the utterance of the Name which in course of a short period favoured her with the experience of spiritual rapture and Divine Realisation.

Prerequisites for Sadhu's company

The young woman appears before us with a heavy load of sins. She can be well compared with any other individual of this workaday world. An unnatural greed for money and a loathsome tendency to satisfy the sensuous cravings are generally noted in almost all in the present day. In spite of her madness for wealth and passions, she possessed one good quality which her other friends of the same profession or even many other so-called moralists of the world do not have. This, in fact, was her asset. She had a natural instinct in her to respect Sadhus, the sacred Tulasi, etc. This we can gather from her behaviour before Sri Haridas Thakur. The conception of morality and immorality as understood by the people of the material world is to be completely and favourably moulded for one's spiritual progress. Extremists in either of these are sure to meet with an utter failure in the spiritual path.

The woman in our narrative did not approach Haridas Thakur with any philosophical arguments. She was not a scholar in any sense. She was neither convinced nor converted by polemics or a show of miracle or supernatural powers. Her reformation was brought about by the simple method of listening to the Holy Name and Its repetition, and her natural receptive disposition completed the work.

Essential requisites for Nama-Bhajan

A spiritual aspirant must possess a natural instinct to pay due respect to Sadhus and other godly objects. They must never underestimate them on any ground. With reverence and faith they must be prepared to follow the instructions of Sadhus. This is what is otherwise called 'Sradha' or faith. Real faith is the outcome of one's previous unconscious association with true devotees of the Lord. It is this special gift that would enable a person to come in contact with Sadhus and hear their soul-stirring words. This is altogether different from blind faith. Those who possess blind faith are seldom attracted by genuine devotees or their words. The words emanating from the lips of pure devotees are not material sounds. They are, on the contrary, Transcendental Sounds capable of producing the most marvellous experiences in the heart of

submissive listeners. An aspirant, who longs to follow the path of God-realisation, must submissively hear the Holy Name uttered by genuine Sadhus. After serving the devotee, the Holy Name is to be accepted from him as his special favour, and It is to be chanted constantly in the holy company fully observing all his instructions. Attachments to the material world and worldly objects in any form is an obstacle in the spiritual path. They are to be discarded totally. Association with them in any form would once again bring on us unpleasantness and physical mortifications. Even such matters as food, clothing, residence, etc., should be refused from those who are extremely worldly-minded. One must always follow the preceptor's instructions which are given for his spiritual uplift. Unless we follow the above instructions, our progress in the spiritual path remains ever blocked.

LORD'S NAME - THE DIVINE PANACEA

AFTER hearing some of the wonderful effects of the Divine Name, we often take recourse to the chanting of the Name, overlooking the important instructions as immaterial. From our practical experience in this world, we see these people, in spite of their show of religious practices of chanting the Name, etc., lack in the elementary principles of religion, not to speak of higher achievements. Their examples in society have proved stumbling blocks in reviving faith in God or His Name. The system of medical treatment insists upon the patient to carry out the instructions of the doctor strictly with respect to the medicine as well as the diet. The Holy Name is the Divine Medicine to save us from the chronic disease of worldliness and as such it is indispensable to take the Name fully observing all the other injunctions of the Sastras.

Sri Kulasekhar Alvar, one of the ancient renowned saints of South India and a noted exponent of Bhakti, in his popular devotional work 'Sri Mukundamala Stotra' mentions thus:

Materialised mind uncongenial to devotion

"O my mind! Why do you instigate me to run after various medicines when you have before you a highly potential one with astounding results? Did you ever think of it even for a short while? Your madness and restlessness are proverbial. The mischief that you often work on the lives of ascetics and the untoward sufferings you cause them thereby are innumerable and most damaging. You have easily conquered ordinary human beings by your two pronged drive of Sankalpa (forming ideas), and Vikalpa (dissolving them), and the Almighty Lord alone knows when they are to get their release from your well-fortified prison chambers. I do not know with what objects amongst the creations of the Lord I can properly compare to you, either with a grasshopper that never sits in a place, but goes on frisking as often as possible or with any angry monkey bit by a scorpion. Really you are incomparable!"¹⁵

Did not the great Arjun on behalf of the entire world state in Gita, "O Krishna, You want me to control the mind. But how can I do it? It is so wavering, vehement, powerfully defiant and firm that its control, I consider, is very hard to achieve as of the wind."¹⁶ Bhagavan Sri Krishna

15 vyāmoha-prāśamauśadham muni-mano-vṛtti-pravṛtṭy-auśadham
daityendrārṭi-karauśadham tri-bhuvane sañjīvanaikaauśadham
bhaktātyanta-hitauśadham bhava-bhaya-pradhvamsanaikaauśadham
śreyaḥ-prāpti-karauśadham piba manaḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-divyauśadham
(śrī-mukunda-mālā-stotra 32)

16 cañcalaṁ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad dṛḍham
tasyāhaṁ nigrahaṁ manye vāyor iva suduṣkaram
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 6.34)

too agreed with the same sentiments of His devotee Arjun and seconded them with extraordinarily high compliments. "O mighty armed! True, you are perfectly right; you may be easily successful in conquering many of your opponents by your mighty arms. But this restless mind is difficult to conquer."¹⁷ Most people may be ignorant of your wicked activities; yet, they may be knowing this much that you are the bitterest enemy of humanity striving for God-realisation.

"O Mind! Thou art the worst enemy of those who indulge frequently in transitory objects; thou art also the best friend of those few fortunate souls who constantly remember the Blessed Lord. How thou misguidest the poor forgotten souls by thy false and clever arguments! I have now understood thy evil leanings; thanks, thanks to thee my worthy friend, for the lesson thou hast taught! No longer I hope to satisfy thy whims and fancies and no more suggestions from thee to that effect for the present. Now, drink this Divine Medicine - the Holy Name of the Lord - without any further excuse. Thou art very clever in framing excuses with thy unusual arguments and reasonings, in bringing about a downfall from proper devotional approach. Do not put forward any such specious pleas as suggesting the practice of other methods like asceticism, Karma, Jnan, Yoga, renunciation, penance, etc. They are not in the least equal to This Elixir. They neither possess as many virtues as the Divine Name nor are they as efficacious and easy as the latter. Start forthwith this course of treatment without any hesitation and you will reap its wonderful effects. 'Proof of a pudding is in the eating.'"

The Divine Name is the most powerful remedy for delivering one from the sinister influences of infatuation and ignorance. Every soul who has forgotten the Supreme Lord without any exception is under the spell of this enemy called ignorance. Having fallen a prey to this, the unfortunate soul identifies itself with the material body and its surrounding relations. It forgets its real nature and its original relation with the All-Merciful Lord - the Soul of all souls. Taking recourse to constant chanting of the Divine Name, one becomes eligible for the Grace of the Lord which is evidenced by one's immediate redemption from the thralldom of infatuation (Moha) which is our misidentification. It is only the Divine Grace of Bhagavat Prasada that can save us from this degraded condition. "O Achyuta! By Your Grace my delusion is completely gone."¹⁸

It helps the steady concentration of the mind on the Absolute Godhead by totally destroying mind's all evil propensities like the wavering and the stubborn natures.

It is a marvellous medicine to do away with all the opposing factors, external or internal. In our spiritual struggle, we are beset with obstacles everywhere, within and without. Unless we are free from all these stumbling blocks, our advance towards our goal is out of question. The easiest and best course of operation in driving away all these adversaries

17 *asamśayaṁ mahā-bāho mano durñigrahaṁ calam*
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 6.35)

18 *naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā tvat-prasādān mayācyuta*
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 18.73)

is performed with this Divine Medicine.

This is the best rejuvenating agent in all the infinite number of worlds. This not only delivers the materialised soul from the worst lamentable labyrinth of extreme worldliness, but also enlivens and spiritualises it with fresh life.

Beginning from the lowest stage of devotion to the highest realisation of Godhead and His unflinching loving services, no other process is as conducive to the devotee as this Divine Medicine. Free from all risks and restrictions, it is the easiest and best method that any devotee, under the most trying physical conditions of health and climate, can adopt for the achievement of his purpose in life. A novice likes it better than any other course because of its special attractive features, all-accommodating outlook and easy accessibility. For an advanced soul or a God-realised person, it is the very pith and marrow of his existence - the life-giving factor - nay, the very life itself.

This Divine Medicine strikes at the very root of the terrible suffering of this repeated cycle of births and deaths. The movement of this wheel of worldliness, busily engaged in its routine cycle of births and deaths, is maintaining an alarming speed. No mortal can arrest its motion. "One who is born is destined to die and vice versa. It is allotted to all to die."¹⁹ "O great hero! For those who have taken birth, death also is assigned along with their bodies, whether it be at this moment, or at the end of a century, death is indeed a definite and inevitable phenomenon."²⁰ "Death as it must come, comes to all!" Though the world is flooded with wonderful inventions, there is not a single one so far devised by any human genius to stop this unpleasant cyclic movement revolving ceaselessly. By its marvellous inventions scientists may boast that they have conquered nature itself. It is a mere boast - a childish prattle. Did modern science solve any of the puzzling problems facing humanity from time immemorial? Did the human brain invent any device by which man can know the actual time and circumstance under which he should take leave of his so-called friends and near relations? Alas! Many powerful brains credited with astounding inventions or discoveries had to meet with tragic ends in unknown lands which unfortunately they could not foresee.

The only course of arresting these events rests with the Almighty Lord. The credit goes to Him alone and to none else; not to any proud conditioned soul who out of sheer foolishness feels as a rival and hence an adversary of the Great Lord.

Over and above, 'Hari-Nama' is the only Potential Medicine in this dark age that helps the attainment of the everlasting good, the summum bonum of human existence.

The Transcendental Name appears similar to that of a material

19 jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur dhruvaṁ janma mṛtasya ca
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 2.27)

20 mṛtyur janmavatām vīra dehena saha jāyate
adya vābda-śatānte vā mṛtyur vai prāṇinām dhruvaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.1.38)

Name. The Holy Name is not a mere composition of Sanskrit alphabets. It is pregnant with many mystic potentialities. It attracts the utterer and the hearer. This Divine Name is the only wealth that multiplies when stolen. That is not the case with material wealth which enriches the robber and impoverishes the robbed. But the Name enriches both him who steals It or the person from whom It is stolen and by whom It is imparted. It blesses both of them. The more he takes It, the more thrilled he will feel to take It, carrying Its healthful and divine contagion to others equally lucky. The Holy Name, being totally Divine, makes Its manifestation on the lips of His pure devotees. In our present fallen state all our senses except the ears have not got any access to the Name. Aural reception is the first course that is prescribed for us. Hence, those who attentively hear the Divine Name from the lips of true devotees, with a spirit of submissiveness and honest inquiry to know more and more about Godhead Who is the only Independent Truth, and after offering them sincere and loving services, are alone eligible to realise the true nature of the Divine Name.

The Divine Name does not manifest Itself to those who do not serve the Supreme Lord. The proper hearing of the Name from a pure devotee makes him eligible for the next stage of repeating It. The devotee favours you with the Divine Name. He becomes your Guru. A true Guru is he who has experienced the Supreme Godhead and who is engaged exclusively in serving Him with his words, deeds and thoughts, subordinating all other activities to these. He need not be of a particular caste or creed.²¹ The Guru is the Divine Medium for the manifestation of the Supreme Lord in the form of Sound - the Holy Name. The Guru alone can impart the Divine Lord in the form of His Name and none else. The Holy Name imparted by the genuine Guru, when repeated constantly, will lead us to the realisation of the true nature of the Name, i.e., the attainment of Transcendental Love itself, reinforced with the realisation of Its identity with the Form, Qualities, Pastimes, etc.

Thakur at Chandpur

As the surroundings proved unfavourable for spiritual practices, Haridas Thakur left Benapol for a different place. He reached the village of Chandpur, which was situated in the neighbourhood of Saptagram-Triveni in the northern district of Hooghly in West Bengal. Saptagram, to which Chandpur and other villages are attached, was under the supervision of two brothers Hiranya Majumdar and Govardhan Majumdar in matters of revenue. They were the revenue accountants under the Nawab. Sri Balaram Acharya, the family priest of the Majumdar brothers, had his house at Chandpur, lying a little east to the residence of the Majumdar brothers. Balaram Acharya was the recipient of the special favour of Haridas Thakur and hence with utmost devotion and care, he entertained the Thakur in his village. For the convenience of his spiritual master, Balaram Acharya erected a small hut in a secluded place. Residing in that

21 kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, m. 8.128)

lonely hut, Haridas Thakur carried on his chanting of the Holy Name, accepting food from his disciple Balaram Acharya. Sri Raghunatha das, the only son of Govardhan Majumdar, later on well-known as one of the specially favoured devotees of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and one of the six Gosvamis of Vrindavan, was then a boy having his education under Balaram Acharya. With a desire to have the sight of a saint, he used to visit Haridas Thakur, who was very merciful to him. Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita of Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj Gosvami states that the mercy of Thakur Haridas was the cause of Raghunatha das becoming the recipient of the Grace of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu at a later period.

Thakur on the effects of the Name

While Haridas Thakur was continuing with his spiritual practices there, an unusual event took place. One day, Balaram Acharya, after series of humble entreaties, succeeded in taking Haridas Thakur to a gathering in the house of the two Majumdar brothers. Both the brothers received Haridas Thakur with great respect befitting his position. They prostrated themselves at his feet and offered him a special seat. Besides the two Majumdar brothers, who were themselves noted scholars of Sastric lore, the gathering included a large number of scholars and other important celebrities. Everyone present there spoke in praise of Haridas Thakur. Both the Majumdar brothers were highly pleased to hear these high compliments. The whole assembly knew that Haridas Thakur chanted every day three lacs of Holy Names. Eventually the audience there dwelt freely on the Glory of the Holy Name. This discussion soon took a slightly controversial turn. Some said that the repetition of the Name of Bhagavan destroys all sins, while some others opined that by taking recourse to chanting of the Name all the Jivas are freed from the clutches of the octopus of Maya. But the holy Haridas Thakur did not favour either of the views. He said that these are not the primary results of chanting the Name of Godhead. **Unalloyed Love at the Feet of Bhagavan Sri Krishna is the real fruit of chanting the Divine Name.**

“A person who is constant in his service to Sri Krishna in the ways enunciated above, viz., by hearing, chanting Hari-Nama, etc., finds his heart melted and by reason of realising the quality of love by chanting the Name of Sri Krishna, experiences the Bliss of Prem towards Hari in such a heart. He loses all consideration for the opinion of the people and like one possessed by Sri Krishna, laughs, cries, shouts, sings and dances at intervals.”²²

Salvation or the destruction of sins is only the secondary result of chanting the Name. The primary object of the sunrise is to illuminate the world, making everything visible in their real nature and giving delight to one and all by bestowing light and energy; but incidentally it also dispels darkness.

22 evaṁ-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiṃ jātānurāgo druta-citta ucchaiḥ
hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.2.40)

"Let the Holy Name of Sri Hari the Benefactor of the world be glorified; Who like the rising of the sun destroys all darkness, even so, the Holy Name by Its manifestation, removes all the sins of the world."²³

Haridas Thakur requested the Pandits present there to explain the above Sloka. They, on the contrary, insisted on Haridas Thakur himself to do it for the benefit of all. Haridas Thakur agreeing to their proposal, gave his expositions thus: "Take the rising of the sun. It is an excellent example to illustrate our view. Even before the sun actually rises above the eastern horizon we see all the darkness being slowly dispelled. Pears of all evil elements, such as thieves, demons, evil spirits, etc., that haunt the nights are totally removed, and by the actual appearance of the sun other useful purposes are achieved. Similarly, the dawning of the appearance of the Holy Name dispels all the sins of the aspirants as Its secondary result, and by the full blooming of the Name unflinching Love at the Feet of Sri Krishna is achieved. Mukti or salvation is an insignificant result that an aspirant can derive by the mere dim reflection of the Name (Namabhas). Sincere devotees of the Lord spurn this Mukti even though it is offered to them by Sri Krishna Himself."

"When the dying Ajamil by unintentionally uttering the Name of Sri Hari while calling his son by his name could attain Vaikunth Dham, how much more beneficial would the result be if the Name Itself is chanted with implicit faith?"²⁴

"My Own devotees, says the Lord, never accept the different forms of salvation, e.g., attainment of My Realm, power, wealth, and fame similar to that of Mine, the privilege of living near Me always, even the favour of becoming one with Myself even if offered by Me unreservedly. **They covet nothing except My loving service.**"²⁵

The above statement of Haridas Thakur was met with a protest. It is strange that not a single view, however appreciable and convincing it may be, cannot escape the protests of a certain section of the people. Even the most brilliant ideas of extraordinarily pious and virtuous people are met with vehement opposition in this world, at least once. This habit has become, specially, the rule of the present day.

23 ahaḥ saṁharadakhilam sakṛd-udaya-deva sakala lokasya
taraṇiriva timira jaladhim jayati jagan-mangalam harer nāma
(śrī bhagavān-nāma-kaumuḍī 1)

24 mriyamāṇo harernāma gṛṇan putropacāritam
ajāmilo 'py agāddhāma kimuta śraddhayā gṛṇan
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.2.49)
mriyamanāṇatvādeva aśraddhayāpi gṛṇan kiṁ punaḥ śraddhayeti
(sārārtha-darśinī)

25 sālokyā-sārṣṭi-sāmīpya- sārūpyaikatvam apy uta
dīyamānam na gṛhṇanti vinā mat-sevanam janāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.29.13)

Thakur and Gopal Chakravarti

At the residence of the Majumdar brothers there was a Brahmin employed as a bearer by name Gopal Chakravarti, who used to carry money and letters to the Ruler who was residing in his capital at Gaud. He was entrusted with the responsibility of collecting the revenues amounting to the extent of rupees twelve lacs annually and remitting it to the Nawab. He was of a handsome complexion blooming with youth and learning. He was one amongst the audience. He could not tolerate the views of Haridas Thakur. He differed totally on the issue that salvation is attainable by a mere dim reflection of the Name. The young man shouted with burning wrath: "Well, learned scholars, you have now heard the statement of this sentimentalist! The liberation that is impossible even by means of the knowledge of Brahman after crores of births is offered so cheaply by him with a mere dim reflection of the Name!"

Thakur on Bhakti and Mukti

Thakur Haridas answered the criticism by freely quoting the Sastras. Once again he established his previous statement with sufficient emphasis, basing his claims on the authority of the scriptures to the entire satisfaction of the audience, except this arrogant youth, a trifling argumentarian. Haridas Thakur replied: "Well, why do you challenge the Sastras and entertain a doubt in you? It is not my individual opinion. I do not want to thrust my personal views on you. The Sastras that are common to both of us have declared it. They, in addition, point out the insignificant position of the bliss enjoyed by liberation in comparison with the perennial flow of happiness that can be attained by rendering loving services to Bhagavan. It is simply on account of this fact that the genuine devotees or Bhaktas never hanker after or accept any type of liberation mentioned in the Sastras though they are voluntarily offered by the Lord Himself."

"O Teacher of the universe! To me immersed in the pure ocean of Bliss by meeting Thee, the Bliss of the attainment of the Brahman appears to be as contemptible as the tiny speck of water filling a hole in the ground caused by the hoof of a cow."²⁶

Haridas Thakur's reply did not cool down his temper; on the contrary, it was like adding fuel to fire. The unfortunate Gopal Chakravarti had lost all control over his temper. He shouted in the presence of all other elderly persons and scholars that he would cut off the nose of Haridas Thakur if the dim reflection of the Holy Name did not secure liberation. Haridas Thakur wilfully agreed to this. He was not a mere fanatic who stood for his own conviction or a sectarian who dogmatically fought for his views, but a genuine devotee of the Supreme Lord who had fully realised what he expressed. He was not fighting merely on bookish knowledge or

26 tvat-sākṣāt-karaṇāhlāda viśuddhābdhi-sthitasya me
sukhāni goṣpadāyante brahmaṇy api jagad guro
(śrī hari-bhakti-sudhodaya 14.36)

on the power of a vociferous disposition. He knew his position very well by dint of his practical experience. He said: "Undoubtedly, if by the dim reflection of the Holy Name liberation is not attained, I fully agree to cut off my nose."

Gopal Chakravarti rebuked

The blasphemous utterance of this foolish Brahmin was not at all approved by the rest of the audience. They all resented it very much and rose against him. The two Majumdar brothers rebuked him severely on the spot and utterly condemned his unwarranted behaviour. Balaram Acharya, more than anyone else, felt highly offended. He remarked: "Fool of an ass! You boast much of your learning; what do you know about Bhakti? This is not the place for your verbal jugglery. You have dug your own grave by insulting the great Haridas Thakur. Inevitable perdition is soon to befall you. None can help."

Thakur consoles the gathering

Haridas Thakur did not wish to remain in the assembly for long. He rose up. Majumdar forthwith dismissed the services of this Brahmin from his office and with the entire audience fell prostrate at the feet of Thakur Haridas. All the persons gathered there knew something about the sayings of the Sastras and the grave consequences of insulting great devotees. They all prayed Haridas Thakur to pardon them. Haridas Thakur with a sweet smile consoled them all by soft words. He said: "Why do you worry? You have not done anything wrong to me. In fact, you are not responsible for this unhappy incident. It is only this ignorant Brahmin who misbehaved thus. Even he is not to be blamed. His argumentative disposition has brought about this action. **The Glory of the Divine Name lies beyond the scope of human intelligence and arguments.** Intellectual achievements, however great and astounding they may be, are utterly inadequate to have any access to the Divine Name and Its marvellous potentialities. Hence, from where can he get these most secret principles? Please retire to your respective houses. May you all, by the Mercy of Sri Krishna, attain eternal good. On my account, let not any one feel sorry." Haridas Thakur took leave of them all and returned to his hut.

Evil consequences of disparaging Sadhus

The first action of Hiranya Majumdar on returning home was to prevent Gopal Chakravarti from crossing his door-steps. Gopal Chakravarti had not to wait long for the consequence of his offensive misbehaviour. In three days' time he was attacked with an acute type of leprosy. Of all the limbs of his body, his prominent nose was the first unfortunate victim. It totally disappeared from his face. It was followed by the delicate and beautiful fingers and toes. They too got withered and corroded away in a short period.

Everyone in the village was struck with consternation on the terrible turn of events facing Gopal Chakravarti. The glory of Haridas Thakur touched everyone to the heart. They offered their obeisances to Haridas Thakur.

One can easily understand that Haridas Thakur did not take the misconduct of the Brahmin seriously. What of that? How can his Beloved Lord tolerate the vilification of His devotees? He did not pardon the offender. Devotees are always by nature forgiving and hence ever-willing to pardon the faults and shortcomings of the ignorant. They never wish any sorrow to befall their opponents. But, Bhagavan in His very essence never endures even the slightest attack or calumny on His loving devotees. He never hesitates to come down even for rescuing His devotees or doing any other act that can stem the situation.

Haridas Thakur was a person of overflowing kindness. As is natural to the devotees of the Lord, he was of a very soft and sympathetic disposition. The news of the terrible calamity that befell Gopal Chakravarti, though a vilifier and opponent of Thakur Haridas, caused immense pain to the latter. Taking leave of Balaram Acharya, he left for Santipur in the district of Nadia in West Bengal.

This unhappy incident in general and the discussion that took place between Haridas Thakur and Gopal Chakravarti in particular are of great significance. We are favoured with an inspiring exposition on some of the cardinal points in our religion and particularly the Holy Name and Its potentialities from the lips of an authentic person like Haridas Thakur.

Qualifications of a religious preacher

The large assembly of learned people proved worthy of their learning by allowing Haridas Thakur to expound his views on the particular scriptural text. Haridas Thakur is the 'Namacharya'. He is one who really practises what he speaks. No one is fit to preach religion who does not follow in his own life what he stands for. Every true preacher of religion should live the principles he preaches. His must be the teachings of Sastras fully translated in day to day life into each and every action. In other words, an Acharya is a living embodiment of the Sastras before us. As such, he is the Proper authority to explain the texts of the Sastras, the real significance of which is realised by him.

The views raised by Gopal Chakravarti are those holding sway in the heart of a vast part of population that goes by the name of intellectuals or learned men. They think too much of themselves. These people depend mainly upon their own efficiency, their own reasons and experiences. They feel that they have an appreciable command over all Sastras as well. But unfortunately, they have fallen a victim to the wise saying 'little learning is dangerous'. Often they are like 'the frog in the well'. They have got their own peculiar notions on any topic which according to them is the highest philosophy, the sublime truth, the one common goal of achievement. They are not prepared to hear anything more than this. They have no patience to do so. When occasion arises by chance, they lose all their patience.

They fret and fume. They make a vivid picture of their learning and other qualities in them. They swell and swell beyond their capacity and finally burst out throwing here and there a little of the filthy substance crammed in them. This is actually what we have seen in Gopal Chakravarti too. He feels that he has understood the entire range of Sastras. He has finally come to the conclusion that merging oneself in the Impersonal Brahman by means of knowledge is the summum bonum of all the teachings of the scriptures. He never believes anything more than this. In fact this is only a one-sided view, i.e., is not the full import of the Sastras.

Scriptures - The sound authority

Instead of placing his individual experience of reasonings, Thakur Haridas draws our attention to the scriptural authority which is the only sound source of knowledge (Pramana) for Divine Matters. Gopal Chakravarti and his type of persons do pose that they are believers in God and Sastras; but their actions and words are just the contrary. They do not conform to their professions even to the slightest extent. If one believes in God, he must necessarily believe the word of God as well. Mere lip service either to the Lord or His sayings, i.e., the Sastras, would not serve any real purpose.

Scriptures and the modern public

Most of the people living in the modern world treat the Sastras as a set of irrational books containing an abundance of dogmas, rituals, myths and fictitious stories. They consider them as outmoded. Some hold them as 'kitchen books' as they are only useful for old ladies and widows who lack in real intelligence and as such are engaged in the kitchen for cooking purpose. A few who accept the infallible nature of these invaluable treasures and their validity in the field of religion interpret them in a highly intellectual manner. Their conclusions are mainly based on their direct perception and inference. For these the Sastric texts are there that they may interpret their texts to suit their idiosyncrasies. They go on twisting the next to a great extent, sometimes explaining them on grammatical, etymological, and philosophical grounds, sometimes splitting them into so many alphabets, and once again uniting them in their own ways, to support their views.

And still a few others desire that all the statements of the Sastras must be proved through the help of scientific apparatus in some recognised laboratory under the expert supervision of some eminent scientist. They hold the opinion that it is high time the Sastras submit themselves to the scrutiny of science and reason for the welfare of humanity as a whole in this age of machines. If the Sastras are not capable of standing this scientific test their survival is foredoomed.

Yet another section (and these are the most dangerous) while denouncing all these arguments, patiently wait for the approval of western scholars. They claim to be more polished in their behaviour, up-to-date in

dress and civilised in their views than the rest of the people in the world. They move in high circles, imitate the Westerners in external activities, in keeping the hat or holding the pipe. They accept only those books or writings or those men as are favoured by eminent writers of western countries. Such groups of people guided by some special instinct in them, follow the instructions of foreigners faithfully. They prefer to be in the midst of what they consider to be the intelligent and civilised section of society of ultra modernists than to be in the midst of a set, in their opinion, of primitive and quixotic Hindus who have crude notions in everything.

Some accept the Vedas alone as the original Sastras and accept their statements only as understood by their empiric mind as authentic records in religious matters. They do not give any place to the other works. Some accept the Vedas, the Vedantas (Upanishads), the Vedanta Sutras and Srimad Bhagavad-Gita as their infallible Sastras. They denounce the Puranas, the epics, etc., as later works; such books are of minor importance. Even when these people are concerned and defeated, they will harp on the same string, denying all other views excepting theirs as untenable and unwarranted additions, intentionally and mischievously prepared to crush their views. Hence, they hold such other Sastric works as unauthentic.

Still a different group blame the Brahmins and denounce the very Sastras saying that they are created by these selfish people to exploit the other innocent three castes. They remark that these works contain only certain instructions to threaten the people with the existence of hell and tempt them with certain pleasures of heaven, etc., and that these statements help the Brahmins earn their livelihood by duping the remaining people. All these diverse dispositions are due to the extreme ignorance on the subject. There is a proverb 'faults are thick where love is thin'. These people are lacking badly in good instincts born of previous religious merits. As such, they relish the type of cheap literature that is available on footpaths and bookstalls and which abounds in obscene photos that easily increase sensuous passions, senseless and fabulous stories, useless fairs, etc. Generally most of the fettered souls cannot claim a highly enlightened position from their very birth. There are certain fortunate souls with very high instincts in them and they develop early in their lifetime association with Sadhus and practise detachment, etc. Neither a dogmatic affirmation without any understanding nor a dogmatic denial is a sign of wisdom. A submissive attitude with an unbiased mind is a true sign of a seeker after Truth. Many of the ignorant people are unwilling to accept their ignorance. They are so egoistic that they never believe that there are greater persons in the world than they themselves. It appears as though they have come down with the resolution that they will not accept any enlightenment from anybody. Their behaviour only reminds us of the Mantra of the Upanishad. "Those who, remaining in the midst of extreme ignorance, consider themselves to be learned and

enlightened, come to grief like one blind man leading another."²⁷ Both would fall in a ditch and get their bones and skulls broken.

Scriptures defined

What are the Sastras and why do we believe in them? The Sastras, though appearing in book-form before us, printed by human labour, on machines invented by us, on the paper manufactured by us, are not, as many think, any production of the material world. They are the words of the Godhead Himself coming down into this world through the lips of unconditionally surrendered Sadhus who are the transparent mediums for the same. They are the reports and messages of the Transcendental Realm that have come down to the mundane world for the edification of humanity. They contain records of the inspiring lives of great personalities, their thrilling experiences, together with great secrets on the details of the Supreme Godhead, the very object of their worship, and His Activities. They are infallible Truths above human pitfalls and are the same for all ages. 'To err is human'. 'Every man hath a fool in his sleeve'. 'No man is always wise'. Human intelligence with its reasoning, however brilliant and developed it may be, has got in it fourfold errors since they are gathered from this imperfect world through the medium of our deceptive and defective senses. That is why we always notice one type of argument replaces another which in turn is again defeated by a still different one and so on and so forth. The Sastras, as the Word of the Supreme Lord, are far above such inefficiencies, such as (1) Bhram (error due to wrong perception of one thing for another), (2) Pramada (error due to heedlessness), (3) Vipralipsa (error due to the wish to deceive oneself and others), and (4) Karana Patav (error due to self-deception and deception of senses). The Sastras are not the compositions of human beings or any other similar fallen Jivas. They are existing from time immemorial. They are self-revealed truths manifested into this mundane world by the Divine Will through a channel of spoken communication brought about by a succession of genuine spiritual masters.

There is no religion in this world without its authentic scriptures. They are the true sources of knowledge. If these authorities are ignored religion becomes unsteady and irrational. Sastras are not irrational. They are based on true reasons and practical experiences or realisations, whereas, we, the reasoning animals, stand on perverted reasons, untested conclusions and unsound suppositions. Ours is only a war of hollow words, whereas, the sastras are records of practical experiences. The Vedas, the Upanishads, the Vedanta Sutras, the Puranas, the great epics like Mahabharata and Ramayana, the Pancharatras and all such works, commentaries, etc., based on the above by the Acharyas who are commissioned by Bhagavan for the benefit of humanity are known by the word 'Sastras'. Sastras need not be confined in one particular language alone. They can be in any of the languages of the world. The Sastras deal

27 avidyāyam-antare vartamānāḥ svayaṁ dhīraḥ paṇḍitam-anyamānāḥ
jaṅghanyamānāḥ pariyanti mūḍhā andhe naiva nīyamānām yathāndhāḥ
(muṇḍaka upaniṣada 1.2.8)

with the Transcendental Objects and their knowledge and hence are not easily intelligible to a novice whose knowledge is enshrouded in the ideas of the material world. He must listen to expositions on them from the lips of the genuine Sadhus with a submissive spirit as the Sadhus are living Sastras and unerring broadcasting mediums. This is the first and foremost requisite for those who aspire for God-realisation. This is indispensably necessary for all without which the Sastras will not unfold their real truths. Challenging their authority is only a sign of sheer foolishness and irrepressible arrogance. An arrogant man never succeeds in the material world, not to speak of the spiritual. If the Divine Lord, His Name, Form, etc., are all objects of our perceptions, everyone who makes an attempt for them would have succeeded. There will be no necessity for the word 'Transcendent' in the dictionary; and the world also would not have produced so many philosophies that are diametrically opposite to each other.

Coming to Haridas Thakur's exposition on the Divine Name, we are enlightened with Its High Position. Mukti, which Gopal Chakravarti so highly speaks of and pleads for, is attained by a mere dim reflection of the Holy Name. Before achieving the results of chanting the Name of the Lord, we are expected to cross two other stages, en route. They are the stages of 'Namaparadha' and 'Namabhas'. We shall try to know more about these in twelfth and thirteenth chapters of this book.

Verbal jugglery - The sign of ignorance

Gopal Chakravarti, in spite of his verbal jugglery on the Name, is utterly ignorant of the secrets of the Holy Name and Its Glories. But he is adamant in holding his view. This is the sign of extreme ignorance and egoism. He is also ignorant of true devotion and its astounding effects. To him liberation from all worries and merging in the Impersonal Brahman is the highest goal. This is a mere side issue - a secondary result of a dim reflection of the Holy name. He belongs to the school of people who consider Bhakti to be weak and vulgar, and hence, Bhaktas, however great they may be, as persons of no consequence. The people of this school include Bhakti in fruitive actions. Gopal Chakravarti is under the impression that Haridas Thakur too is only a follower of this misnomered Bhakti school. But, Haridas Thakur is neither a follower of the fruitive actions nor one who is an advocate of dry intellectualism. He is not an opportunist to whom religion is more a matter of convenience than a creed and whose views are vacillating this way or that like a pendulum. These opportunists like Gopal, adopt a certain philosophy for convenience of argument; but when the question of sacrifice, hardship and practical living arises, they are found wanting to such an extent that none will ever be able to discover their erstwhile theoretical stand.

Bhakti - Second to none

Thakur Haridas is out and out a strong advocate of Bhakti or devotion to Bhagavan. Amongst the various methods of religious practices

mentioned in the Sastras, Bhakti or devotion to Bhagavan holds a position supreme to all else. Its marvellous characteristics, magnificent efficacies, infallible results, and thrilling influence on its ardent devotees are inexpressible facts that add to its glory. It is not a strange subject to the people of the world; on the contrary; it is a subject much talked about and discussed by many spiritual people and persons of great eminence in the mundane world, in different languages and in different ways, and yet how very little it is understood in its right spirit, and how less practised in daily life. After putting in some very insignificant and mild efforts, and sometimes even without these, by merely reading some books, we often deceive ourselves into the belief that we have attained Bhakti, without any understanding as to the difficulty of attaining it. Bhakti being the highest attainment of human existence is not given to the Jivas by the Supreme Lord for the mere asking.

"By following the process of Jnan, salvation easily is attained, and the performance of righteous actions, leads one to various enjoyments here and hereafter, whereas, even by thousands of similar methods devotion to Sri Hari remains unattainable."²⁸

Aspirants for Bhakti are to face innumerable severe tests. The Lord plays in hard game with them and only those sincere souls, free from any iota of worldly desires or self aggrandisement in the form of salvation, can turn out successful in their efforts. Those who desire Bhakti must be prepared to face any eventuality, persecution and harassment, both in and outside one's own family and society. The life of Thakur Haridas narrated in this book is an inspiring example of the above fact. The idiosyncrasies, fancies, and the persecutions of the husband can be borne with calm and silence only by a faithful and devoted wife; whereas, one who seeks merely her own pleasures and comforts always looks for caresses from her husband. The path of devotion is not a bed of roses, decidedly not an easy-going path, strewn with soft and sweet smelling flowers, as many of us are prone to think.

A few liberal minded of Gopal Chakravarti's class or type, believe Bhakti as an effective means to Mukti or salvation. **But for a true Bhakta, Bhakti is both the means as well as the end in itself. To him Bhakti is its own reward. He does not long for any gain extraneous to Bhakti.**

Both The Majumdar brothers, and the large gathering present there, already knew the gravity of committing offences to great devotees and their terrible after-effects on the lives of the offenders. Hence, in order to free themselves from the terrible consequences, they all jointly requested Haridas Thakur to pardon them. This is the best remedy of getting relief from the evil effects of committing offences. The offender must get himself pardoned by the saint whom he has offended.

28 jñānataḥ su-labhā muktir bhuktir yajñādi-puṇyataḥ
seyam sādhana-sāhasrair hāri-bhaktiḥ su-durlabhā
(tantra-vacana)

HARIDAS THAKUR AT SANTIPUR

His meeting with Advaita Acharya

AT Santipur, Haridas Thakur met the great Sri Advaita Acharya and prostrated himself before him and the latter, being extremely delighted, embraced Thakur Haridas and received him with all cordiality. Advaita Acharya, an elderly person, was the leader of the Vaishnav community in Navadvip. He came from a Brahmin family of high lineage. His ancestors were very eminent in learning. Originally belonging to Sylhet (Assam), he became a disciple of the great saint Sri Madhavendra Puri, and in subsequent years settled at Santipur and later on at Navadvip. He was fairly well-to-do. The people of Santipur, as well as Navadvip, regarded him with great respect for his vast learning of the Sastras, pious life and sincere devotion. He was one of the select few of the eternal associates of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu.

Advaita Acharya arranged a lonely hut for Thakur Haridas on the banks of the Ganges and daily explained to him the real import of Srimad Bhagavata and Srimad Bhagavad Gita. Haridas Thakur had his alms of food everyday from the house of Advaita Acharya, and spent his days completely lost in the eddies of Spiritual Bliss. He remained absorbed in the topics relating to the Sportive Pastimes of the Lord in the company of this revered host. While days rolled on unnoticed in such unparalleled spiritual happiness, Haridas Thakur approached Advaita Acharya one day with a humble request. "Holy sir! What is the benefit of feeding me daily? This is a place noted for Brahmins. Many eminent persons of high lineage are here. Ignoring all of them, the great hospitality that you are extending to me may possibly offend them all. Yes, it may pave the way to some social trouble. Hence, I appeal to you from the bottom of my heart not to continue it, and to do such actions that may be agreeable to the social and spiritual principles of one's life."

Bhakta - His unique position

Advaita Acharya was an eminent scholar of sound principles, holding an extraordinary position amongst the devotees. He knew his position pretty well. He knew that in this age of Kali, it is well nigh impossible to get a crore of Brahmins. He asked Haridas Thakur to shed all such baseless fears, and assured him that he would do only such observations that are sanctioned by the sacred Sastras. "By feeding you, a crore of Brahmins are really fed."²⁹ With this reply, he offered Haridas Thakur the food cooked on the occasion of the anniversary - 'Sradha-day'. The above

29 tumi khāile haya koṭi-brāhmaṇa-bhojana
eta bali, śrāddha-pātra karāilā bhojana
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 3.222)

deed undoubtedly is a severe and inexcusable violation of the existing social code. According to the prevailing customs amongst the orthodox Brahmins, such food can be offered only to members of their own community. Giving it to anyone outside the community and especially to one who is a non-Hindu is a grave violation of the custom of the community. By this action, the great Advaita Acharya is not to be misunderstood as one who has trespassed the social principles or Vedic Varnasram Dharma. He has, in fact, laid bare before and taught the world the unique position of a genuine devotee over all castes and creeds, and his sole eligibility to accept the offerings of even high cast Brahmins on such special occasions. The above fact is not against the Sastras.

'Among thousands of Brahmins, one who performs Vedic rites is superior, amongst thousands of such Vedic Brahmins, one who is well-versed in the meanings of the Vedic lore is superior; amongst a crore of Brahmins well-versed in the Sastras, a devotee of Sri Vishnu is considered to be still more superior and even amongst thousands of devotees of Sri Vishnu, **a single-minded devotee of Sri Krishna is spoken of as the supreme most.**'³⁰

Such was the lofty position that Thakur Haridas enjoyed even before the great Advaita Acharya, the leader of the Vaishnav community at Navadvip.

Advaita Acharya's sympathy to the fallen humanity has no parallel elsewhere. The deplorable condition of the people moved his heart. He wished to do something substantial to them. He devised ways and means for the deliverance of all these suffering souls. He took an oath for bringing on Earth the Manifestation of Bhagavan Sri Krishna in the midst of all, and started regularly worshipping Him with the Ganges water and the sprays of Tulasi, a very efficacious method mentioned in the Sastras. Haridas Thakur too, with renewed enthusiasm and faith, went on with his chanting of the Name, eagerly expecting the Advent of Sri Krishna. Influenced by the sincere devotion and repeated entreaties of both Advaita Acharya and Haridas Thakur, the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu manifested his Advent into this world and inundated our country from Himalayas to Cape Comorin like a furious deluge with Divine Name, the swelling waves of which overflowed in all directions, making the inhabitants beneficiaries of this great onrush.

30 brahmaṇānaṃ sahasrebhyaḥ satrayājī viśiṣyate
 satrayājī sahasrebyaḥ sarva vedānta pāragaḥ
 sarva vedānta vit kotyā viṣṇu bhakto viśiṣyate
 vaiṣṇavānāṃ sahasrebhya ekantyako viśiṣyate
 bhakta raṣṭavidhāhyeṣa yasmin mlecche 'pi vartate
 sa viprendromuniśreṣṭaḥ sa jñānī sa ca paṇḍitaḥ
 tasmai deyaṃ tato grāhyaṃ sa ca pūjyo yathā hariḥ
 name 'bhaktaścaturvedī madbhaktaḥ śvapacaḥ priyaḥ
 tasmai deyam tato grāhyaṃ sa ca pūjyo yathā hyaham
 (garuḍa purāṇa)

"The cult of unalloyed devotion of Sri Krishna reached its highest degree of development and received its great impetus on the appearance of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu - the Fullest Manifestation of Sri Krishna, Who was born in Navadvip on the banks of the Ganges, a little over four hundred and fifty years ago and flourished for nearly half a century. He was Sri Krishna Himself manifested in the form of His great devotee. **Sri Krishna is the Mystery and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is Its Explanation.** Whenever Sri Krishna comes on earth as the Mystery of Love in the junction period of Dvapara and Kali, He comes again in the Form of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as the explanation of that Mystery, 5000 years after, **to show mankind the way to Himself.**"*

"Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Love, Devotion and spirituality will ever remain unparalleled. **He preached Sri Krishna, the Seed and Soul of Love Absolute,** and while preaching, He would burst forth in praises of Sri Krishna. And all India was flooded with Sri Chaitanya's Divine Love."

"Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu preached and proved the potency of Sri Krishna's Name - that His Name is the Lord Himself. If anybody says, 'Krishna', 'Krishna', mentally or loudly and concentrates his mind on It, he is bound to absorb Its Love-Nectar, be drunk with Its Ecstasy, see Krishna in Form and in everything, and finally go to Goloka after passing out of this life. The world has never seen such an Avatar, the Manifestation of All-Love - Krishna."*

"Like master, like servants. His apostles were of such purity and sublimity that it would be hard to find one such like them even in India of the past. Anyone of them was competent to save a whole world. They left thousands of books on Sri Krishna and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Career and Teachings, which are of the utmost value to the students and adherents of all religions of all climes, ages and denominations. Love is the theme of every book, and it is difficult to resist its essence pouring into you as you read them. For Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu cannot be understood without first understanding Sri Krishna and His Lila on Earth."

The doing of great personalities like Haridas Thakur, etc., do not submit to the reasoning faculties of ordinary limited human intelligence. They continue to remain an enigmatic puzzle even to the best of the brains of the world. Listening to them with real faith is the only course open to us. Haridas Thakur's career in this world is crowded with many miraculous and thrilling incidents. It is simply impossible to record each and every such deed. To add to the glories of Haridas Thakur, of which we have already heard, Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami explains another incident.

* Extracts from 'Sri Krishna - The Lord of Love'

* Extracts from 'Sri Krishna - The Lord of Love'

Thakur and Mayadevi

Once, sitting in his cave as usual, Haridas Thakur was reciting loudly the Holy Name. It was a full moon day. The cool and silvery moonlight spread over the country, making the atmosphere all around very fascinating. The sparkling ripples of the Ganges flowing close by added fresh beauty and solitude to the prevailing calm outlook. The entrance to his cell was sanctified by the presence of a Holy Tulasi plant grown in an elevated place especially erected for the purpose. The whole scenery, both inside and outside that cave of Haridas Thakur, was so lovely that it would easily steal away any heart.

At this moment, there appeared in this charming scene a beautiful woman. The glowing lustre around her was so dazzling that it drove away all the darkness making the place fully illuminated. The sweet fragrance of her body, mixing with the gentle breeze, made all the ten quarters delightful. The sweet ringing of her ornaments was more captivating to the ears than the melodious songs of the Gandharvas. Gently she bowed down to the Tulasi, perambulated the same, and approached the entrance of Haridas Thakur's cave. With folded hands she worshipped his feet and taking her seat on the threshold spoke thus: "Truly, you are a benefactor to the whole world. Both in appearance and qualities, you are an exception. Enchanted by these, I have come over here to enjoy your loving company. Please have the kindness to accept my humble request. You are a great devotee. Devotees are by nature embodiments of kindness and sympathy. They are ever exceptionally merciful to the suffering humanity."

So saying this attractive stranger woman tried to convert the great Haridas Thakur by various charming gestures and postures, the sight of which undoubtedly would violently disturb the mental equilibrium of even great Munis. But these efforts of the young woman did not prove effective before Haridas Thakur. He was a hard nut to crack. He remained firm. He, on the contrary, pitied the unfortunate woman and said: "I have taken an oath of chanting a special fixed number of Names daily. Till the fixed quota of Names is completed it is impossible to attend to any other work. This is my vow. When my routine of Kirtan is over I may have enough time for rest. Be seated at the entrance and attend the chanting of the Name. On completion of my vow I shall certainly agree to your proposal."

Thakur Haridas, who was deeply absorbed in constant meditation on the Name of Sri Krishna, was totally unconscious of the external world. Hence, all the attempts of this bewitching woman resulted in an utter failure before our great saint, yes, they ended as 'wasted fragrance in desert air'.

At the end of the third day, when she was totally disappointed, she approached once again Haridas Thakur with these words: "You have deceived me by your consoling words for all the past three days. It seems there is no end of your Kirtan, either during the day or the night."

On hearing her words Haridas Thakur replied: "What can I do? I am helpless. I have already taken an oath. How can I break it now?" She now understood him well. She was convinced beyond any doubt that she was only 'making attempts to extract sunbeams from cucumbers'. All her hopes were frustrated. She thought that there was no use of meddling with him any further. She, therefore, finally decided to reveal herself before him. With all reverence she bowed down to Haridas Thakur and said: "I am Maya, the deluding energy of Godhead. I came to test you once. I can claim that I have deluded all Jivas, from Brahma downwards. None could stand my test. But today I accept my utter failure. My pride is humbled. Yes, I am miserably defeated by you. You are the only exception that I have ever witnessed. You are a great 'Mahabhagavata'. By a mere sight to your person, and by listening to your chanting of the Holy Name, my heart is completely purified. I too long to remain absorbed in drinking the Nectarine Bliss emanating from the Divine Name. Ah! What a marvellous and soul-stirring experience it is! Have the mercy to initiate me too with the sweet Name of Sri Krishna. The whole of India is submerged under the sweeping currents of Divine Love. Everyone is carried away by this inundation. Really why India? The whole world is exceptionally fortunate. Those who are deprived of this great influence are the most unfortunate amongst the creation of the Lord. Even in crores of births there is little hope for one who has not tasted the Bliss of Divine Name. On a previous occasion I had accepted the Holy Name 'Rama' from the great Siva. Now, I eagerly long to be favoured with the Name 'Krishna' by your grace and I humbly request you to initiate me into the same. **The Name 'Rama' is well-known for its characteristics of delivering one and all from the thralldom of Maya, whereas the Name 'Krishna' distinguishes itself by imparting 'Krishna Prem' in addition.** Pray bless me with the Name of Sri Krishna and make me fit to experience this surging ocean of Divine Love." With these words, she worshipped the feet of Haridas Thakur. Her prayer was granted. How can one escape the overflowing kindness of Thakur Haridas? Yes, she was initiated with the Name of Sri Krishna.

Why did Mayadevi request Haridas Thakur for the Name of Sri Krishna when she had already been initiated with the Name of Sri Rama by no less a personage than the great Siva? Is there any difference between the Names of the Lord? Is it essential that everyone should repeat the Name of Sri Krishna? What harm is there if we utter the name of Kali, Siva, Ganapati, Kartikeya, etc.? A person of a thoughtful disposition is often confronted with similar questions when he comes across such typical occurrences. Doubts are the outcome of misunderstandings. Proper enlightenment on the subject clears all our misconceptions. A correct idea of the Absolute Truth, or the Ultimate Reality Whom we know by the common epithet - 'Godhead' and 'a true conception of Sri Krishna', are sure to help us satisfactorily in solving this problem. This definitely would help us to wipe out all our erroneous notions.

Sri Krishna - The Darling Lord of millions

To any Hindu in India Sri Krishna is not a strange figure. Though most of the people in India lamentably lack in having a proper understanding of His Real Personality, and the significance underlying His Divine Deeds, He is widely known even amongst the unlettered masses. Sri Krishna! How sweet is the Name Itself! Ah! Is there anything sweeter to the heart of lovers than this pretty little Enchanter, full of pranks, fun and frolic? He is the Love, Light, Life and the very Soul of Vrindavan, the very life-breath of the Vrajavasis. Millions of people from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin hail His Glories, sing the fascinating events of His marvellous Deeds, listen with rapt attention to his soul-stirring Messages, repeat His sweet Names and experience flashes of His contact which is verily ineffable joy and satisfaction in their hearts. There is no occasion in India amongst the majority of Hindus when Sri Krishna is not referred to in one way or other. Whether in the days of festivities or on marriage occasions, whether in times of weal or woe, or in time of social rejoicings, it has become a habitual custom to remember Him and to sing His captivating Pastimes, in the midst of inexplicable heartfelt feelings of love and enthusiasm. He holds a continuous sway in the hearts of lacs and lacs of inhabitants in India. He is the most popular Figure, the sweetest Object of veneration and worship. He is the most Beloved Lord and Saviour - nay, the Absolute-Par-Excellence.

Sri Krishna - His Personality

Numerous conceptions about Sri Krishna are current even amongst eminent scholars in India. His inconceivable potency prevents all the empiric thinkers and their efforts from having a thorough conception of His Divine Personality. He is moulded by each of these savants in his own thoughts, giving new colours and shapes to His Divine Personality and Deeds. If at all we are interested to know something genuine about him we must necessarily listen to the authentic scriptures that speak of Him, and rely on the words of those pure devotees who have realised Him in His true nature. The remarks of critics are based on their individual understandings purely gathered through the material senses. It is obviously evident that the mundane reasoning faculties have no access to Divine Objects. Hence, depending solely on the statements of ordinary critics, or the so-called scholars, we cannot get a true conception of Sri Krishna, His Divine Personality, Deeds, or Messages. Such statements only take us away from the real facts, by the weight of intellectual representations based on individual ideas of a defective nature. Almost all the conclusions of today are changed and replaced by new reasons tomorrow. Intellectual conclusions are, therefore, incomplete and unsteady even in the visible plane of matter. Therefore, wise persons take their firm stand on the revealed scriptures which alone can unfold the Truth before us.

The numerous conceptions about Sri Krishna that exist, themselves are a sound proof that most of these scholars are ignorant of His Real Personality. Each one is depicting Him in the way that is intelligible to him.

The first group regards Sri Krishna as one of the endless Descents of Bhagavan Sri Vishnu. To them Sri Vishnu is the Supreme Godhead. The word 'Vishnu' literally means one Who pervades the entire universe. Our Puranas have described various Descents of Bhagavan Vishnu appearing in this world on different occasions for fulfilling manifold purposes concerned with the administration of the universe. The Name of Sri Krishna, too, is included in the list of the many Descents that have manifested in this mortal plane. Some of them (forming the second group), after making a deep study of these Descents, Their Deeds, etc., distinguish Sri Krishna as the fullest or the most perfect (Purna Avatar) of all such Manifestations of the Divinity. They take Him as 'Class One' of all these Avatars. And a third section of people realise Him as a Personal Manifestation (Saguna Brahman) of the Impersonal Absolute (Nirguna Brahman). According to them the Ultimate Reality is conceived as one that is void of all attributes. All intellectual empiric thinkers of the world are supporters of this view. They hold that the Absolute is incomprehensible to human understanding, and as such, is undefinable. This Attributeless Absolute incarnates into this world for various purposes, and Sri Krishna is the best of such Manifestations. A fourth section of men do not enter into any of these controversies, discussions or abstract philosophical speculations. They are very simple in their views. They are contented with the historic records and hence they declare Him as a mighty warrior, a great hero, and a powerful ruler of the Yadav race. They see in Him an eminent politician of marvellous tactics and ingenuity, of surpassing far-sightedness, a keen statesman, an uncompromising and a terrible chastiser of the wicked, a great conqueror of extraordinary strategical abilities, a successful oppressor of innumerable tyrannical exploiters, and an able and just administrator. A fifth group proclaim Him as the foremost of the Prophets Who ever graced the world, Who by His philosophical expositions infused new vigour in the teeming millions of the world. Yet a sixth section of the society usurping the power of Judge, in their arrogance laugh at Him as a voluptuous enjoyer. These stiff-necked, dry intellectualists, boast too much of their purity and scale the moral merits of Divine Personalities from a low material level, and pass remarks on Them. A seventh group simply deny Him, taking Him as merely allegorical - the product of a poet's mind. Thus, if we make a patient and careful scrutiny of the prevailing notions, we can still gather many curious views on the Divine Personality of Sri Krishna. The fundamental reason of these varying and mostly conflicting views on this unique Personality, is due to the fact that Sri Krishna is an incomprehensible Personality in Whom all the contradictory qualities such as unity (Ekatva) and diversity, fullness and division, simultaneously exist.

A thorough and reliable account of His most charming Personality, marvellous Career and rejuvenating Teachings, can be had from Mahabharata, Harivamsa, Srimad Bhagavata and some other Puranas, like Brahma Vaivarta Purana, etc.; of these, Srimad Bhagavata is the foremost

authority. Srimad Bhagavata, the epitomised quintessence of all the Sastras, whose chief purpose is the glorification of Bhakti and Sri Krishna Lila, declares Him as 'Absolute-Par-Excellence'. "When the world is oppressed in every age by the tyrannical conquests of the enemies of Indra, i.e., the demons, His partial Manifestations make this world happy by destroying them. These Descents are the Partial Avatars of the Supreme Lord - **Sri Krishna, Who is Svayam Bhagavan Himself.**"³¹

Sri Krishna - His Avatars

After giving a long list of all the Avatars, such as (1) Chatuhsanas, (2) The Divine Boar - Varah, (3) Narada, (4) Nara and Narayana, (5) Kapil, (6) Dattatreya, (7) Yajna, (8) Rishabh, (9) Prithu, (10) The Divine Fish - Matsya, (11) The Divine Tortoise - Kurma, (12) Dhanvantari, (13) Mohini, (14) Nrisimha, (15) Vaman, (16) Parasuram (17) Vyas, (18) Rama, (19) Balaram, (20) Sri Krishna (21) Buddha, and (22) Kalki, Who were merciful enough to manifest Their appearances in different ages for the welfare of humanity, Vyasadev emphatically distinguishes **Sri Krishna as the Supreme Godhead Himself.** All the rest are only His partial Manifestations and secondary incarnations, either in part (Amsa), or in part of part (Kala).³² **But Sri Krishna is not an Avatar; He is Avatari Himself, the very Fountain-source of all the Avatars from Whom the various Manifestations originate. He is the Eternal Reality Who reveals Himself to us in the three aspects as 'Brahman', 'Paramatma' and 'Bhagavan'.**

"The Tattva which the knowers of reality declare as 'Advaya-jnan' is expressed by the designation of 'Brahman', 'Paramatma' and 'Bhagavan'.³³

The above Sloka gives a beautiful exposition of the Absolute Reality summarising all the philosophical conceptions of the various religions of the world. All the notions of the world about the Absolute Truth find its place in this exposition. The Ultimate Reality or Tattva is spoken of as Advaya-jnan. Very often, the term 'Advaya-jnan' is confused with the Nirguna Advaita Tattva or the Attributeless Brahman of the monistic school. **The word "Advaya", i.e., one without a second or Sole, is used only in the sense that there is no other second entity equal or superior to that of the Supreme Lord.** The word 'Advaya' never

31 ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokaṁ mṛḍayanti yuge yuge
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.3.28)

32 bhāgastvardhaṁ tadardhaṅca aṁśitya 'bhidhīyate
tadadhaṁ kulamākhyātaṁ kalā tasyārdha mucyate
tadadhaṁ śakti rakhyātā āveśaḥ syāktadardhakaḥ
evaṁ catuḥ ṣaṣṭibhāgair avatārāḥ parātmanaḥ
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-yāmala)

33 vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.2.11)

denies the existence of other entities, as many often misunderstand. Though the Reality is termed by the word 'Indivisible Knowledge', It reveals Itself to Its different votaries in different ways, according to the particular capacity of realisation they possess, viz., these three aspects as 'Brahman', 'Paramatma' and 'Bhagavan'. These Revelations are not to be confused as entirely independent objects, but as aspects of the One and the Same Reality. The above described variation in their realisation is due to the difference in their angle of vision, caused by the divergent methods adopted by the votaries and by the degree of surrender they offer to the Supreme Reality.

Sri Krishna - Brahman

The first of these three Aspects of Revelation, viz. Brahman is in fact the unqualified (Nirvisesh) and imperfect (Asamyak) Manifestation of Bhagavan, Who is the most perfect Person, in Whom all the qualities are most perfectly developed. Bhagavan is abundantly qualified with an infinite number of most auspicious and perfect Attributes. In Bhagavan we experience a full display of all the Saktis or energies; but in Brahman they remain only in a potential state. Brahman in other words is the philosophical Absolute in which the various attributes and powers remain undifferentiated. Hence, the Attributeless Brahman of the Upanishads is an incomplete or Imperfect Manifestation (Asamyak Avirbhav) of the Absolute Divinity. Brahma Samhita describes this Aspect of the Supreme Divinity as His Bodily Effulgence. "I worship Govinda, the Primeval Lord, Whose effulgence is the source of the non-differentiated Brahman mentioned in the Upanishads, being differentiated from the infinity of glories of the mundane universe, and Who appears as the Indivisible, Infinite and Limitless truth."³⁴

Srimad Bhagavad-Gita adds to the same issue thus: "I am indeed the Mainstay of Brahman and the very ground of immortality. I am also the basis of the eternal religion and of perpetual Divine Bliss."³⁵ Brahman is the ultimate goal of all Jnanis.

Sri Krishna - Paramatma

Paramatma, the second Aspect of Divine manifestation, is more qualified than Brahman, the first one. But when compared with Bhagavan, this Aspect is only a Partial (Amsik) Manifestation, having relation chiefly to Maya Sakti and Jiva Sakti. Paramatma remains as the Immanent Lord, both in the unconscious material universe, as well as in the conscious Jiva

34 yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad aṇḍa koṭi
koṭīṣv aśeṣa vasudhādi vibhūti bhinnam
tad brahma niṣkalam anantam aśeṣa bhūtaṁ
govindam ādi puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi
(brahma-samhitā 5.40)

35 brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 14.27)

souls who are numerically infinite. It is Paramatma Who looks after the functions of creation, preservation, and dissolution of the infinite number of worlds, in various aspects, and He is the regulator of both the individual Jiva and the collective world. Paramatma is the ultimate goal of all the Ashtanga Yogis.

Sri Krishna - Bhagavan

Bhagavan represents the highest, in the long list of the countless Divine Manifestations. He is realised as a Person with Whom are associated distinctive features, potencies, attributes, abodes, and entourage in the company of His internal energy. In Bhagavan there is a direct and full display of His Antaranga Svarup Sakti. The other two Saktis, Bahiranga Maya Sakti and the Tatastha Jiva Sakti, are displayed indirectly, through the medium of His Partial Aspect Paramatma. Bhagavan is the possessor of all Saktis - the Sarva Saktiman, the Summum bonum of Bhaktas. The word 'Bhagavan' is defined thus:

"He is a Person in Whom the six Divine Qualities of; Aisvarya - majesty, or special power to attract, and bring under control all sentient and insentient like; Virya - prowess or an unusual and miraculous influence resembling precious gems, magic spells, etc., that could win over any power on the face of the earth; Yasas - name and fame or an incomparable reputation arising from various excellent qualities of body, mind, and speech; Sri - prosperity, all kinds of wealth; Jnan - knowledge, such as omniscience; and Vairagya - dispassion or non-attachment to the objects of the material world, in short, absolute freedom from Bahiranga Maya Sakti, are developed in the fullest degree. Bhagavan is entirely free, from any influence of the material attributes, such as Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These Gunas or attributes are due to the influence of His Bahiranga Maya Sakti. Since she, being subservient to Him, is unable to exercise any influence on her Lord, as such, Bhagavan is above all these material attributes. The various qualities that the Sastras attribute to Him are all of Divine Essence."³⁶

"The nature of the Attributes of Sri Hari is such that it compels even great sages, who delight in themselves, and who are dispassionate to the core, to render loving selfless services to the Lord."³⁷

The principles and virtues described in the three Aspects, viz. Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan, can be realised in their most perfect and infinite development in the Personality of Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Hence, Srimad Bhagavata, Sri Brahma Samhita, Srimad Bhagavad-Gita, and a host of Sastras unanimously and unambiguously declare Sri Krishna as the Absolute Godhead, in Whom all other Aspects are fully identified.

36 aiśvaryaśya samagrasya viryasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ
jñāna-vairāgyayoścaiva śaṅṅāṁ bhaga itīṅganā
(viṣṇu purāṇa)

37 ātmārāmāś ca munayo nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.7.10)

"The Indivisible Knowledge alone is the Eternal Truth. It is the Sublime Truth, beyond the jurisdiction of mundane qualities, the fullest entity in Himself, all-pervading, and void of transformation (this illustrates the unqualified Aspect, Brahman). The same Truth is immanent in all the jivas and unaffected by the events of the world (this explains Paramatma - the Partial Aspect). The most perfect status of Indivisible Knowledge is Bhagavan. The wise call Him by the Name 'Vaasudev', He being the Son of Sri Vasudev."³⁸

Sri Krishna - The fountainhead of all potencies

Many hold the view that the Absolute Truth or Knowledge is an abstract one, void of any Form, Power, Name, Attributes, Activities, etc. This statement, though popular amongst the classes to a great extent, and amongst the masses to some extent, is not well founded on the authority of the sastras. It is merely one-sided interpretation of the texts of the Sastras. Puranas declare Him as Infinitely Powerful. His energies are inscrutable and beyond the reach of human thought and reason, and they are capable of performing most impossible effects. These energies are not concocted things or imaginary objects. They are of the essence of the Lord. They are inseparable entities; but the Lord in His infinite power transcends all of them.

"Saktis of Sri Vishnu are of three kinds. They are (1) Para Sakti (Chit Sakti), (2) Kshetrajna (Jiva Sakti), and (3) Avidya (Maya Sakti)."³⁹

The Para Sakti is otherwise known as svarup or Antaranga Sakti; Maya Sakti is understood otherwise as Bahiranga Sakti, and the Jiva Sakti as Tatastha or Marginal Sakti.

The Svarup Sakti is again classified in three different aspects as Sandhini, Samvit and Hladini Saktis. In her Sat aspect, she is Sandhini. This Sandhini Sakti is the energy of the existence of all. In her Chit aspect, she is known as Samvit, the energy of self-enlightening knowledge. This is the energy that helps the promotion of knowledge. In her Ananda aspect, she is Hladini, the delight imparting energy. It is by the influence of this energy that delight is experienced. Svarup Sakti is concerned directly with all the activities and expansions in the Divine Realm. Maya Sakti causes the creation, sustenance, and dissolution of phenomenal world, and Jiva Sakti is bringing out infinite number of Jivas, which are the expressions of the Tatastha or Jiva Sakti of Bhagavan.

Of these three Saktis, the Hladini Sakti is the most important. She transcends the other two. Sri Radhika, Who is the eternal consort and the

38 jñānaṁ viśuddhaṁ paramārtham ekam
anantaram tv abahir brahma satyam
pratyak praśāntaṁ bhagavac-chabda-samjñam
yad vāsudevam kavayo vadanti
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 5.12.11)

39 viṣṇu-śaktiḥ parā proktā kṣetra-jñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-samjñānyā tṛtiyā śaktir-iṣyate
(viṣṇu purāṇa 6.9.60)

most favourite of all the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, is represented as the highest Manifestation of the Hladini Sakti.⁴⁰ Sri Radhika has attained the most sublime stage of Mahabhava,⁴¹ which is unattainable to any other devotee. Application of material attributes of Sri Radhika, the Invariable Embodiment of Prema Bhakti, is the outcome of sheer ignorance, absence of proper understanding of Her Real Personality. Without the least distinction of any classification of sex, Sri Radha and Sri Krishna as Sakti and Saktiman (Possessor of Sakti) are identical. Sakti is inseparable from her Possessor, as noted in the case of fire and its burning capacity. In fact, Sakti and Saktiman are not altogether two different Personalities. They are One and the Same Indivisible Truth manifested as the Divine Couple out of the inconceivable potency of the Lord, for giving fillip to the Transcendental Sportive Activities.

"The chief of the gopis is Sri Radha, the Consort of Sri Krishna, in Glory and on Earth. 'Radha' means adoration or Love - Devotion. Sri Radha is the Embodied Manifestation of Sri Krishna's Love-Principle, the Energy of His Soul, the Principle of Sri Krishna which sets His Love in motion. **Radha is inside of Krishna as His Principle of Love-Energy, and She is outside of Krishna as the Embodiment of that Principle. Radha is the first Active Principle of Nature, the Active Love-Principle, which unconsciously gives birth to creation and pervades it as the purest spiritual energy. Like Krishna, She is above and out of reach of the creative Cardinal Attributes. Krishna is the Soul. Radha is the Heart-Soul and Her eight other companions are the eight chief devotional aspects, and the other Gopis the inclinations and minor attributes of Her Ensouled mind.** Radha and Her chief companions are Krishna's chief companions in Golok. They came with Him in glory and were born in Vrindavan as Gopis. Other Gopis who were in the Rasa dance, were manifestations of Vedic hymns and truths which are entities in nature, the form-centres of Nature's purest sentiments and conceptions. Other Gopis were manifestations of goddesses, the Presiding Deities of Nature's spiritual forces and attributes, while others were manifestations of some of the highest illuminated male saints (Rishis) who had prayed for ages and ages, in every birth, to serve the Lord personally with the tender devotion of a loving woman. The love of these Gopis for Sri Krishna was absolutely selfless. They loved Him for the sake of the spontaneous, causeless love they felt for Him and Which His Personality inspired in them, for Sri Krishna was that causeless Love Itself. The Rasa dance represented the vibrations of the Soul-absorbed Mind, vibrations which filled the universe with the nectar of Bliss, and

40 govindā-nandinī rādhā, govinda-mohinī
govinda-sarvasva, sarva-kāntā-śiromaṇi
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 4.82)

41 mahābhāva-svarūpā śrī-rādhā-ṭhākuraṇī
sarva-guṇa-khani kṛṣṇa-kāntā-śiromaṇi
taylor apy ubhayor madhye rādhikā sarvathādhikā
mahābhāva-svarūpeyaṃ guṇair ativarīyasī
(ujjvala-nīlamaṇi 69,70)

destroyed its Karma of a whole Kalpa, the Karma which formed its Prarabdha for the time."

"Sri Krishna danced separately with each Gopi. Each Gopi has Her Own Krishna beside Her. One Krishna became as many as there were Gopis and yet It was the Selfsame Krishna. One soul played like so many Souls with so many hearts and yet the hearts saw but One Soul. Each Gopi saw Her Own Krishna and was unconscious of any other, as she danced absorbed in that Sri Krishna; round and round, arms round necks, eyes into eyes, all forgetting, the world forgot, round and round in the whirl of ecstasy, afloat on the waves of Love, that is Bliss - round and round, the Lover and the Loved, the Little Soul twining round the Great Soul, the Great Soul pouring Its Nectar into the Little Soul."*

"Ignorant writers and prudish religionists of the West have dared to call this Gopi Lila of Sri Krishna as shocking to all religious sense, in the face of the fact that three hundred and odd millions of Hindus of the present day and myriads of millions of Hindus of the past, whose giant intellect and all-towering height of spirituality the world of today are beginning to wonder at - call this Lila the most Transcendental of all the Divine Deeds that have ever been performed on the face of the globe. **According to these little critics of the greatest Avatar of the Supreme Deity, that Supreme Deity cannot possess any other sentiments of love than those of a Father and a Saviour, that God ought not to feel or show the love of a husband for his wife or of a lover for his lady-love. If this be the fact, will they answer the question as to whence has man got these sentiments, if not from his Maker, of Whom he is but an imperfect image? Whence has he got them if not from the Source of Creation itself of which he is such a tiny part and product? This denial to God of the possession of a lover's sentiment implies an impertinence, which God alone, out of His infinite affection for His creatures, can pardon. It only betrays the dense ignorance of these critics in regard to the origin and laws of creation and of the relations of creation with its Creator.**"*

"Nature (creation) is the materialised Will-force of God. The Will-force of God is a reflection of God Himself - the objectified phases of the semblance of manifoldness of the Absolute One. **God is the Husband and the Energy of His Will, Nature, is His Wife. God is the Lover and Nature is His Lady-Love. By His All-Pervading essence, the only support and sustenance of Nature, He clasps His Lady-Love to His bosom and dances with Her to the intricate steps of the music of Her Laws. This is the Rasa dance in the aggregate, the Rasa dance that is being performed every moment within Nature, though hidden from our outlooking physical vision.** What is true of the Great Universe is also true of its miniature man. Within our heart of heart is the forest of Vrindavan, in which the microscopic blue river of Love - Yamuna flows, lapping with thrills of joy the bank of the bowery lawn

* Extracts from 'Sri Krishna - The Lord of Love'

* Extracts from 'Sri Krishna - The Lord of Love'

where Sri Krishna - our Soul - with His Gopis - an ensouled mental aspirations - is performing His ever-favourite, never-ending Rasa dance. And we are unconscious of it all, because our mind's outer ken is employed outside of us with outer objects. If we can withdraw the mind's vision from outwards and direct it into the depth of our heart, then will belief come in the Rasa dance of Krishna with its practical realisation. We are then of Vraja and each of us of the enlightened inner eye, a dancing Gopi - male or female, whatever we may be externally, it matters not. We are all Gopies, human-male or human-female. We are all spiritually feminine, for Sri Krishna alone is the One Male and we, particles of Nature, are all female. We are all the lady-loves, the brides and wives of our One Husband, Lover and Beloved - Sri Krishna. In the working out of the ever-beneficial laws of Inner Nature - the laws that throb for the weal of mankind - this innermost performance of Nature's constant Rasa dance with Her Lord is reflected for a time upon Her outer surface to fill outer Nature and mankind with the ecstasy of its supermost spirituality, the blessing of the Absolute Love."

The conception of all these inherent Saktis establishes beyond any doubt that the Absolute Truth known by the word 'Bhagavan' is a Perfect Person. He is not a Formless Entity as many depict. He is a Person in Whom infinite attributes and energies inseparably exist. In many places of our Sastras, words such as Ananda Ghan, Rasa Ghan, etc., are freely used in association with the Personality of Bhagavan. The importance of these words can never be ignored. They make us understand that Bhagavan is a Person possessing a Murti or a Form of His Own. Since we are in the habit of measuring every object that is placed before us, and our experience of Divine Objects are insignificantly poor, our ideas of this Personality of the Lord are mostly erroneous. The very idea of a Murti or Form of the Lord throws us in a whirlpool of thoughts and confusions suggestive of materialistic speculations. Almost all these efforts end like those of 'attempting to milk rams'. This Form of the Lord is not to be understood as something gross, like that of the material body of human beings. The Body of Bhagavan is non-phenomenal. This Body consists entirely of pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss; as such It is always spoken of as 'Satchidananda Vighrah'. This Body is not essentially different from His being. In Bhagavan there is no such difference of an organic body and a soul, as in the case of human beings. His Being and His Body are One and the Same. The Sastras declare that the Body of the Lord is like that of a human being. The similarity that they speak is only in respect of the form and not of the ingredients. The Sastras in certain places speak of Him as Formless. This statement is only to deny the presence of a material body or material senses in Him. The same Sastras too, dilate on the beauty of Lord's Form to a great length taking minutely each and every limb one after another. Do they expound contradictory theories and increase confusions in the minds of ignorant men? No, never. They with all emphasis, establish the existence of the self-existing natural Form of the Lord which is of a purely Divine stuff. The Lord is not subject to any change as we notice in the case of material objects; but due to His inconceivable power He is capable of adopting any type or any number of

Forms as He pleases. The Ascension and Descension of Bhagavan is merely actuated by His free will. This Divine Form of the Lord is no doubt unthinkable to the materially minded. It is a matter of realisation and not one of argument. Persons who are guided by dry empirical reasonings fail to understand this conception of a Transcendental Personality. These barren intellectualists, sublimely unconscious of their own limitations, of their profound incapacity and unwillingness to fathom even the simplest problem presented to them, talk nowadays as if they are gifted with an inexhaustible fund of impenetrating reason. They boldly come forward with their assertion that they can accept nothing, let it be of any source, that is not passed through the crucible of their reason, and acknowledge no scriptures however authentic they may be, or the sound sayings of eminent saints. Someone has spoken of this mistaken notion in the following Sloka very impressively.

"Gems lie littered at the feet and glass adorns a crown. None but the ignorant confounds the two and thinks the glass to be a gem and the gems, glass. To a wise person glass will always be glass and a gem always a gem."⁴²

Between the sound reasonings based on practical realisations found in the infallible Sastras of our noble religion - Sanatan Dharma, and the conclusions of barren empiricists guided by the understandings and experiences of the deceptive senses of man, who is liable to fall a victim to manifold errors, the relation has all along been that of the gem and the glass, deceptive to the ignorant but clear to any one not blinded by vain and unwarranted pretensions. The conclusions of empiric wisdom, however convincing they be on the surface, are only mere expressions of half-truths and untruths.

These empiric scholars are under the impression that when the Absolute wishes to make His Manifestation into this world, He does so by Himself entering into a body made of flesh, blood and bones. For the sake of understanding they thus use the word incarnation for such Divine Manifestations. This conclusion is entirely baseless and is due to the absence of a proper conception regarding the Nature and Potentialities of Divine Lord. In Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna Himself throws proper light on this issue.

"Persons actuated by extreme ignorance disregard My Human form as they are utterly oblivious of My true Supreme Nature and of the fact that I am the Supreme Lord of the universe."⁴³

A great saint of the modern age from Bengal has interpreted the above Sloka in a simple and inspiring manner, the free rendering of which is as follows:

42 mañirluṭhāti pādeṣu kāco mukuṭa śobhanaḥ
mohācca vibhrameccittaṁ kācaḥ kāco mañirmaniḥ

43 avajānanti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam
param bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūta-maheśvaram
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 9.11)

"My Real and Eternal Form which is grossly misunderstood by persons under the influence of sheer ignorance **is invariably of Sat (existence), Chit (knowledge), and Ananda (bliss). My energies do function in accordance with My Own Will and Grace. But I remain unconcerned with all their actions. Whenever I wish I make Myself visible to the mundane world. This act is carried out through the operation of My internal potency and mainly guided by My own compassion to the fallen souls. My energy, being subservient to Me, cannot have any influence over Me. I am fully beyond the ken of any material nature or law. I am Omnipotent and Self-Effulgent. My Own Will is the cause of My coming to the world. No other power is capable of inducing Me for such a Manifestation. Those who are quite ignorant of My eternal nature and Personality associate Me with various mundane attributes. My Supreme Personality resembles a human form, but it is wholly non-phenomenal. It is a most Beautiful Form of Eternal Adolescence and of a Medium Stature. These ignorant persons suppose this Eternal Form of Mine to be a mortal one, subject to the influence of Maya or My illusory potency."**

The scriptures describe the Form of the Lord sometimes as two-handed and sometimes as four-handed, etc., and as possessing various limbs and organs like head, eyes, feet, etc. In fact, the various Forms manifested by the Lord are all eternal and co-exist in Him. Of all the Forms manifested by the Lord, **the two-handed one with a wonderful flute in His hands is the best and most beautiful.**

nana ca satyam ananta-koṭi-brahmāṇḍa-vyāpī saccid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
kāraṇārṇava-śāyī mahā-puruṣaḥ sva-prakṛtyā jagat sṛjatīti yaḥ prasiddhaḥ,
sa eva hi bhavān, kintu vasudeva-sūnos taveyaṁ mānuṣī tanur ity etad-
amśenaiva kecit tava nikaṛṣaṁ vadantīty ata āha avajānantīti, mama
mānuṣyās tanor asyā paraṁ bhāvaṁ kāraṇārṇava-śāyī-mahā-
puruṣādibhyo 'py utkr̥ṣṭaṁ svarūpam ajānanta eva te, kīdṛśam ? bhūtaṁ
satyaṁ yad brahma tac ca tan maheśvaraṁ ceti, tan maheśvara-padaṁ
satyāntara-vyāvartakam atra jñeyam "yukte kṣmādāvṛte bhūtam" iti
amaraḥ, "tam ekaṁ govindaṁ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaṁ vṛndāvana-sura-
bhūruha-bhāvanāsīnaṁ satataṁ sa-marud-gaṇo 'haṁ paramayā stutyā
toṣayāmi iti śruteḥ" "narākṛti para-brahma" iti smṛteś ca, mamāsyā
mānuṣyās tanoḥ saccid-ānanda-mayatvaṁ mad-abhijña-bhaktair ucyata
eva, tathā sarva-brahmāṇḍa-vyāpitvaṁ ca bālye yan-mātrā śrī-yaśodayā
dr̥ṣṭam eva, yad vā mānuṣīm tanum eva viśiṅaṣṭi param utkr̥ṣṭaṁ bhāvaṁ
sattāṁ viśuddhaṁ sattvaṁ saccidānanda-svarūpam ity arthaḥ, "bhāvaḥ
sattā svabhāvābhīprāyaḥ" ity amaraḥ, paraṁ bhāvam api viśiṅaṣṭi mama
bhūta-maheśvaraṁ mama sṛjyāni bhūtāni ye brahmādyās teṣāṁ api
mahāntam īśvaram, tasmāt jīvasyeva mama parameśvarasya tanur na
bhinnā, tanur evāham, aham eva tanuḥ sāksād brahmaiva "śābdaṁ
brahma dadhad vapuḥ" iti mad-abhijña-śukokter iti bhavadṛśais tu
viśvaśyatām iti bhāvaḥ
(sārārtha varṣiṇī)

Sri Krishna - His Divine Attributes

The various Attributes of Bhagavan explained in the Sastras are not imposed upon Him from outside. They are on the other hand invariable aspects of His Own Self and as such they are all His inherent Attributes. These Attributes can be summarised thus: (1) Capacity to pervade in and over all objects and places, (2) capacity for self-manifestation, (3) capacity to be above the gross and subtle bodies, (4) capacity for not being subject to transformations or changes, such as birth, existence, growth, transformation, decay and destruction, (5) capacity to be invisible to mortal eyes, and (6) capacity to be above mundane influence in matters such as birth, form and action.

From the innumerable unambiguous texts of the various Sastras one can without any difficulty understand the true Nature and Personality of Bhagavan and how He is fully identified with the Personality of Sri Krishna, Who is not merely an Avatar alone, as many understand, but the Avatari Himself - the Absolute-Par-Excellence. To deal with all these minute details in course of this brief narration is impossible.

"Sri Krishna Who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has a Body formed of All-Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. He is the Beginningless and yet Origin of all and He is the Cause of all causes."⁴⁴

The Manifestations or the Avatars of Sri Krishna are innumerable like the waves of an ocean. They are mainly grouped under six heads, (1) Purushavatars, (2) Gunavatars, (3) Lilavatars, (4) Manvantaravatars, (5) Yugavatars, and (6) Saktyavesavatars.

Though categorically there is no difference between the various Avatars of the Lord, **yet Sri Krishna is superior to all the others, inasmuch as there are certain special qualities noticed in Him which are in excess over those mentioned in His Avatars of the above six categories.**

This difference is not to be treated from a material point of superiority and inferiority complexes. Any such discrimination of mundane nature would be a blasphemous commission of a grave offence against the Lord. The consequences of such offences are nothing but total doom.

The qualities of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna are innumerable. These qualities as experienced and expressed by his favourite devotees are summarised into sixty-four.⁴⁵

Sri Krishna stands distinguished from other Avatars by virtue of His Madhurya or Sweetness.

44 *Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam
(brahma-samhitā 5.1)*

45 *ayaṁ netā su-ramyāṅgaḥ sarva-sal-lakṣaṇānvitaḥ
ruciras tejasā yukto balīyān vayasānvitaḥ
(śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.123-44, 2.1.45-217)*

Sri Krishna - His Lila Madhurya

He is an Ocean of Transcendental Pastimes in which inexhaustible waves of Lilas keep the devotees drowned in extreme wonder and enchantment. The marvellous raptures those sports create in the hearts of the devotees are beyond the capacity of expression. There is no vocabulary in human, celestial or in any other language that can do full justice to this soul-captivating Sportive Activities of the Lord. Uddhav speaks thus in Brihad Vaman Purana: "Let the most delightful Sportive Deeds of Sri Narayana, the Lord of Lakshmi, and His innumerable

(1) suramyāṅga: Possessing a charming body, (2) sarva sallakṣaṇānvitāḥ: Possessed of all the excellent characteristics, (3) ruciraḥ: Radiant, (4) tejasa yuktaḥ: Heroic and shining, (5) balīyan: Strong, (6) vayasānvitāḥ: Youthfull, (7) vividhādbhutabhaṣāvit: Acquainted with many and strange languages, (8) satyavākyaḥ: Truthful, (9) priyamvadaḥ: Capable of pleasant speech, (10) vavadūkaḥ: Eloquent, (11) supaṇḍityaḥ: Learned and wise, (12) buddhiman: Intelligent, (13) prathibhanvitaḥ: Possessed of genius, (14) vidagdhaḥ: Crafty, (15) caturaḥ: Ingenious, (16) dakṣaḥ: Dexterous and quick, (17) kṛtajñaḥ: Grateful, (18) sudṛḍhavrataḥ: Resolute, (19) deśakalāsupatrajñaḥ: Possessing a knowledge of fit time, place and object or considerate to circumstances, place, time and person, (20) śāstracakṣuḥ: Acting according to the Sastra, adept in Sastric lore, (21) śuciḥ: Pure and purifying, (22) vaśī: Self-controlled, (23) sthiraḥ: Steadfast, (24) dantaḥ: Capable of tolerating unbearable suffering, (25) kṣamaśīlaḥ: Forgiving, (26) gambhīraḥ: Profound, (27) dhṛtimān: Contended and placid, (28) samaḥ: Equable, (29) badānyaḥ: Liberal in gift, (30) dharmikaḥ: Dutiful, (31) sūraḥ: Brave, (32) karuṇaḥ: Compassionate, (33) mānyamānakṛt: Respectfull, (34) dakṣiṇaḥ: Amiable and well-behaved, (35) vinayī: Humble, (36) hṛīman: Modest, (37) śaraṇāgata-pālakaḥ: Protector of devotees, (38) sukhī: Happy, (39) bhaktasuhṛt: Friend of the devotee, (40) premavaśyaḥ: Controllable by love, (41) sarvaśubhaṅkaraḥ: Beneficent to all, (42) pratapī: Subjugator of enemies, (43) kīrtimān: Famous, (44) rakta-lokaḥ: Popular, (45) sādhusamāśrayaḥ: Partial to the good, refuge to the good and virtuous, (46) nārīgaṇa manoharī: Enchanter of women, (47) sarvārādhyāḥ: Pre-eminently adorable, worshipped by all, (48) samṛddhimān: Prosperous, (49) varīyān: The Preeminent, (50) īśvaraḥ: Independent and supreme.

The above fifty qualities are present in the human beings to a very limited extent.

(51) sadāsvalapasamprāptaḥ: Unconditioned, (52) sarvajñaḥ: Omniscient, (53) nityanūtaṇaḥ: Ever-new, (54) saccidānanda sā andrāṅgaḥ: Having self-existent, self-conscious, blissful compact form, (55) sarvasiddhi niṣevitaḥ: Possessed of all powers and perfection.

The above fifty-five qualities are present in Brahma, Siva, etc., in a greater degree than in human beings, but to a far lesser extent than in Bhagavan Himself.

(56) avicintya mahā śaktiḥ: Possessed of infinite and indescribable powers, (57) koṭibrāhmaṇaḍavagraḥ: Holder of infinite universes and possessing crores of Forms in the universe, (58) avatārāvalībījam: The seed of all descents, (59) hatārigatīdāyakaḥ: Giver of salvation or Mukti to enemies killed, (60) ātmārāma gaṇakarṣaṁ: Embodiment of attraction to multitudes of liberated souls.

All the above sixty qualities are present in a perfect form in Sri Narayana and other important Avataras of the Lord.

Manifestations appear in my heart, but the wonderful Rasa dance which enchants even the heart of my Master Sri Krishna, the Lord of Dvaraka, is indeed marvellously bewitching to me."⁴⁶

Sri Krishna manifests His Sports in His three Eternal Abodes of Dvaraka, Mathura, and Vrindavan. Sri Krishna's Manifestation is full in Dvaraka, fuller in Mathura, and fullest in Vrindavan, from the point of Madhurya rasasvada. Leaving Vrindavan, He never resides in any other place. Vrindavan is the most favourite Sporting Land of Sri Krishna.⁴⁷

Sri Krishna - His Prema Madhurya

"Sri Krishna being All-Love, He knows nothing but Love, gives and accepts nothing but Love, acts nothing but Love, breathes nothing but Love, speaks nothing but Love, Sri Krishna is Love itself, the Love that destroys all distance, the Love that draws the Lover and the Loved closest to each other. It knows no ceremony, knows no formal respect. It knows no motive. Love is its own cause, motive, and satisfaction. Divinity demands our reverence and inspires us with awe. Despite its strong attraction we can but adore it from a distance, we cannot approach it too near. But **Love draws us to its bosom and holds us close. Love is a master and Love is a slave. It knows no barrier, sees no faults - nay, sees virtue in faults.** It responds to its own clear call or vibrates to the voice of its own inspiration and blesses its own creation with greater gifts of its own wealth. In the four kinds of Bhakti, viz., Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya, and Madhurya, the last, i.e., the feeling of a loving wife to her lord sums up the essence of all the foregoing three feelings. It is the highest and tenderest feeling of devotion. **The true wife is the servant, friend, mother, and lover of**

(61) sarvādbhuta ca matkāra līlakallolavāridhiḥ: An ocean of most wonderful and captivating pastimes, (62) atulyamadhura prema maṇḍata prīya maṇḍalaḥ: Ever encircled by a host of devotees proficient in their incomparable, confidential loving service to Him, (63) trijagan mānasākarṣi muralī kalakūjitaḥ: Wonderful Flutist Who attracts the mind of the inhabitants of all the three worlds, by the melodious music of His Flute, (64) asamānordhvarūpa śrīvismāpi ta carācaraḥ: **Unequally sweet and marvellously Beautiful Form that not only attracts both movables and immovables but also enchants Him.**

All the above sixty-four Divine Qualities are present in their most perfectly developed condition in Sri Krishna. The Divine Qualities of Sri Krishna, as we have already read, are infinite in number. They are never exhausted and none can comprehend the limit of such virtues. **These Qualities or Gunas are not Prakrita or phenomenal.**

46 parisphuratu sundaram caritram atra lakṣmī-pates
tathā bhuvana-nandinas tad-avatāra-vṛndasya ca
harer api camatkṛti-prakara-varadhanah kintu me
bibharti hr̥di vismayam kam api rāsa-līlā-rasaḥ
(bṛhad-vāmana-purāṇa; śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.1.210)

47 trailokye pṛthivi dhanya yatra vṛndāvanam purī
tathāpi gopikāḥ pārtha yatra rādhābhidhā mama
(ādi purāṇa)

her husband. She is slave, equal, and superior by virtue of her all-surrendering love. Every form of pure love is self-surrender. The love that knows no surrender or sacrifice is a mockery. It mocks itself more than its object, for sacrifice is its chief test and best expression. Love that only loves if loved, is pure selfishness. It is self-deception. **But the Love that loves for its own sake and is the fullest satisfaction in itself, the love that loves whoever or whatever its object loves, is the Love Absolute that Sri Krishna is. The human soul that develops it, binds Sri Krishna thereby and holds Him its prisoner for good. When that Love develops the tenderness of a Loving wife it captivates the Heart of hearts and entrances the Soul of souls - Sri Krishna."**

"Those Sadhus who have fixed their hearts and minds in Me and who share others' woe as if it were their own, win Me over through loving devotion like a chaste and virtuous wife loyally devoted to her equally dutiful and devoted husband."^{47.1} **The tie of relationship that is existing between a paramour and his sweetheart goes a step further than the one that is explained in the above para. It trespasses all the social barriers, conventional formalities, obligatory responsibilities, reverence, conservatism, and the like, and wends its way straight to an unfathomably deep pool of free and refined love.** This feeling finds a beautiful expression in the following Sloka: "A married woman, having her husband, who loves her paramour, though engrossed in her household duties enjoys in the heart of her heart the raptures of ever new union with the latter."^{47.2} The intensity of feelings for her paramour knows no limits, because it is something inexplicable that she has fallen in love with in her paramour and that too when the object of her carnal love, i.e., her husband is living by her side. She loves the paramour in spite of herself. The course of illicit love is very strange. Love is said to be blind, but illicit love is definitely blind. Its ways are crooked. She always feels in her heart thus: "How much more beneficial would it have been if this thorn of her husband were removed to pave the way for her paramour in the house, so that she could serve him with her mind, soul, and body." In majority of cases, to an unbiased person, it is seen that the paramour is far inferior to her husband in such points as looks, physique, wealth, etc.; but she is under the uncontrollable spell of that blind and intense carnal love which considers no risk too great for meeting the object of her love, because the chances of meeting are few and far between. So every meeting becomes a novelty to her, as it involves many escapades, escalades and even hair-breadth escapes to surmount. All the incidents of her meeting with him remain fresh in her memory for a longer time than in the case of her first meeting with her husband. **The intensity of the feeling of love though it is illicit, is**

47.1 mayi nirbaddha-hṛdayāḥ sādhaveḥ sama-darśanāḥ
vaśe kurvanti mām bhaktyā sat-striyaḥ sat-patiṁ yathā
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 9.4.66)

47.2 para-vyasaninī nārī vyagrāpi gṛha-karmasu
tad evāsvādayaty antar nava-saṅga-rasāyanam
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, M. 1.211)

uncontrollable. Similarly a devotee practising the loving devotion to Sri Krishna though apparently engrossed in worldly activities, **is secretly in the innermost recess of his heart harbouring an intense feeling of Divine Love to Sri Krishna and continues to taste the ever new luscious sweetness of ever fresh intercourse or communion with his Beloved Sri Krishna without any external show of the same.**

He is always surrounded by a host of loving devotees, the depth of whose feelings fail to find an analogy elsewhere. "O most loving One! When You go away in the daytime to the pasture lands of Vraja, we are utterly deprived of Your sight. To us those moments of separation are more than an aeon, and when once again after Your return at the end of the day we see You and satiate our yearning by feasting upon Your bewitching Face, beautified with the flowing curls of hair, we cannot bear to lose sight of You even for a fraction of a second. Our impatience reaches its climax and we take the creator Brahma to be a dull-witted person for providing us with eyelids that deprive us of Your sight by their constant twinklings."⁴⁸

"O Destroyer of the demon Agha! By Your charming company many of those memorable moonlit nights rolled on as the twinkling of an eye; but alas! Now afflicted as we are by the pangs of Your separation, even a fraction of a moment appears as more than an age."⁴⁹

Sri Krishna - His Venu Madhurya

The soul-maddening powers of the wonderful Flute of Sri Krishna are the popular subject that is much discussed in diverse ways. Who in India has never heard of the enchanting results of this mysterious instrument? "When Sri Krishna plays on the Flute in His original, varied, and soul-captivating tunes, great gods like Indra, Siva, Brahma, and many others like Skanda, Katyayani, Ganes, etc., listen to them with their heads and hearts full of reverence. Though, they are all experts - nay, even founders in various tunes, rhythm, etc., they get confused over the new types of tunes and their melodies."⁵⁰

48 aṭati yad bhavān ahni kānanam
truṭi yugāyate tvām apaśyatām
kuṭīla-kuntalam śrī-mukham ca te
jaḍa udīkṣatām pakṣma-kṛd dṛśām
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.31.15)

49 brahma-rātri-tatir apy agha-śatro
sā kṣaṇārdhavad agāt tava saṅge
hā kṣaṇārdham apī vallavikānām
brahma-rātri-tativad virahe 'bhūt
(śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.1.212)

50 savanaśas tad upadhārya sureśāḥ
śakra-śarva-parameṣṭhi-purogāḥ
kavaya ānata-kandhara-cittāḥ
kaśmalaṁ yayur aniścita-tattvāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.35.15)

To speak on the glories of this enchanting and favourite instrument of Sri Krishna is like a pigmy's attempts aspiring after the moon. The melodious sound of this Flute wrought inexpressible and unimaginable wonders in the hearts of sages like Sanak, Sanandan, etc. Their meditation was greatly disturbed, their minds being completely captured by the sound. The movements of the clouds high up in the sky became arrested; Narada with his celebrated 'Tumbury' was overtaken repeatedly by ineffable joy and never-ending surprise. Brahma was astounded beyond measure for words to express; it swelled eagerness in the heart of the King Bali with accompanying restlessness, and the great Lord Anantadev shook His Head with immeasurable joy; such are the astounding effects of this instrument that penetrated and spread in all the ten directions. How tremendous was its influence in the hearts of the milk-maids of Vraja who dedicated their hearts unconditionally to Sri Krishna and got utterly confused even in their routine activities; who without the least hesitation abandoned their nearest of kith and kin, social rules and even care of their own bodies extremely dear to them? What a marvellous attainment? Even the movements of the sun and moon and even the timewheel too stopped. Rivers started flowing upwards, movables turned to immovables and vice versa. Birds, beasts, etc., all lost their consciousness. All conscious became unconscious and the unconscious conscious ones.

Sri Krishna - His Rupa Madhurya

"The Divine Form which Bhagavan Sri Krishna manifested in this world through the medium of His Yoga Maya and for the purpose of making everyone understand the miraculous capacity of His internal energy which is capable of bringing out the appearance of such extraordinarily Beautiful Forms, and which is at the same time most suitable for His Pastimes like that of human beings. This Form is so bewitching not only to the world but even to Sri Krishna Himself that He is enchanted with the same. It is the pinnacle of excellence and perfection, a charming ornament of ornaments, a miracle of matchless beauty."⁵¹

"Which woman in all the three worlds, o Beloved Lord Sri Krishna, who, after being captivated by the over-melodious and ravishing tunes of Your wonderful Flute, would not deviate from the laid-out moral codes of her religion? By beholding Your most Beautiful Form that enchants the

51 yan martya-līaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā gṛhītam
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.2.12)
kṛṣṇa-mādhuryera eka svābhāvika bala
śravaṇe, darśane ākarṣaye sarva-mana
āpanā āsvādite kṛṣṇa kareṇa yatana
kṛṣṇa-ādi nara-nārī karaye cañcala
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 4.147-148)

hearts of all beings in the three worlds, cows, beasts, birds and even trees stand surcharged with incomparable joy."⁵²

Sri Krishna seeing His reflection (Image) on the wall bedecked with gems, was stunned with Its all-alluring grandeur and soliloquised thus: "This ravishing flood of exquisite sweetness, never comprehended by Me anywhere before, overpowers Me! Alas! I too being covetous of relishing His sweetness like Sri Radhika, ardently desire to enjoy Him."⁵³

"Indeed, how sweet is this Form of Sri Krishna?! O His Face, how to express?! It surpasses all conceptions of beauty and the sweet fragrance flowing from His Body is exceptionally bewitching. His sweet and gentle smile is marvellously fascinating and abundantly sweet."⁵⁴

From what has been so far explained above, it goes without saying that Sri Krishna is unparalleled in Beauty. Even Cupid feels alarmed at such a matchless complexion. This Enchanter of Vrindavan is always in the charming dawn of eternal Youth. He is ever in the charming Youth as is seen in the commencement of the fifteenth year. Each limb of His is capable of performing the function of all other limbs, and the most fascinating 'Triple Bent Stature' of His, with His Flute of marvellous Powers, is His Eternal Form.⁵⁵

Sri Krishna, as we have already understood, distinguishes Himself as superior to all of His other Manifestations with respect to the four special

52 ka stry anga te kala-padayata-venu-gita-
sammohitarya-caritan na calet tri-lokyam
trailokya-saubhagam idam ca nirikshya rupam
yad go-dvija-druma-mrigah pulakany abibhran
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.29.40)

53 kasyānubhāvo 'sya na deva vidmahe
tavānghri-reṇu-sparaśādhikāraḥ
yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo
vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā
āpana-mādhurye hare āpanāra mana
āpanā āpani cāhe karite āliṅgana
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, m. 8.147-148)

54 madhuraṁ madhuraṁ vapur asya vibhor
madhuraṁ madhuraṁ vadanam madhuraṁ
madhu gandhi mṛdu smitam etad aho
madhuraṁ madhuraṁ madhuraṁ madhuraṁ
(śrī kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta 92)

55 advaitam acyutam anādim ananta rūpam
ādyam purāṇa puruṣam nava yauvanam ca
vedeṣu durlabham adurlabham ātma bhaktau
govindam ādi puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi
(brahma-samhitā 5.33)
ālola candrakā lasad vanamālya vaṁśī
ratnāṅgadam praṇaya keli kalā vilāsam
śyāmam tri bhaṅga lalitam niyata prakāśam
govindam ādi puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi
(brahma-samhitā 5.31)

qualifications described above. These four qualifications are absent in all other Descents of the Lord that are so far made known to us.

Who would not be tempted to behold with his eyes such a charming Figure? Certainly every man and woman may long for it. But how? He is not visible to the material eyes which are running hither and thither to enjoy the various forms of this world. **His beauty can be experienced by a fortunate person who possesses a pair of eyes saturated with loving devotion.**

"I worship Govinda - the Primeval Lord, Who is Syamasundar - Sri Krishna Himself with inconceivable innumerable Attributes, Whom the pure devotees see in their hearts with the eyes of devotion tinged with the salve of love."⁵⁶

In addition, Sri Krishna is an embodiment of all the mellow qualities (Rasas) which are described as twelve in number.⁵⁷ Of these, five are the important ones, and the remaining seven are the secondary ones. The unique position of Sri Krishna is such that any devotee with any of the above Rasas can worship Him to His entire satisfaction. The other Manifestations of the Lord do not possess this capacity. They can be approached only with specific and limited types of these Rasas. Sri Ramachandra too, is accessible to be worshipped by more Rasas in excess of these qualities in respect of other Manifestations of the Lord. But in the forms of worship of all these Descents of the Lord, the one feeling that predominantly works throughout is awe and reverence. As such, the perfect and well developed form of worship actuated by spontaneous love or Prem is unobserved in the case of the service of other Avatars. **The solitary exception of this loving service can be noticed only in the Personality of Sri Krishna. In Him we notice a rare and marvellous combination of all Attributes and Rasas.**

"When Sri Krishna with His elder Brother Balaram entered into the arena of Kamsa, though He was of extremely tender age, obviously having a very delicate Body and an inexpressibly sweet complexion, He appeared as a thunderbolt to the two wrestlers Mushtik and Chanur, both of whom possessed bodies like mountains, with incontestable Herculean strength and intensely hard limbs; to all the persons assembled there, especially of Mathura, He appeared as the Gem amongst men; the young womenfolk viewed Him as the veritable Cupid Himself in visible Form; to the cowherds or Gopas He appeared as their Kith and Kin; as an uncompromising Chastiser to the wicked rulers, who are the oppressors of good-natured,

56 premāñjana cchurita bhakti vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya guṇa svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi
(brahma-samhitā 5.38)

57 mukhyas tu pañcadhā śāntaḥ prītaḥ preyāṁś ca vatsalaḥ
madhuraś cety amī jñeyā yathā-pūrvam anuttamāḥ
hāsyo 'dbhutas tathā vīraḥ karuṇo raudra ity api
bhayānakaḥ sa bībhatsa iti gaṇaś ca saptadhā
(śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.5.115-116)

innocent and devoted persons; as a Child, an object of compassion to His parents like Nanda, Vasudev, Devaki, etc., as the cruel death itself to Kamsa; as an ordinary human being to the ignorant and offenders, like the faithful servants, priests, etc. of the wicked Kamsa; as the Supreme Reality to sages like Sanak, etc., and as the Absolute Godhead, the veritable Object of their worship to the people of the Vrishni race."⁵⁸

Mankind with their limited capacity and understanding are absolutely at a loss to gauge His innumerable Glories which are enigmatic puzzles even to great gods and sages.

"I offer my innumerable prostrations to the Supreme Lord, Whom Brahma, Varuna, Indra, Rudra, Marutas extol by singing His Divine praises, Whom the Vedas with Upanishads and other complementary texts always eulogise, Whose excellences are sung by the followers of Sama Veda, Whom the Yogis behold in their minds lost in complete contemplation, and the limit and extent of whose Glories are incomprehensible even to gods and Asuras."⁵⁹

"I offer my prostrated obeisances to Sri Krishna of the most wonderful and incomprehensible sportive energy, by Whose mere Will a vast ocean turns into a tract of land and a piece of ordinary land to an ocean, atomic and microscopic particles of dust metamorphose into a huge mountain and mountains to atoms, a weak blade of grass to a mighty thunderbolt and a thunderbolt to a light blade of grass, a blazing fire as cooling as that of a frozen block of ice and cold ice gains the capacity of burning objects."⁶⁰

"On the strength of these six virtues, such as (1) filial affection, (2) affording shelter to the helpless, (3) saving the distressed, (4) extreme munificence, (5) the capacity to destroy sins, and (6) offering innumerable other auspicious attainments, that Sri Krishna alone, the Supreme Lord of all the worlds, ought to be worshipped by us, as the great devotees like Prahlada, Vibhishana, Gajendra, Draupadi, Ahalya, and Dhruv furnish testimony by their individual instances."⁶¹

"What wonder is there, if the importance of the sacred river Ganges - the great renowned ancient pilgrimage and the Feetwash of Bhagavan, is

58 mallānām aśanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smaro mūrtimān
gopānām sva-jano 'satām kṣiti-bhujām śāstā sva-pitroḥ śīsuḥ
mṛtyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣām tattvaṁ param yoginām
vṛṣṇīnām para-devateti vidito raṅgaṁ gataḥ sāgrajaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.43.17)

59 yaṁ brahmā varuṇendra-rudra-marutaḥ stuvanti divyaiḥ stavair
vedaiḥ sāṅga-pada-kramopaniṣadair gāyanti yaṁ sāma-gāḥ
dhyānāvasthita-tad-gatena manasā paśyanti yaṁ yogino
yasyāntaṁ na viduḥ surāsura-gaṇā devāya tasmai namaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 12.13.1)

60 ambhobhiḥ sthalatām sthalaṁ jaladhitām dhūlīlavaḥ śailatām
śailī mṛt-kaṇatām tṛṇaṁ kulīśatām vajraṁ tṛṇa-kṣīṇatām
vahniḥ śīlatatām himaṁ vahanatām āyāti yasyecchayā
līlā-durlalitādbhuta-vyasaninaṁ kṛṣṇāya tasmai namaḥ
(padyāvalī 6)

rendered insignificant by the growing marvellous Glories of Sri Krishna, the greatest of the Holy Personages, Who, now appearing in the clan of the Yadus, is shining with unprecedented brilliance. Because of this, the importance of the sacred places of pilgrimages and Shrines has been greatly lowered. It is a wonder of wonders that both His foes like Kamsa, etc., and His most favourite loving devotees like Vraja-Devis, attained His Real Self; the former by merging in His glow and the latter by enjoying the company of His Ravishing Svarup. What a shocking surprise is that the great Lakshmi, for attaining a particle of whose grace even gods like Brahma, etc. make repeated efforts, failed to enjoy the company of Sri Krishna, like the Gopis in getting access to the celebrated Rasa dance? What a marvellous achievement! Yes, the two syllables 'Kri' and 'Shna' are far superior to the Names of His Partial Manifestations like Narayana, etc., and perform wonders over their recorded efficacies - the very hearing or chanting of Which saves mankind from all that is inauspicious, and Which excels all other Names in Its capacity to impart the most sublime munificence - Krishna Prem. The establishment of respective duties in the various clans of Rishis, which delivers mankind all over the earth from all the evils and maintains the entire universe also, is solely credited to none else than Sri Krishna alone. Hence, is it any wonder then for Him to destroy the burden of sins of the earth by His weapon, the wheel of time? Not at all. Ridding the earth of her load of sins, by which people are astonished, for Sri Krishna is no feat at all. It is a mere child's play to Him."⁶²

Even the sands on the sea-beach or the stars in the galaxy may possibly be counted; but certainly it is impossible to recount the innumerable Glories of Sri Krishna. The great Anantadev with His thousand mouths speaking for countless number of years frankly accepts His defeat to do full justice in touching even a portion of His Deeds. When such is the case, how could we, human beings, victims of countless inabilities and shortcomings, groping in darkness and lying in the midst of all unfavourable surroundings, beset with endless obstacles, speak of the Divine Excellences of Sri Krishna? It is His Mercy alone that enables us to speak even this much about Him. Our knowledge about Him mainly depends upon the degree of Mercy that we have attained from Him. Just as different birds flying in the vast sky feel satisfied in the belief that they have reached the highest position, even so, human beings too feel contented, while giving vent to certain expressions on Sri Krishna and His unfathomable Excellences according to their limited capacity.

61 vātsalyād abhaya-pradāna-samayād ārtārti-nirvāpaṇād
audāryād agha-śoṣaṇād agaṇita-śreyah-pada-prāpaṇāt
sevyah śrī-patir eva sarva-jagatām ete yataḥ sāksīṇah
prahlādaś ca vibhīṣaṇaś ca karirāṭ pāñcalya-halyā dhruvaḥ
(padyāvalī 7)

62 tīrthaṁ cakre nṛponaṁ yad ajani yaduṣu svaḥ-sarit pāda-śaucam
vidviṭ-snigdhaḥ svarūpaṁ yayur ajita-para śrīr yad-arthe 'nya-yatnaḥ
yan-nāmāṅgala-ghnaṁ śrutam atha gaditaṁ yat-kṛto gotra-dharmaḥ
kṛṣṇasyaitan na citraṁ kṣiti-bhara-haraṇaṁ kāla-cakrāyudhasya
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.90.47)

Sri Krishna - The Name excels all other Names

Just as Sri Krishna stands distinguished in matters of Beauty, Sweetness, Revealing Capacity, Depth of Love, and Sportive Deeds, even so, His name occupies a higher position over all other Names of the Lord. The Names of Bhagavan are infinite in number. None can limit the same. Yet, by His Mercy, the 'thousand Names' are manifested in this world. In the words of the great Siva: "One single Name 'Rama' is equivalent to the utterance of one thousand other Names of Sri Vishnu. Then again, **a single utterance of the word 'Krishna' once, grandly accomplishes the result for which the sacred thousand Names (Sahasranama) have to be repeated thrice.**"⁶³

"'Kri' and 'Shna' these two syllables, ah! What a marvellous fountain of ineffable joy! Really it is a vain attempt to measure the fund of incomparable Bliss It contains. How can I express Its astounding experiences? Its inexpressible sweetness; It is unimaginable! When It dances wildly on the tongue, It suddenly creates a longing to possess an infinite number of tongues at one time; when It just enters into the cavities of the ears, lo! It brings in automatically a burning desire to have thousands of ears. No sooner it becomes the bosom companion on the arena of consciousness, then It overcomes the actions of all the senses and impels them all in Its Own service. It is beyond my comprehension to gauge what kind of intensely mysterious sweetness the twin syllables 'Kri-shna' are imbibed with!"⁶⁴

"How blessed is the Sahasraksha (Indra) to have been gifted with thousand eyes to enjoy the Divine Beauty of Sri Krishna! Cursed be that Brahma for giving man only two eyes and that too with eyelashes, which bar his continuous vision of Him. How fortunate he would have been, if all his sense-organs had been endowed with the power of vision?! Lo! What ecstatic states of mind people are driven to in their yearning to have His fullest vision?!"⁶⁵

63 śrīrāma rāma rāmeti rame rāme manorame
sahasranāma bhiṣṭulyaṁ rāma nāma varānane
(padma purāṇa; śrī rāma-aṣṭottara-śata-nāma 9; viśvāmitra-saṁhitā)
sahasra-nāmnām puṇyānām trir-āvṛtyā tu yat phalam
ekāvṛtyā tu kṛṣṇasya nāmaikam tat prayaccati
(brahmāṇḍa purāṇa, śrī kṛṣṇa-aṣṭottara-śata-nāma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa
2.11.488)

64 tuṇḍe tāṇḍavini ratim vitanute tuṇḍāvali-labdhave
karṇa-kroda-kaḍambini ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyaḥ sprhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-saṅgini vijayate sarvendriyānām kṛtim
no jāne janitā kiyabdhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayi
(vidagdha-mādhava 1.15)

65 yad-darśane pakṣma-kṛtam śapanti
vidhim sahasrākṣam api stuvanti
vañchanti dṛkṭvaṁ sakalendriyānām
kāṁ kāṁ daśām vā na bhajanti lokāḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.5.110)

"Let me have hundreds of millions eyes to enjoy Your Beauty, a like number of ears to hear Your melodious voice, an equal number of noses to inhale the floods of Your fragrance, millions and millions of tongues to relish Your innate sweetness and billions and billions of hearts to hug You."⁶⁶

From the above facts relating to the Svarup of Sri Krishna, the sublime position He occupies, and the special capacity of His Name, particularly 'Krishna',⁶⁷ I hope much of our doubts of Mayadevi's acceptance of Sri Krishna-Nama-Mantra are answered.

66 netrārbudasyaiva bhavantu karṇa-
nāsā-rasajñā-hṛdayārbudam vā
saundarya-sausvarya-sugandha-pūra-
mādhurya-samśleṣa-rasānubhūtyai
(śrī anurāga-valli 7)

67 kaḥ pareta-nagarī-purandaraḥ ko
bhaved atha tadīya-kiṅkaraḥ
kṛṣṇa-nāma jagad-eka-maṅgalaṁ
kaṅṭha-pīṭha murarī karoti cet
(padyāvalī 21)
brahmāṇḍānām koṭi-saṅkhyādhikānām
aiśvaryaṁ yac cetanā vā yad aṁśaḥ
āvīrbhūtaṁ tan-mahaḥ kṛṣṇa-nāma
tan me sādhyam sādhanam jīvanam ca
(padyāvalī 23)

SPIRITUAL MASTER AND SELF-SURRENDER

THE Advent of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu into this world is a most marked event even to great celestials. Gods like Brahma, Siva, etc. and sages of repute like Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatan, Sanatkumar, etc. greedy of tasting the highest and rarest Transcendental Bliss are born in the material world and **having been blessed with the Divine Name, they dance, sing and lose themselves on the wavelets of Divine Bliss.** Exalted devotees like Narada, Prahlada, etc. are no exception. Assuming human forms, they too are drinking the ambrosia flowing from the never-ending fountain of the Transcendental Name. Lakshmi and other consorts of Sri Vishnu too, were born in this mortal world in human forms, tempted by the same desire and are having a taste of it. **What to speak of all other persons? Sri Krishna Himself is enjoying the sweetness of His Name!** As such, why wonder at the request of Mayadevi?

Guru and his function

There are many who preach against the idea of accepting a spiritual guide. These people go round in different parts of the country and deliver vehement speeches criticising the whole principle. The duty of a Guru is to enlighten the ignorant people, by removing their misunderstandings in spiritual matters and throw sufficient light so that they may not be misled by pseudo-propagandist. The Guru by his special mercy and influence helps the worthy disciple to change his aversion to Godhead into active conversion towards Him and His service.

A few, who are liberal amongst them and of a slightly milder nature, style themselves as moderate and come forward with different views. These people agree to the principles of service of the Supreme Lord. They, with all emphasis protest against the idea of submitting to another. They do not subscribe to the thoughts of another person, however great he may be in this world, to take control of their modes of life and dictate terms to them. They opine that there is no other suggestion more humiliating to a man than asking him to submit unconditionally to another man whom they believe to be of their stuff.

Spiritual preceptor - Indispensable

There is nothing in this world, spiritual or material, which a human being can understand without the help of a guide. The importance of a guide is conspicuously felt in every field of knowledge. The imperative need of such a person can never be overlooked, even in acquiring the knowledge of those objects that are opened to the analytic and synthetic researches of human ability, not to speak of God, who is far above the reach of human intelligence. When the very understanding of the secrets

about objects lying within the inspection of tangible senses, is utterly impossible, without the expert guidance of external help, how can we succeed in getting a conception of One, Who is declared 'Transcendental' by the best of the brains and our sacred Sastras, without any help?

Let us try to follow what Bhagavan Sri Krishna has mentioned in the Gita, "Learn that Divine Truth with a submissive spirit, sincere inquiries and obedient services from those great persons who are not only erudite scholars, but Absolute-realised souls."⁶⁸

Personality of Guru

The Position of both the Guru and disciple is explicitly expressed in this Sloka. The Guru, as some of the arrogant elements of society take, is not an ordinary man like any of us, not even a mere bookworm or a scholar of certain Sanskrit work, an adept in verbal jugglery. He is an Absolute-realised person who is competent enough to make others to realise the Eternal Truth. He who has not realised it cannot be a spiritual preceptor. He is the one well-wisher without a second to the fallen humanity, who helps us to concentrate our diverse activities towards the Supreme Godhead. He is an embodiment of kindness who, with his prevailing spiritual influence, dispels all the darkness, which is the result of extreme ignorance on this relative plane, and opens our eyes by imparting to us genuine Divine Knowledge. He is an honest and perfect guide on our spiritual voyage, who leads us like an expert helmsman to the ever safe heaven on Transcendental Bliss, free from the onslaughts of any mighty rough wind or gale. He is a true messenger of the All-Loving-Godhead, yes. His transcendental mediator who is eager to establish a real tie of loving relationship between the Lord and those fortunate human souls who sincerely seek it. He is a pioneer of true love, a loving agent, an establisher of all relations of love, a trustworthy and expert destroyer of all our non-loving principles. If we can cultivate a devotional aptitude towards this representative of the All-Merciful Lord, we are definitely sure to reach our final goal. He saves us from all our changing views and wrong mentalities. The status that a real Guru occupies is too high; none holds such a lofty position as he. He is greater than Godhead in this respect as he can impart the Lord and His service to any one whom he favours. The Sastras even declare that "the displeasure of Godhead when directed towards any individual is not harmful provided he is backed by the divine master, whereas, one who is denounced by the spiritual preceptor finds no shelter in the infinite number of worlds."⁶⁹ Bhagavan remains silent and adamant to such a Person who disregards the spiritual preceptor, His loving agent. Without the mercy of an eternally liberated person, a conditioned soul can never free himself from the fettered state. One, who

68 tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ
(Bhagavad-gītā 4.34)

69 harau ruṣṭe gurustrātā gurau ruṣṭe na kaścana
tasmāt sarvaprayatnena gurumeva prasādayet
(āḍitya purāṇa)

is already in fetters, cannot help another similarly fettered person. A free person could set another bound one free. Bhagavan while conversing to His old classmate and friend Sudama at Dvaraka said thus: "O friend! I am the Supreme Lord and I reside in the heart of every person as the Indwelling Witness. I am not so much pleased with the performance of the daily obligatory sacrifices of Brahmacharis, the procreation, maintenance and the observance of prescribed duties by the householders, severe austerities of the Vanaprasthis and the practices of The Sanyasis in solitude, as with the loving services rendered to a spiritual preceptor."⁷⁰

Bhagavan mentions in another place, "One must worship the Gum first before he starts with My worship: such a person alone succeeds in this efforts. Any violation of this procedure results in utter failure."⁷¹ The Supreme Lord favours the individual Jiva through His medium, the Guru. Guru or spiritual masters are of three types.(1) Diksha Guru (one who imparts the initiation or Mantra), (2) Siksha Guru (one who imparts spiritual enlightenment), and (3) Chaitya Guru (indwelling guide, who inspires and directs from within).

"O Lord! The great sages who are blessed with the benefits of your various favours, can never feel themselves convinced of adequately discharging their deep indebtedness to Thee, even if they are provided with a long life as that of Brahma. In Manifold ways Thou hast extended Thy Mercy to them. Thou dost destroy all their evil propensities and worldly attachments, as the spiritual preceptor in living form, appearing as Diksha and Siksha Gurus, and as Chaitya Guru, guide from within and lead to the attainment of Divine Love."⁷²

All these three Gurus belong to the same category. They are all transcendental personages. They are always engaged in the uninterrupted realisations of the Transcendental Activities of the Lord. Amongst the two visible forms of Guru, one becomes our Diksha Guru. He imparts Mantras and initiation to us. Diksha Guru is always one, but Siksha Guru may be one or more. Father is one, but uncles can be many. To certain individuals, both Diksha Guru and Siksha Guru may be one and the same.

"Hence, those persons who are interested in the attainment of their eternal welfare, must submissively approach a Guru who is an erudite

70 nāham ijjā-prayātibhyāṃ tapasopāśamena vā
tuṣyeyaṃ sarva-bhūtātmā guru-śuśrūṣayā yathā
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.80.34)

71 prathamam tu gurum pūjya tataś caiva mamārcanam
kurvan siddhim avāpnoti hy anyathā niṣphalam bhavet
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 1.4.344)

72 naivopayanty apacitiṃ kavayas taveśa
brahmāyusāpi kṛtam ṛddha-mudaḥ smarantaḥ
yo 'ntar bahis tanu-bhṛtām aśubham vidhunvann
ācārya-caitya-vapuṣā sva-gatiṃ vyanakti
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.29.6)

scholar in all the ultimate lore of Sastras and who is favoured with the full realisations of the Absolute, and seek enlightenment from him." ⁷³

"Fully believing in the transcendental nature of the spiritual preceptor as eternally identical with the Supreme Lord Sri Hari and accepting him as one's eternal benefactor, he should constantly and with single-minded devotion please him and receive from him enlightenment on the details of Bhagavata Dharma, by observing which Bhagavan is so pleased as to give Himself up to the devotee."⁷⁴

The real import of the sastras, in spite of vast literary achievements, remains a hidden truth. "The Sastras unfold their real meaning only to those persons who have equal devotion to the Supreme Lord and His representative, the spiritual preceptor."⁷⁵

From all these valuable instructions of the Sastras, a wise person can feel the imperative necessity of accepting the spiritual preceptor and rendering whole-hearted services to him. Those who ignore the spiritual preceptor are under the evil dictations of their deceptive minds. Their condition is vividly described in Srimad Bhagavata thus: - "O Lord! Those unfortunate persons, who, avoiding taking shelter at the feet of the spiritual master, make a vainglorious attempt to control their restless mind, mad like an unbridled horse, which appears impossible even to great Yogis, who have a perfect control over their senses and breathing functions, meet with a disappointing failure. They find themselves helplessly placed in the midst of a series of difficulties and obstacles. Their condition is like that of those merchants who start their voyage without a pilot and who are caught in the deep rough sea, their vessel being mercilessly tossed by a strong gale."⁷⁶

True disciple - His qualifications

The above are some of the ideas about the genuine Guru according to the Sastras. Here are some about the disciple. The disciple should not, at any cost, be like a modern student who attends an educational institution either for securing a mere degree or diploma with the object of drawing salaries in three digits or four, after getting through the

73 tasmād gurum̐ prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam̐
śabde pare ca niṣṇātam̐ brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.3.21)

74 tatra bhāgavatān dharmān śikṣed gurv-ātma-daivataḥ
amāyayānuvṛtṭyā yais tuṣyed ātmātma-do hariḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.3.22)

75 yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanah
(śvetāśvatara upaniṣada 6.23)

76 vijita-hṛṣīka-vāyubhir adānta-manas tura-gam̐
ya iha yatanti yantum ati-lolam upāya-khidah
vyasana-śatānvitāḥ samavahāya guroś caraṇam̐
vaṇija ivāja santy akṛta-karṇa-dharā jaladhau
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.87.23)

departmental competitive tests or to gather some general knowledge to carry on one's family trade, or to have some status in society, etc. He must be a sincere seeker after Truth prepared to undergo any amount of hardships and sacrifices for achieving his goal. If the would-be disciple is an easy-going careless and indifferent person, his attempt to meet a spiritual master and the further developments on their meeting, would be met by a severe disappointment. As already stated a worthy disciple should approach a true spiritual preceptor with due submission. In the mundane world too, none tolerates a haughty approach. A haughty man fails to enlist the sympathy even of his co-workers, not to speak of superiors. An appeal from an arrogant heart is never met with success. For favour of spiritual enlightenment, a disciple must approach an Absolute-realised person fully equipped with three qualifications viz. (1) Complete surrender. The disciple must unconditionally resign all his material ego arising from birth, age, wealth or popularity, material learning and pride or personal appearance. He should never make attempts to measure the spiritual master after accepting him. (2) Sincere inquiry after Truth. Unnecessary questions, either for showing of one's intelligence or for testing the ability of the master are to be always avoided. Questions even for satisfying one's curiosity are also most certainly to be dropped. Questions that are of vital importance and immediate benefit for one's spiritual uplift, are alone to be placed before the master. A disciple should under no circumstances argue with his spiritual master, and try to conquer him with one's own imperfect notions and views, gathered from this defective world through the assistance of the deceptive senses; on the contrary, he should wait with eagerness and submission for his Guru's spontaneous expositions. His explanations are entirely based on his continuous and undisturbed realisations of Godhead and His various Pastimes. And (3) Loving services. Without the least hesitation, a disciple should be prepared to render loving services of any nature, be it menial or dignified. The inspiring examples of Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, etc. and the ideal lives of world teachers are living monuments that illustrate the above ideal.

Sri Krishna and His Divine Descents like Rama, etc. do not require the least outside help in any matter. In fact, no one could have the fitness to be a preceptor to Them; yet, for the benefit on the world, to enlighten the fallen humanity, they set ideals before the people. Did not Sri Krishna go to the forest with an axe in His Hand, cut firewood, make them into bundles and carry them on His Own head for the service of the great Sandipani whom He accepted as His preceptor? Did not Sri Rama and Sri Lakshmana spend sleepless nights with bows and arrows in Their Hands, sometimes sitting on piled heaps of rocks and sometimes resting on bare earth for satisfying Their master? Are we to read those soul-stirring events as mere stories that do not concern us? Do we not require to grasp the meaning underlying such actions and translate the same in our lives too?

The act of submission

Saranagati or the act of self-surrender to the Supreme Lord is an essential requisite that an aspirant in the path of religious pursuit can never ignore. The Proud man, urged by his false ego, ignores the fundamental principles of human life, viz., a virtuous life, full of faith and love to his ever loving lord. But, providentially a day will come, when he must feel the necessity of this fundamental principle, realising the utter vanity of the worldly pleasures. The unfortunate man, falling a victim to evil influences of the sense-ridden ego, may revolt against his own Lord, the only benefactor of humanity; he may conquer worlds, he may be the architect of nations, he may build vast empires or he may do many other wonders which no ordinary man can ever even imagine; yet he is utterly helpless in crossing this unfathomable ocean of worldliness. At every moment, he is being violently tossed by the roaring waves of this ocean of never-ending sufferings. All his false hopes are frustrated, his confidence in the efficacy of his own actions betrays him finally. He sees all around him threatening temptations, horrors and sweeping currents of cares, calamities, anxieties, and worries. He feels his helplessness and sincerely longs to come out of this terrible predicament. He gains more experiences in this transitory world of fleeting pleasures; he becomes wiser than ever before. He recollects wise saying and comes round to the above fundamental principle. He surrenders himself to the Supreme Lord. Did not Bhagavan Sri Krishna in unambiguous words, emphasise the imperative necessity of surrender?

"Discard all human element in religion addressed to embodied Atman, such as social duties, like Nitya, Naimittik and Kamyā Karma; your confidence in your physical strength, your mental eligibility, your moral achievements, your social duties, reliance on your elders, wealth, properties, etc., and surrender to Me. I am here to shoulder all your responsibilities. I can save you from all your sins consequent on your nonobservance of edicts addressed to embodied souls. You need not worry even for a fraction of a moment. None else can do this deed for you. I assure you, I am the Supreme Lord; I am the only Saviour of humanity. Why do you depend upon others and other courses? They cannot help you. They too are in the same plight as you are. As such, how can they lend their helping hands to you? Why do you hope to cross an ocean by catching hold a dog's tail? This is a tumultuous ocean of roaring waves, infested by various ferocious animals who are waiting with wide open jaws. They will swallow you within no time. Your efforts, however well designed, and however equipped they may be, in your light, can never lead you safely to the other shore. If you disobey Me and enter into its rough waters, you will be caught in a short while in its terrible eddies, surrounded by wild beasts that can easily swallow even elephants. Hence, the safest course for you is to come to Me. I am here with My boat. You need not have any fear whatsoever. You are once and for all saved for eternity. You do not repent for the failures in fulfilling the different duties you had to perform. All those duties are intended only to please Me finally. If I am favourably disposed to you, there is nothing else that you should

gain in the infinite number of worlds. You can be sure that you have achieved everything. This is the final attainment of all fortunate souls-My Love. Go on, do not waste time, make haste and be free from all the worries that you are subject to, from time immemorial."⁷⁷

"Should the duties like meditation, etc. that I am performing, conform to the duties enjoined according to the code for one's own Asram of be exclusively by themselves? The answer is this :- **"Discarding all codes of conduct, prescribed for the Varnas (classes), as enjoined by the Varnasram Dharmas, take absolute shelter in Me alone."** The word 'Parityajya', should not be interpreted as "discarding the worldly ties and attachments to become a hermit "; because Arjun being a

77 sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ
(bhagavad-gītā 18.66)

nanu tad-dhyānādikaṁ yat karomi tat kiṁ svāśrama-dharmānuṣṭhāna-pūrvakaṁ vā, kevalam vā ? tatrāha sarva-dharmān varṇāśrama-dharmān sarvān eva parityajya ekaṁ mām eva śaraṇam vraja | parityajya sannasyeti na vyākhyeyam arjunasya kṣatriyatvena sannāsādhikārāt na cārjunam lakṣikṛtyānya-jana-samudāyam evopadideśa bhagavān iti vācyam | lakṣyabhūtam arjunam prati upadeśam yojayitum aucitye saty evānyasyāpi upadeṣṭavyatvam sambhaven na, tv anyathā na ca parityajyety asya phala-tyāga eva tātparyam iti vyākhyeyam asya vākyasya -

devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām piṭṛṇām na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇi ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇam śaraṇyam gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.5.41)

martyo yadā tyakta-samasta-karmā niveditātmā vicikīrṣito me
tadāmṛtatvam pratipadyamāno mayātma-bhūyāya ca kalpate vai
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.29.34)

tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.20.9)

ājñāyaiva guṇān doṣān mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajet sa ca sattamaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.11.37)

ity ādibhir bhagavad-vākyaiḥsahaikārthasyāvaśya-vyākhyeyatvāt | atra ca pari-śabda-prayogāc ca | ata ekaṁ mām śaraṇam vraja, na tu dharma-jñāna-yoga-devatāntarādikaṁ ity arthaḥ | pūrvam hi mad-anya-bhaktau sarva-śreṣṭhāyām tavādhikāro nāstīty atas tvam yat karoṣi yad aśnāsītyādi-bruvāṇena mayā karma-miśrāyām bhaktau tavādhikāra uktaḥ | samprati tv atikṛpayā tubhyam ananya-bhaktau evādhikāras tasyā ananya-bhakter yādṛcchika-mad-aikāntika-bhakta-kṛpaika-labhyatva-lakṣaṇam niyamaṁ sva-kṛtam api bhīṣma-yuddhe sva-pratijñām ivāpanīya datta iti bhāvaḥ | na ca mad-ājñāyā nitya-naimittika-karma-tyāge tava prayavāya-śaṅkā sambhavet | veda-rūpeṇa mayaiva nitya-karmānuṣṭhānam ādiṣṭam adhunā tu svarūpeṇaiva tat-tyāga ādiśyate ity ataḥ katham te nitya-karmākaraṇe pāpāni sambhavanti ? pratyuta ataḥ param nitya-karmaṇi kṛta eva pāpāni bhaviṣyanti sākṣān mad-ājñā-laṅghanād ity avadheyam |

nanu yo hi yac-charaṇo bhavati, sa hi mūlya-kṛtaḥ paśur iva tad-adhīnaḥ | sa tam yat kārayati, tad eva karoti | yatra sthāpayati tatraiva tiṣṭhati | yad bhojayati, tad eva bhunkte iti śaraṇāpatti-lakṣaṇasya dharmasya tattvam | yad uktaṁ vāyu-purāṇe -

Kshatriya, is debarred from being a Sanyasi. This should not also be taken to mean that Bhagavan Sri Krishna, having Arjun in view intended to convey His directive to the rest of the people. When it was proper for Him to give advice to Arjun only, others could adjunctively be included but not vice versa. The word 'Parityajya' should not be taken to mean "discarding only the fruits of one's actions" This is illustrated thus: - **"O king! That person who, discarding his duties enjoined by the Varnasram Dharma, takes sole refuge in Sri Mukunda - the Fittest Person amongst all yielding protection, is neither a slave nor a debtor to his ancestors, well-wishers, other animate beings, the sages, or the other gods." " When a mortal, who has cast aside all his worldly duties and dedicated his self to Me, in his desire to seek Me, attains immortality, then indeed he becomes fit to realise Me-the Self-Produced One."** "Man should continue to perform his worldly duties, so long as he does not free himself, from the attachment thereof, nor is able to develop an attachment to the hearing, etc., of My Narratives." **"That person who, knowing the merits and demerits of My directives, though given by Me, solely serves Me, leaving aside all the moral and religious codes of his own Dharma, is the most virtuous of the virtuous."** All these words of Sri Krishna convey the same meaning, because of the prefix 'pari' meaning 'all-around', "Hence, the words 'take refuge in Me alone', imperatively means that you should

ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso gopṛtve varaṇam tathā
niḥkṣepanam akārpaṇyam ṣaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ || iti |

bhakti-śāstra-vihitā svābhīṣṭa-devāya rocamānā pravṛttir ānukūlyam tad-
viparītam prātikūlyam | gopṛtve iti sa eva mama rakṣako nānya iti yat |
rakṣiṣyatīti sva-rakṣaṇa-prātikūlya-vastuṣūpasthiteṣv api sa mām rakṣiṣyaty eveti
draupadī-gajendrādīnām iva viśvāsaḥ | niḥkṣepanam svīya-sthūla-sūkṣma-deha-
sahitasya eva svasya śrī-kṛṣṇārtha eva viniyogaḥ | akārpaṇyam nānyatra kvāpi
sva-dāinya-jñāpanam iti ṣaṇṇām vastūnām vidhātr-anuṣṭhānam yasyām sā
śaraṇāgatir iti |

tad adyārabhya yady aham tvām śaraṇam gata eva varte tarhi tva-uktaṁ
bhadram abhadram vā yad bhavet tad eva mama kartavyam | tatra yadi tvam
mām dharmam eva kārayasi tadā na kācic cintā | yadi tv īśvaratvāt svairācāras
tvam mām adharmam eva kārayasi, tadā kā gatis tatrāha aham iti |
prācīnārvācīnāni yāvanti vartante yāvanti vā aham kārayiṣyāmi tebhyaḥ
sarvebhya eva pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi | nāham anya-śaraṇya iva tatrāsamartha
iti bhāvaḥ |

tvām alambyaiva śāstram idam loka-mātram evopadiṣṭavān asmi | mā
śucaḥ svārtham parārtham vā śokam mā kāṛṣiḥ | yuṣmad-ādikaṁ sarva eva
lokaḥ sva-para-dharmān sarvān eva parityajya mac-cintanādi-paro mām śaraṇam
āpadya sukhenaiiva vartatām | tasya pāpa-mocana-bhāraḥ saṁsāra-mocana-
bhāro'pi mayāṅgīkṛta eva |

ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣām nityābhilyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 9.22)

hanta etāvān bhāro mayā sva-prabhau nikṣipta ity api śokam mā kāṛṣiḥ
bhakta-vatsalasya mama na tatrāyāsa-leśo'pīti nātaḥ param adhikam
upadeṣṭavyam astīti śāstram samāptīkṛtam
(sarartha varṣini)

not take recourse to Dharma, knowledge, Yoga, worship of their gods, etc. " In the beginning, I told you that you are entitled to devotion blended with religious rites, thinking that you have no claim to the highest form of My Bhakti-Ananya Bhakti (whole and sole devotion to Sri Krishna and no one else), as the sole resort. Now out of My sheer unlimited kindness to you, you have attained the right to My highest form of Bhakti-Ananya Bhakti, which accidentally and inexplicably (yaadicchikayaa), is obtainable only by the grace of My ardent devotees, who have solely dedicated themselves to Me alone, the peculiarity of which (Ananya Bhakti), is that I break My Own vows to fulfil those of My Bhaktas as will be indicated to you by the breaking of My own vow to fulfil Bhishmas's at the time of your battle with him. By My commands, you should not entertain any fear of obstacles that might befall you for the relinquishment of these daily routine religious rites. These daily routine rites were directed to be practised by Me alone, assuming the form of Vedas; **but its discardment also, is ordered by My Own Self, i.e. Sri Krishna Himself.** Hence, how can there be any possibility of a sin arising for not performing these routine rites? **On the contrary, if you still persist in performing your daily routine religious rites, you would be committing sins, for disobeying the direct commands given (in Person) by My Own Self.** Verily, he, who has totally dedicated himself to any protector, becomes entirely dependent on the latter like a beast, purchased for a price, doing what he is impelled to do, standing where he is asked to stand, and eating whatever he is provided with. These are all the principles of the codes of self-dedication. It is said in Vayu Purana :- **"(1) Full acceptance of all that is favourable, (2) total rejection (abstinence) of everything that is unfavourable, (3) a firm faith that he will be protected, (4) the choice of the Lord, (5) consigning everything to His care, and (6) giving up of meanness are the six ways of Saranagati.** The word 'Anukulyam' means, the conduct that is one of continued advance agreeable to one's chosen God or Deity, befitting the devotional code; 'Pralikulyam' is the exact opposite of that; 'Bhatritva' is the implicit faith that He alone is my Protector and no one else,' ' Visvas' (faith) is that unflinching faith that He will protect me even in the midst of adverse circumstances as those of Draupadi, Gajendra, etc., 'Nikshepanam' is the utility of everything belonging both to the mortal frame and the subtle body only in the service of one's own Sri Krishna; 'Akarpanyam' (or the giving up of meanness) is the non-display of one's meanness elsewhere; these six qualities constitute Saranagati, or complete self-surrender to the Supreme Creator. Therefore, from now onwards I take absolute refuge in you. Hence, as befitting You, I must do my duty allotted to me, whether good or bad (auspicious or inauspicious). If you ask me to do only the routine religious rites, there will be no anxiety; but because of Your Self-Willed Nature, arising from Your Overlordship, if You compel me to practise unrighteousness (Adharma), then what will be my fate? The answer to this (doubt) is given in the line 'Ahamtvam sarvapapebhyo mokshayishyami ma suchah'. I shall liberate you from all, both ancient (all existing accumulated sins of all past births), and future sins (those I may cause you to perform according to you). The sense is that I shall not be wanting in My ability to protect you like other

protectors. It is on your account alone, that I am teaching these scriptural injunctions to the shale world. Grieve not. Do not grieve either for your own interest (Benefit) or for the benefits of another. **May all people like you, by completely discarding all their own codes of conduct and those of other Dharmas meditating, performing Kirtan, etc., and taking absolute shelter in Me, live happily, because I have, an oath, shouldered the full responsibility of liberating them, from all their sins, of freeing them from their worldly bondage, and the charge of their attaining Me.** What more? "I have taken upon myself even to feed them. It is already said, "I bear the responsibility of looking to the welfare of those, who, being fully engrossed in Me alone, and without seeking any other protector, worship Me wholeheartedly and zealously." Do not grieve saying, "Alas! I have thrust so many burdens on my own Lord." Meditation on the Lord, Who is kind to His devotees, and faithful to His word, can be easily (without any effort) accomplished. Is there anything further and higher than this that yet remains to be told?^{77.1}

"O Uddhav! For the reason already explained to you, **take absolute shelter in Me-Sri Krishna** (*pointing to Himself with His Own Finger*) **alone-the Soul of all beings, with your heart and soul, discarding everything that the Srutis and Smritis expect one to perform and to reject, and giving up the attachment to and the discontinuance of worldly affairs and clean forgetting everything that you have so far heard, and giving up entirely any inclination to hear whatever yet remains to be heard. Be fearless as I am your Protector.**"⁷⁸

Surrender to Bhagavan is the safest path. All our Sastras repeatedly insist on this course. Any observance devoid of the spirit of surrender fails to invoke Divine Mercy. Surrender, pure and genuine moves the Heart of the Supreme Lord. It melts Him and He flies to the rescue of a surrendered devotee. How Many illustrations are there in the lives of many great saints

77.1 dharmān anyān parityajya mām ekam bhaja viśvasan
yādṛśī yādṛśī śraddhā siddhir bhavati tādṛśī
kurvan nirantaram karma loko 'yam anuvartate
tenaiva karmaṇā dhyāyan mām parām bhaktim icchati
(brahma-samhitā 5.61)

78 tasmāt tvam uddhavotsrjya codanām praticodanām
pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca śrotavyam śrutam eva ca
mām ekam eva śaraṇam ātmānam sarva-dehinām
yāhi sarvātma-bhāvena mayā syā hy akuto-bhayaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.12.14-15)

codanām vidhiṁ praticodanām pratiśedham ca | vihitam karma niśiddham
ca karma tyaktvā ity arthaḥ | tarhi kim sannyāsam kurve ? na, pravṛttam
grhasthānām dharmam ca nivṛttam sannyāsinām dharmam ca tyaktvā tatrāpi
śrotavyam śrutam ca tyaktvā iti bhāvi-dharma-śravaṇam anākāṅkṣya bhūta-
śravaṇam ca vismṛtyety arthaḥ | sarvātma-bhāvena sarvopāya ātmano manaso
bhāvo dāsya-sakhyādis tenaikam eva mām ālambanīkṛtya śaraṇam yāhi |
mayaiva akutobhayaḥ syā iti | tava nāsti karmādhikāro nāpi jñānādhikāras tad
apī tam tam ātmany āropya pratyavāya-bhayaṁ samsāra-bhayaṁ ca manyase
cet tadā tad-bhaya-dvayāt trātā aham vidyamāna evāsmīty arthaḥ
(sarartha darśini)

that establish this fact with all emphasis! The incidents of Gajendra, Draupadi, and the lives of a host of devotees, ancient and modern are glorious examples that prove this idea in facts and figures. Words cannot adequately express the astounding effects of surrender.

Activities favourable to devotional progress

The course of Saranagati has got six-fold features as its special characteristics.⁷⁹ The scripture explains it thus: A strong resolve to accept those activities that are congenial to the growth of Bhakti. An aspirant who is sincerely longing for advancement in the devotional path should practise with utmost care only such observances as are favourable to his rapid progress. The extremely turbulent senses, with all their evil propensities and madness, are to be engaged in the service of the Lord. Each activity of the aspirant of devotion, such as taking food, association, movements, etc., should be regulated fully under this principle. Such activities are of six kinds.⁸⁰

1. A genuine enthusiasm in observing the devotional activities is one of the invariable virtues necessary to strengthen our devotion towards Bhagavan. One who is indifferent to his real uplift and hence reluctant to practise all that is conducive to the rise of Bhakti, meets with hordes of tremendous difficulties in his path. Enthusiasm in the observance of prescribed religious practices is a very congenial factor in building up Bhakti towards the Lord. In the absence of genuine enthusiasm, lethargy, indifference, desperation and such other despicable qualities dominate over us. Laziness is the worst enemy to religious progress. If an aspirant allows this evil the slightest scope, it will take undue advantage of him and ruin him totally. Reluctance and lack of endeavour in observing devotional practices make us victims to this evil agent. 'Oak is not felled with one blow', is a very wise proverb. Lack of confidence in himself, and consequently, his efforts create desperation in him. An aspirant in the path of devotion should never fail a victim to this discouraging factor. He must rise above this. "Persons who are given to various desires are asked to follow the path of Karma by Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Those who have a spirit of renunciation in the daily, and occasional activities prescribed by the Sastras, should necessarily follow the path of knowledge. Due to some unknown divine virtues, in the past, those persons, who have ingrained in them a strong faith in the Glories and Deeds of Bhagavan, should invariably follow the path of devotion or Bhakti."⁸¹ They too may be indifferent to the observance of the daily and

79 ānukūlyasya saṅkalpāḥ prātikūlyasya-varjanam
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso goptṛtve varaṇam tathā
ātma-nikṣepa-kārpaṇye ṣaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ
(vaiṣṇava-tantra śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.676)

80 utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt
saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati
(upadeśāmṛta 3)

81 nirviṇṇānām jñāna-yogo nyāsinām iha karmasu
teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānām karma-yogas tu kāmīnām

occasional duties, but they adopt those principles that are favourable to the growth of devotion. Those who are eligible for the path of Bhakti, are not extremely attached to the fruits of their actions. Without the physical body the practice of devotional activities in the mortal plane is impossibility. As such, however unwelcome they may be, a certain amount of activity is unavoidable in the material world. Sincere aspirants after devotion should work for their livelihood, though with reluctance, and worship the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna with intense Bhakti to Him. They are extremely unattached to the various types of worldly actions, and with passage of time, become more devoted to the devotional practices of the Lord. The Merciful Lord, manifesting Himself in their hearts, destroys all their evil propensities. By the continuous remembrance of the Lord. their hearts become purified. They are freed for ever from the evil consequences of bondage. Their doubts too are removed. They become eligible to realise the Supreme Lord. Other efforts are not successful in bringing their results, if the votaries of those methods lack in the quality of dependence on the Supreme Lord. Their inability to destroy the terrible consequences of Karma must not dissuade them from their efforts. Hence, from the very beginning of an aspirant's devotional activities, keen enthusiasm should be preserved even at the cost of all comforts, and this is the very life of firm faith, a prerequisite for obtaining Bhakti.

2. Those treading the path of devotion must have settled convictions regarding the path they are pursuing and the final attainment. Till we are confident of the method and the results it would offer, we are under the influence of doubts. If an aspirant falls a prey to doubts, he is lost.

"He who is ignorant of the true knowledge of relationship and lacks badly in faith for the performance of Nishkam Karma, is overcome by the feeling of hesitation, and meets with destruction. To a sceptic, there is no shining future. He never succeeds in attaining happiness either in this world or in the next."⁸² Hence, strong belief in the statement of the scriptures, without the least possible doubt in it, is indispensably necessary for the growth of devotion.

3. Patience is another essential and favourable quality that is needed for every aspirant after devotion. 'Patience and perseverance will overcome mountains'. We are severely disappointed and non-plussed due to want of patience. Those who lack this quality are undone; they do not prosper in any line. By the influence of patience, an aspirant for devotion gains perfect control over himself, and finally the entire world bows to him.

Souls under the thralldom of Maya are the slaves of six-fold passions. Those who can effectively succeed in conquering all these six passions can

yadṛcchayā mat-kathātau jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān
na nirviṇṇo nāti-sakto bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhi-daḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.20.7-8)

82 ajñāś cāśraddadhānaś ca saṁśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyaṁ loko 'sti na paro na sukhaṁ saṁśayātmanaḥ
(bhagavad-gītā 4.40)

master the whole world.⁸³ These impulses are (1) an uncontrollable tendency for idle gossip, (2) various undesirable speculations of the wavering mind, (3) proneness to uncontrollable anger, (4) unusual desire for satisfying the tongue with delicious varieties of food, (5) longing for excessive eating, and (6) sexual appetite. These six impulses are highly detrimental to the development of devotion. Hence, with utmost patience, they are to be abandoned in the daily life of one aspiring after Bhakti. As long as the human body continues to exist till death, a sincere aspirant should make all earnest efforts to check the inimical incitements by engaging them in the service of the Lord.

All aspirants in the various religious paths are after some gains. Those who are observing the fruitive activities, long for the attainment of paradise and its varieties of pleasures unavailable in the same measure in this world.

People who are following the path of knowledge, do so tempted by a strong desire for eternal liberation for themselves. Similarly, those who are pursuing the path of Bhakti or devotion, constantly covet to render full satisfaction to the senses of the Lord. Delay in the achievement of one's goal, often causes ground for utter despair resulting finally in a downfall from his cherished goal. In order to avoid this evil consequence, an aspirant in devotional path, must be wholly wedded to this quality of patience. The Supreme Lord is an Ocean of Mercy. Either this day or some other day in this very life, if not, certainly in some other birth, He will shower His Mercy upon him. He never forsakes him who solely depends upon Him. "I will cling to His Lotus Feet with all hopes and never give Him up under any severe test." Such a firm determination helps the aspirant to achieve a glorious success. 'Patience is the best remedy for grief'. It is the plaster for all sores. Therefore, in all sincerity one must cultivate this virtue of 'Patience' in him.

4. In observing the prescribed devotional acts the Sastras lay down a series of activities for awakening and promoting devotional feelings in us. These activities must occupy the highest place in our daily performances. The sixty-four principles (see footnote 159) on Sadhan Bhakti are all favourable activities that help us in our goal. Sri Krishna advises Uddhav in the eleventh canto of Srimad Bhagavata thus: "Faith in listening to My Nectarine Narratives, constantly repeating them, great attachment in performing My worship, singing hymns in My praise with a devotional fervour, natural regard for rendering service to Me, prostrated obeisances with all the Indriyas, special liking for the service of My devotees, feeling My presence in each and every created being, engaging fully one's Indriyas in My service, singing My Glories, dedicating one's heart to me, renunciation of all desires, sacrificing one's wealth, comforts, and pleasures for My service, consecration of all things that are worth desiring,

83 vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmāṁ pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt
(upadeśāmṛta 1)

performances of religious sacrifices, muttering of Mantras, observance of religious vows, and practice of austerities for My pleasure. O Uddhav! By observing these, loving devotion to Me, is kindled in the hearts of those souls who have surrendered themselves unconditionally to Me."⁸⁴

5. All evil associations must be strictly eschewed. 'Man is known by the company he keeps'. Association exerts a tremendous influence on the building up of one's character, both in material and spiritual fields. Association is twofold- (1) Company of others, and (2) having attachment to other objects or persons. The first one is again of a twofold nature, (a) keeping company with non-devotees and persons addicted to women, and (b) having association with women. The second, too, is twofold, (a) attachment to bad instincts, and (b) attachment to wealth, properties, house, ornaments, relations, etc. All these associations, either in the form of company or in the nature of attachments, are detrimental towards devotional progress. Sri Krishna explains their evil consequences in Gita thus:-

"Association with the objects of the world awakens passions in man; passions when obstructed give birth to anger; anger leads to delusion; delusion is followed by loss of memory; when a man is deprived of sound memory, he loses his intelligence which consequently brings total destruction to him."⁸⁵

Fallen souls are weaklings in all respects. If they are left at the mercy of their material senses; their destruction is inevitable. 'Birds of the same feather flock together'. Material senses will slowly drag the man to similar sense-objects. Their association, gradually gives birth to attachment with those objects. The more he gets attached to these objects, the less he becomes interested in his spiritual goal. Thus in course of a short span of time, his condition gets deplorable and at the end he meets with a lamentable downfall. Householder devotees, who practise devotion, while leading a household life according to the injunctions of the Sastras, must associate with their wedded wives, in accordance with the rules and regulations laid-out in the scriptures. Both the husband and wife

84 śraddhāmṛta-kathāyām me śaśvan mad-anukīrtanam
pariṇiṣṭhā ca pūjāyām stutibhiḥ stavanam mama
ādaraḥ paricaryāyām sarvāṅgair abhivandanam
mad-bhakta-pūjābhyadhikā sarva-bhūteṣu man-matiḥ
mad-artheṣv aṅga-ceṣṭā ca vacasā mad-guṇeraṇam
mayy arpaṇam ca manasaḥ sarva-kāma-vivarjanam
mad-arthe 'rtha-parityāgo bhogasya ca sukhasya ca
iṣṭam dattam hutam japtam mad-artham yad vratam tapaḥ
evam dharmair manuṣyāṇām uddhavātma-nivedinām
mayi sañjāyate bhaktiḥ ko 'nyo 'rtho 'syāvaśiṣyate
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.19.20-24)

85 dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate
krodhād bhavati saṁmohaḥ saṁmohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ
smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati
(bhagavad-gītā 2.62-63)

with the assistance of the other members of the family, such as daughters, sons, brothers, sisters, etc., must make sincere efforts to engage themselves fully in the service of the Lord. In such a family life, there would not be any fear of evil association or formation of worldly attachments. For householders or renounced persons, association with undesirable people, is unwholesome and objectionable. Attachment or addiction to one's previous evil instincts is to be totally abandoned. By its association with us for the last so many births, it becomes, more or less our inherent nature. It does considerable harm to our eternal welfare.

Attachment to material objects and persons, such as wealth, properties, houses, lands, ornaments, clothings, children, wives, brothers, sisters, their persons, etc., is like a highwayman who robs us of our spiritual wealth gathered while on the royal path to devotion. Addiction to intoxicants and stimulants too come under the same category. Eating objectionable foods like flesh, fish, egg, etc., are also not favourable to our goal. Humanity is saved from all these evils by the marvellous efficacy of 'Sadhu Sanga' or association with Bhaktas.

6. Following the course practised by the devotees is the well-known effective and favourable way that helps the striver in his efforts for developing Bhakti. Sadhus, whose mode of conduct we are expected to follow for our spiritual benefit, are of two kinds. (1) Householder devotees who lead an exemplary life while living in the family fold, and (2) those who give up all their family connections and exclusively devote themselves to the service of Godhead. Because of the difference in the station of life and responsibilities, certain traits of the two classes of devotees show slight variation. Yet, there are common principles as well. Scriptures describe a series of rules for regulating our conduct. The main object of all these rules and regulations laid-out in the Sastras, is to bring us back to a perfect life of faith in and love for Godhead from an uncivilised, and irreligious barbaric living. Those who lead a householder's life, are expected to earn their livelihood and maintain their families by virtuous means, engaging themselves in the service of Bhagavan, Bhaktas and the chanting of the Holy Name. Entertaining guests is an important duty that every householder should unfailingly and ungrudgingly practise. They must be frank in their behaviour and sympathetic in their attitude. They should never be given to foul ways of earning their livelihood and barbarous living. They should be kind even to subhuman beings. Avoiding all pseudo-types of asceticism, they must lead the life of a genuine devotee. Pseudo-asceticism consists in abandoning all objects of the world intended for the service of the Lord, with a feeling of contempt, imposing material attributes on them. Whereas, genuine asceticism is that which utilises, every objects of the world in the service of the Lord, without having the least attachment to any of them. A follower of genuine asceticism leads a well regulated life, earns by virtuous ways means for meeting his legitimate necessities. He is neither for excessive enjoyment nor for renunciation. He is the upholder of the idea of proper utility of all objects. He never runs mad after selfish and unnatural wants. Though in the midst of family surroundings, he is a true devotee in spirit engaged in the service of the Lord.

That striver who has given up all his family connections for exclusively engaging himself in the service of the Lord, i.e. Sanyasi must lead a very simple life. Constantly chanting the Holy Name forms an important item of his daily duty. Avoiding all worldly gossips at all times, delicious varieties of food, and showy dress he must, in all humility, utter the Holy Name. He should maintain his body and meet its bare necessities by alms from those who are faithful to Godhead and Sastras. Discarding all sense of pride and wandering from place to place undergoing all suffering in this ocean of worldliness he must render the maximum help to other souls, who are averse to Godhead.

Unfavourable acts that arrest devotional progress

All should discard harmful activities that stand in the way of attaining Bhakti. Souls imprisoned in the physical and subtle bodies and guided by selfish desires are wandering in this world from time immemorial. They take births in different species according to their actions. They gather a variety of experiences in this world, both good and bad. If these experiences make them wise and persuade them to give up their leanings for enjoyment or freedom in any form-well-they have succeeded in their life's mission. The purpose of their human birth is fulfilled. If not, they are to rotate along with the world of worldliness ceaselessly. These latter displease the Lord and hence His love is not had. Without the least hesitation, we must refrain from these acts that are detrimental to the progress of devotion. Such undesirable agents are grouped under six heads.⁸⁶

1. A tendency to hoard anything more than the legitimate necessity is an impediment that we must all sincerely avoid in our daily activity. The enjoyment of the world through the sense-organs, i.e. eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the skin, plays an important role in which every fettered soul is hopelessly engrossed in this world. Without a certain amount of indulgence in the workings of the senses, it is impossible for human beings to survive here. Devoid of these activities human life something that cannot exist. As soon as we give up all activities of the senses, we cease to exist. Activities are the inherent nature of man. Man cannot continue in this world without performing actions. Actionless life is nothing but death itself. When these actions are done with selfish purposes, independent of any devotion to Bhagavan, they are the cause of our bondage and the repeated cycle of births and deaths. Those very actions when done with a motive of pleasing the Lord, save us from the cyclic effects of this world. As such, all our daily activities are to be regulated in a favourably coordinated way, so that we may attain the Lord while performing them properly.

2. Over-zealousness in trifling acquirements is a weakness of many aspirants to devotion, who fall a prey to this false zeal. They put in

86 atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca prajālpo niyamāgrahaḥ
jana-saṅgaś ca laulyam ca ṣaḍbhir bhaktir vinaśyati
(upadeśāmṛta 2)

innumerable tireless efforts in gathering knowledge, fame, etc. Unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Lord is the wealth of all wealths. Unconditional surrender and loyalty in words, deeds, and thoughts to Bhagavan form an important characteristic of Bhakti. These are ingrained in the inherent nature of unalloyed souls, as such, Bhakti is the natural function of all Jivas. No doubt, in our conditioned state, a certain amount of practice is unavoidable in awakening these dormant sterling qualities. All efforts other than those needed for awakening Bhakti, are impediments to the realisation of our highest goal. These efforts are commonly made in gaining more knowledge and benefits in fruitive activities. The zeal for gathering knowledge makes one go mad after the realisation of the Attributeless Brahman and finally getting absorbed in it.

"The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna though unconquerable in all the three worlds, is won over by those who discard all their vainglorious attempts to realise the Divine Nature, Attributes, etc., of the Lord, through empiric knowledge, submit to his Feet and survive by hearing the glorious Narratives of Lord, spontaneously coming out from the mouths of great saints living in places sanctified by them, receiving and revering the same with body, mind, and words."⁸⁷

3. Idle gossip is another uncongenial factor that stands in the way of persons who are desirous of realising Bhakti. This is sure to bring disappointment in the long run. This ugly habit, if not nipped in time, brings in its trail so many difficulties. Unfortunately, as the Kali progresses, this habit has become a serious disease amongst the people, which starting as a sporadic one, slowly grows into endemic, then develops into an epidemic, embracing a whole region, and finally becomes pandemic, spreading throughout the world. Unnecessary indulgence in gossiping, fruitless verbal jugglery, speaking ill of others, indulging in quarrels, scrutinising the conducts and deeds of others, speaking falsehood, disparaging holy persons, discussing worldly topics with excessive zeal, etc., are all actions of the same category. These evil habits must be totally eschewed.

4. Undue addiction to the observance of the rules of the Sastras or its total neglect must be avoided . The entire teachings of the scriptures come under two heads. (1) Commandments, (Positive assertions) and (2) Prohibitions (negative assertions). The Sastras try to regulate our lives by all these methods, directly and indirectly, and inspire genuine devotion in us.

The highest stage of spiritual realisation is attained after a series of graduated stages. In each of these stages, it is imperatively necessary for the aspirant to practise certain observance pertaining to that particular station in life. The strict performance of these prescribed duties, makes him eligible for the next immediate stage. Failure in these observances,

87 jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadiya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vāñ-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.3)

brings him a downfall from the spiritual path. Addiction to the duties of a stage which is already passed by the aspirant also stops his progress. Hence each Sadhak should perform the duties allotted to the particular phase of his development with sincerity and never be indifferent to it.

5. Evil company or association with persons who have not an iota of Bhakti in them is another serious obstacle that brings ruin to an aspirant of devotion. Mere conversation or sitting side by side, are not acts of association. Any transaction or dealing with such persons in a spirit of too much cordiality and interest result in the form of association.

The Sastras though they forbid us to associate with evil persons, in any way, never encourage us to speak ill of any one including these evil person, at any time. By speaking ill of others we degrade ourselves. The Sastras recommend even imprisonment in a room surrounded by flames as better than living with evil persons.

6. Fickle-mindedness and greed cause the downfall of the aspirant and deter him from the pursuit of his goal. This waywardness is effected in two ways by the unsteady position of the heart, and that of intelligence. The affinity of the mind towards sense objects, creates in the heart both attachment, and hatred. These changes in the mind and heart disturb the tranquillity of an aspirant. Just as, a strong wind tosses a boat in the sea, even so, these disturbances of the mind distract the aspirant from his practices.

Firm confidence in the Lord

A firm confidence that the Supreme Lord will protect us in all circumstances is needed. In fact, who is saving us from all the dangers and calamities that are hovering around us every moment? In time of a severe trial, all of our acquisitions or the nearest of relations fail. There is no power anywhere in this universe that would do any harm to a person whose Protector is the Supreme Lord. On the contrary, the entire population and resources of the whole universe, cannot save him, if he is disowned by the Lord. This firmness in his belief makes him steady ever the more. This spirit of confidence saves him from the unsteady nature of the mind. It laughs in time of dangers. It strengthens his weak enthusiasm. It enables him to overcome his enemies within. It makes the life of a striver light and easy, and his journey remarkably smooth and pleasant.

"The very Lord Sri Hari Who is solely responsible for the creation, sustenance and dissolution of this world and Who is the Origin of all, Whose Yoga Maya cannot be conceived even by the great masters of Yoga and Who is Lord of all triple qualities, the same Lord of Pure Existence will come to our rescue. Why should we unnecessarily worry over the same?"⁸⁸

88 viśvasya yah sthiti-layodbhava-hetur ādyo
yogeśvarair api duratyaya-yogamāyaḥ
kṣemam vidhāsyati sa no bhagavāms tryadhīśas
tatrāsmadīya-vimṛśena kiyān ihārthaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.16.37)

Choosing the Lord as protector

Those who are averse to the Lord, depend on their material resources as the sole support of their life. They have their hopes well established in their bank deposits, insurance premiums, debentures, gold, silver, properties, animals, provident fund, pension, etc. How long can they rely on these perishables? It is definitely sure that these would show their real nature one day. They have never saved a single person, so far, from the various worries he is subject to. In future also they will be incapable of doing what they cannot do at present. They are dead matter; how can they help human souls? Surrender to Bhagavan must be complete in words, deeds, and thoughts. A surrendered person feels extremely delighted by the effects of such an act. By words he expresses it to the Lord, by the mind he feels what he speaks and with the body, he takes shelter in holy places sanctified by the various pastimes of the Lord. Success in our efforts in the devotional path, depends on this act of self-surrender. Variation in the results of spiritual practices is mainly due to the difference in the degree of surrender. Those who have fulfilled all the six qualifications of Saranagati, perfectly in their lives, get immediate response from the Lord. Failure in achieving our goal even after making various efforts, is due to the absence of absolute Saranagati, without any reservations. This indeed, is the very life of Saranagati. It is the one vital force that makes all other qualities of Saranagati fully energetic. If we have real confidence in Him as our Saviour, the rest of the duties automatically accompany. If this substantial principle is absent, the remaining functions are lifeless. This is like the main trunk of a tree to which the other five principles are depending branches. This noble idea is exemplified in the following Slokas:-

"O Protector of cows! O Ocean of Mercy! O Lord of Lakshmi! O Destroyer of Kansa! O Embodiment of compassion with regard to Gajendra! O Madhav! O younger brother of Balaram! O Preceptor of the three worlds! O Lotus-eyed! O Lord of the Gopies! Protect me, I know nobody besides Thee."⁸⁹

"O Supreme Lord! For the innumerable Jivas living in the infinite number of worlds Thou art alone the Father; Thou art alone the Mother; Thou art alone the Beloved Son; Thou art alone the real Friend; Thou art alone the real Benefactor; Thou art along the preceptor; and thou are the Sole Refuge for all. I too belong to Thee, I am Thy servant, and Thou art my Goal. I offer myself at Thy feet. It is evidently certain that I too am to be protected by Thee alone."⁹⁰

89 he gopālaka he kṛpā-jalanidhe he sindhu-kanyā-pate
he kamsāntaka he gajendra-karuṇā-pārīṇa he mādharma
he rāmānuja he jagat-traya-guro he puṇḍarīkākṣa mām
he gopījana-nātha pālaya param jānāmi na tvām vinā
(śrī mukunda-mālā-stotra 44)

Self-dedication to the Lord

All the activities of a self-surrendered soul are guided by the Lord Himself. Service of the Lord is his motto. A surrendered Sadhak feels that he is neither the regulator, guide, nor the dictator of his own life and activities. He loyally attributes these functions to the Supreme Lord. He is thoroughly confident that the Lord is the Guiding Agent behind each and every action of his. He becomes wholly subservient to the wishes of Bhagavan. His individual ego is completely surrendered at the Feet of the Lord. He has firm belief in all the wonderful powers of the Almighty Lord. Being independent of the Lord is the cause of the Jivas being immersed in sins. Submission to Him is the only remedy for it.

"Lord Kesav is never far from those who are totally free from mundane vanities. But He is separated from those under the tutelage of irrepressible arrogance by a multitude of mountains."⁹¹

When Vibhishana from the opposite camp came to take shelter at the Feet of Sri Ramachandra, Sugriv informed Him, that the former should not be welcomed, to which Sri Ramachandra replied as under:- "If anyone (let him be even My enemy) having approached Me, says even once, "O Lord! I am Thine", I always give him assurance of eternal protection, because this is My avowed practice (creed), which even I cannot transgress."⁹²

Prayers with repentance

One practising surrender, while observing this last stage, is thoroughly convinced of all his inabilities and shortcomings. Recollections of the past deeds roll in his heart like waves on an ocean. He sees before him a picture of a series of his unworthy acts. He sincerely repents for all his past sinful deeds and evil propensities. He prays from the bottom of his heart. He weeps continuously before the Lord. This qualification of surrender is thus explained by a great saint in one of his devotional songs.

"My life is ever given to the commitment of sins. There is not even an iota of piety in it. There is no estimate of my misdeeds towards others. I have wounded their feelings oftentimes. I was an object of regular worry to others and have given them considerable pains. I was never afraid of committing the worst of sins for my own comforts. I was ever unkind and

90 pitā tvam mātā tvam dayita-tanayas tvam priya-suhṛt
tvameva tvam mitram gurur api gatiś cāsi jagatām
tvadīyas tad-bhṛtyas tava parijanas tad-gatir aham
prapannaś caivam sa tv aham api tavaivāsmi hi bhavāḥ
(stotra-ratna 57)

91 ahaṅkāra-nivṛttānām keśavo na hi dūragaḥ
ahaṅkāra-yutānām hi madhye parvata rāśayaḥ
(brahma-vaivarta purāṇa)

92 sakṛd eva prapanno yas tavāsmīti ca yācate
abhayaṁ sarvadā tasmai dadāmy-etad vratam mama
(śrī rāmāyaṇa laṅka-kaṇḍa 18.33)

selfish in my attitude. It was a regular torture to me to see others in happy circumstances. I freely spoke lies and it was a pleasure to me to see others in sufferings. My heart was a repository of all evil desires. I was always given to anger and pride. Infatuated by worldliness, I was full of all the various vanities. Malice and pride were my ornaments which I frequently wore. Being a prey to sleep and laziness, I was devoid of any virtuous deeds, but over-zealous in evil deeds. All my actions were for winning fame in the world; full of duplicity and actuated by greed, I was a slave to lustful passions. I am a sinner who is abandoned by all virtuous souls and a worst criminal, terribly disposed to committing crimes constantly. There is not even a single virtuous deed to my credit and I am miserably disposed to evil activities. As such I fell a deplorable prey to multifarious sufferings. Now, old age has overcome me. I find not any help coming forth from any quarter. My pride is humbled, all my hopes are shattered. I am utterly helpless. O my Beloved Lord! I submit all my grievances at Your Lotus Feet."⁹³

Submission and total self-surrender

Submission differs from total self-surrender slightly, though usually taken to be in the same category. Saranagati leads us to the realisation of liberation and finally Divine Love. The various secrets and specialities in the vast field of Divine Love, such as Sneh, Mana, Pranaya, Raga, Anurag, Bhav, Mahabhav, Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya and Madhurya are realised only by Atma Nivedan. Saranagati has no access to these specific realisations lying deep down the lowest depths of the Ocean of Divine Love.

Atma Nivedan is complete surrender of one's body, mind, words, deeds, thoughts, Atma, and all other things that he feels or claims as his own with the knowledge of relationship and guided by predominant feeling of rendering whole-hearted service to the Lord. Atma Nivedan has twofold characteristic, i.e. (1) Complete indifference to making any effort for one's own necessities of life, and (2) absolute dependence upon the Lord.

Saranagati is a mental attitude whereas, 'Atma Nivedan' is complete surrender of even the soul at the Feet of the Lord. It is not attained by the study of the Sastras or discussing philosophical problems frequently. It is effected only by the Grace of the Lord's internal potency or Svarup Sakti. To impress upon a huge audience the indispensable necessity of surrender, quoting innumerable striking examples from different Sastras is an easy achievement. To dilate on its marvellous benefits too is possible; but to feel its necessity in the heart of hearts, and to live up to it, constitute the most difficult problem that faces every man. Unless a man gains sufficient experience in course of his worldly sojourn, and is thoroughly convinced of his utter helplessness and the futility of his dependence on earthly objects, his pitiable condition continues to remain so for ever. As such, an inborn conviction that no other person except the Supreme Lord, is capable of saving him from the endless sufferings, he is

93 āmāra jīvana sadā pāpe rata nāhika pūṅyera leśa
(śaraṅgati 5)

at every moment subject to, is a favourable disposition in attaining this virtue. Automatically, he gives up all other types of worship which lie was hitherto pursuing and takes complete shelter in the Supreme Lord alone.

"The Kiratas, the Hunas, the Andhras, the Pulindas, the Pulkasas, the Abhiras, the Kankas, the Yavans, the Khasas, and such others born of sinful races, and others who by nature are given to the commitment of sins, are all delivered of their previous sins by taking shelter at the feet of those who depend upon the Lord. We offer our prostrated obeisances at the Feet of such an All-Powerful Lord!"⁹⁴

"O what a wonder! Even the wicked Putana, sister of the demon Baka, who, prompted by a desire to kill Sri Krishna, suckled Him with the most deadly poisonous breast-milk and got in return from Him attainment of the position of a foster-mother. Hence, is there anyone else more merciful than Sri Krishna to Whom we can offer ourselves for protection."⁹⁵

"How could physical, mental, and other troubles arising from a divine source or human medium or even from that of other inimical beings afflict one who has taken refuge in Sri Hari."⁹⁶

"For those self-controlled men, ever addicted to Truth and who unconditionally surrender themselves at the Feet of Bhagavan Sri Hari, Which destroy all the worldly sorrows, there is nothing that yet remains to be attained in this world."⁹⁷

"To those who have taken resort to the Boat of Sri Krishna's tender Lotus Feet, of ever-sanctifying excellences which even great gods and saints from time immemorial have adopted as their Sole Support, the Vast sea of worldly existence appears as insignificant as a calf's footmark of water. They cross this with the least difficulty. To them the attainment of their Final Goal Vaikunth, is always free from any obstacles."⁹⁸

94 kirāta-hūṇāndhra-pulinda-pulkaśā
ābhīra-śumbhā yavanāḥ khasādayaḥ
ye 'nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 2.4.18)

95 aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ
jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatim dhātry-ucitāṁ tato 'nyam
kaṁ vā dayālum śaraṇam vrajema
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.2.23)

96 śārīrā mānasā divyā vaiyāse ye ca mānuṣāḥ
bhautikāś ca katham kleśā bādhante hari-saṁśrayam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.22.37)

97 kim durāpādanam teṣām puṁsām uddāma-cetasām
yair āśritas tīrtha-padaś caraṇo vyaśnātyayaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.23.42)

98 samāśritā ye pada-pallava-plavam
mahat-padam puṇya-yaśo murāreḥ
bhavām budhir vatsa-padam param padam
padam padam yad vipadām na teṣām
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.58)

"O Lord! Those who have taken shelter under the Dust of Your Lotus Feet, never covet from You any reward, such as kingdom of heaven, sovereignty over the earth, the high position of Brahma, rulership of the uppermost heavens, attainment of supernatural Yogic powers, or even Moksa itself which puts an end to the repeated cycle of births and deaths."⁹⁹

"O Lord! Truly You are the Beloved of devotees, ever truthful friendly, and extremely grateful for the services rendered. Which wise man, ignoring You (Sri Krishna) would take protection under any other god or goddess? If anyone at any time has rendered any insignificant service to You, You in exchange of such services grant all his desires. Even with that You are not satisfied, You give away even Yourself Who are eternally free from growth and decay."¹⁰⁰

99 na nāka-prṣṭham na ca sārva-bhaumam
na pārameṣṭhyam na rasādhipatyam
na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavam vā
vañchanti yat-pāda-rajah-prapannāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.16.37)

100 kaḥ paṇḍitas tvad aparam śaraṇam samīyād
bhakta-priyād ṛta-giraḥ suhṛdaḥ kṛta-jñāt
sarvān dadāti suhṛdo bhajato 'bhikāmān
ātmānam apy upacayāpacayau na yasya
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.48.26)

HARIDAS THAKUR AND THE KAZI

FOR sometime Thakur Haridas lived at Fulia, a village situated on the banks of the river Ganges, midway between Ranaghat and Santipur, in the district of Nadia, West Bengal. Fulia was very near to Santipur, where Sri Advaita Acharya was residing. Haridas Thakur was delighted beyond measure to have the company of Advaita Acharya. Saturated with ineffable joy, he spent his days in chanting the Name of the Lord. Unattached to the mundane objects and undisturbed by the ups and downs of the transitory world, he was swimming in the Ocean of Transcendental Bliss.

Thakur and the inhabitants of Fulia

Loudly uttering the Name 'Sri Krishna', Haridas Thakur frequently roamed on the banks of the river Ganges with great joy. Having no attachment to the fleeting pleasures of the world, he was the best of the ascetics. He never refrained from uttering the Holy Name, even for a moment. By the influence of the higher qualities of Bhakti, he experienced various moods. He danced, sang, wept, laughed, rolled on the ground; in short, he had all over his body signs of spiritual perturbations of Divine Rapture, that a highly advanced devotee of Sri Krishna would experience. The moment Haridas Thakur started dancing, all the above signs of loving devotion made their appearance on his body. O! What a wonderful overflow of spiritual bliss! It drenched every limb of his, the sight of which transported even the worst of atheists with joy. These wonderful and uncommon signs of devotion that were visible on the charming person of Haridas Thakur impressed beyond measure even great gods like Siva and Brahma, not to speak of others. All the Brahmin inhabitants of the village were highly impressed by his marvellous achievements in the field of devotion. Most of them accepted him as a great saint. Haridas Thakur continued to stay there. After taking his bath in the Ganges and incessantly chanting the holy Name loudly, he roamed about freely in all the surrounding places near about.

This action of Thakur Haridas was not well appreciated by a certain section of the Brahmins and more especially the Muslim population there. They joined in opposition and took exception even to this most harmless and highly beneficial action of Haridas Thakur. To the Hindus and the Muslim opponents, it was a grave violation of the social custom. All these people regarded religion as a bundle of narrow dogmas and queer restrictions.

Complaint against Thakur

On the western side of Bhagirathi (Ganges) lay the township of Ambua. A Nawab (Governor), a Powerful royal officer-in-charge of the administration of the town and surrounding villages was having his headquarters there. The Brahmin opponents of Haridas Thakur, who had in them a deep rooted enmity towards the devotees of the Lord, conspired with the local Muslims and came to a unanimous agreement to punish Haridas Thakur for creating social disorder. The matter was reported to the Kazi, the Muslim priest as well as the local administrator, who after making a thorough investigation of the whole case, decided to bring the matter to the notice of his superior officer, the Governor at Ambua. Accordingly, the Kazi himself went to the Governor and apprised him of the whole case and requested him to punish Haridas Thakur in a fitting manner for his guilt of changing his religion from Islam to Hinduism.

The Governor too was not a broad-minded man. He was also a cruel-hearted person. Forthwith he issued orders to arrest Haridas Thakur. Within a short period, Haridas Thakur was produced before him. By the causeless Mercy of Sri Krishna, Haridas Thakur was not afraid of death even, not to speak of the Muslim Governor and his wicked advisers. The virtuous and devoted inhabitants of Fulia felt immoderate sorrow at this most unwise action of the Government authorities in imprisoning a great saint, such as Haridas Thakur and depriving them of his happy and inspiring company.

Thakur and the convicts

Without the least hesitation, the cruel Governor cast him into a prison like an ordinary felon. There were at that time many others imprisoned. As soon as the arrest of Thakur Haridas reached their ears, they experienced a great joy from the bottom of their hearts. They thought, that since Haridas Thakur being a devotee of the highest order, his mere glimpse would bring to an end the miseries of their present prisoner's life. Hence, all of them requested their warders to afford them an opportunity to have a glance of the great devotee when he passed their quarters. After a short period he came to the very place where all of them were eagerly expecting him. Haridas Thakur was greatly moved in his heart to see them all in such earnestness. His soft and compassionate heart yielded to those convicts. He silently showered his blessings on them. The personality of Haridas Thakur impressed them deeply. His hands extended as far as his knees, a rare sign in any ordinary mortal; his moonlike face with eyes similar to lotus petals added to the charm of his matchless appearance. The very sight of the most handsome and revered personality of Thakur Haridas made all the prisoners present there to bow down with a natural impulse of regard and devotion. Their feelings had their consequent results. Sincere longings even of a momentary nature can never be a failure. The sweet wishes of Haridas Thakur were not in vain. All of them felt in their hearts a flash of unparalleled joy which brought in them a great change in the form of loving devotion to Sri

Krishna. Haridas Thakur noticing the circumstances in the midst of which they were for the moment, blessed them smilingly thus: - "God bless you! May you all continue to remain forever as you are at present." Those poor prisoners felt utterly disappointed at the words of Haridas Thakur from whom they were expecting a blessing that would surely save them from the fetters of prison life. Yes, they totally failed to grasp his kind intentions. They could not catch the meaning underlying the expression of his. Finding that all of them were disheartened by misunderstanding his words, he made haste to explain the hidden meaning of his expressions. He said, "I suppose you all feel miserably disappointed over my words of blessings which I used just now. You have utterly misunderstood the real meaning of my words. I never bless anybody in a way that would bring mishap to him. If you just try to think deeper, you will surely be convinced of my intention. Do not feel sorry over my words. Let the minds of all of you remain absorbed in Sri Krishna as is your state at present. This attitude that you are fortunate to have in you now, is highly beneficial to you. May you all from this moment jointly chant the Name of Sri Krishna and think of Him constantly. At present, the minds of all of you are entirely free from any evil thought of malice, oppression to other fellow beings and such other vices. Meditate on Sri Krishna incessantly, taking His Name in all humility. If you plunge into the material world once again, you are sure to forget Him by the influence of evil company. True love for Sri Krishna is unattainable by one who is deeply absorbed in worldliness or who is in the company of the worldly-minded. Sri Krishna is farther than the farthest star in the heavens to one who is madly hunting after life's transitory pleasures. But to one who has completely surrendered his all to Him and who seeks earnestly to love Him, 'He is closer to him than his very breath, nearer than hands and feet'. A mind that is engrossed in enjoying mundane objects is the worst impediment towards God-realisation. As long as there is present in you an iota of desire to satisfy the cravings of your material senses, so long the chances of attaining devotion to the Feet of Sri Krishna remain slender.

The service of Sri Krishna and that of the objects of sense-enjoyments are the extreme opposite poles. A 'forgotten soul', who has in him no leanings towards the service of the Supreme Lord, wastes his valuable time on worldly topics. 'Time and tide wait for no man'. With an unimaginable speed, time fleets fast. If by the causeless Mercy of the Supreme Lord, one is fortunate enough to get the company of pure devotees at this stage, he will be extricated from this whirlpool of worldliness, and a tendency to the service of Bhagavan will be infused in him. "All those offences from which you are free at present, will once again make you a target for their attacks when you mix with the people of this world. That is the invariable nature of the world and its relationship. Understand this as the substance of all that I wished to convey to you. You could not grasp it, and you misunderstood me. I never desired that you should continue to remain in this prison for life, nor did I bless you to that purpose. Forget this transitory world and its fleeting pleasures and constantly utter the Sweet Name of Sri Krishna. May you all be blessed with unflinching devotion to Sri Krishna." After delivering a soul-stirring

sermon and showering his blessings on all those prisoners present there, Haridas Thakur reached the Governor.

Thakur and the Governor

The Governor had taken Haridas Thakur to be an ordinary man; but when he saw his impressive figure and striking personality, he had to change his view. He offered him a seat with great respect. The Governor asked him in a familiar tone, "Brother! What is wrong with you? How are you given to this peculiar disposition? It goes without saying that of all the communities in the world, the Muslim community is the best, you are extremely fortunate to have taken birth in a noble community. Why then are you given to the practices of Hindus who are socially our inferiors? You have transgressed the religion of your race and adopted other methods of conduct in your life. By such improper behaviour in the present life, how can you expect deliverance in the next world? For the misdeeds you have already committed out of ignorance, you are guilty of grave sins. 'It is no use crying over spilt milk'. Try to free yourself from the sin that you have incurred. I shall give you a bit of advice that would save you from your present critical situation. Utter the 'Kalma' of our noble faith and get reinitiated into our religion and that will be the end of the whole trouble. I am of the firm opinion that it is the only solution to meet the situation."

Thakur's exposition of religious principles

On hearing the words of the Governor, infatuated by the deluding energy (Maya) of Godhead, Haridas Thakur could not suppress laughter. He was greatly astonished over the wonderful skill of Maya in deluding unlucky souls about the true knowledge of the Lord and His eternal religion. He burst out amidst laughter: "Wonderful is the illusory power of Sri Vishnu!" And continued in sweet words, "Listen, dear sir! God is One for all. He is the One Eternal Object of worship without a second, for all, Hindus or Muslims. For young and old, Hindu and non-Hindu, for man and woman, He and He alone is the Supreme Godhead. Those ignorant Hindus and Muslims, who have no knowledge about the true nature of Godhead, are solely responsible for these unpleasant rivalries in religion. They create separate gods, lay the foundation for unnecessary foolish quarrels, which lead to unfortunate developments of bitterness amongst the members of both the sections. If you can forget all these petty, narrow, bigoted, and fanatic feelings for a while and try to understand with an impartial mind, the real Truth, by holding both the Puranas of the Hindus and the Koran of the Muslims as sound authorities in judging such matters, then and then alone we will be in a position to understand that they speak of the same Truth. Both the Puranas and the Koran remarkably agree on this issue. It is the self-same eternal entity, the Embodiment of Perfection, the Indivisible Truth, the Supreme Lord, the Indestructible by nature that resides in the hearts of one and all. The inhabitants of all the worlds function in accordance with the guidance which the same Supreme Lord instils in their minds. "O Arjun! The Supreme Lord is directing all Jivas like

toys wire-pulled by a machine from behind, by His external potency Maya and dwells as the Indwelling Monitor in the hearts of all jivas."¹⁰¹

The Name and Glories of the same Lord are sung by all people in every part of the world according to the declaration of their respective scriptures. But, the same Godhead accepts the inner motives underlying the actions of all persons. Any act of contempt against any of His creatures is verily a contempt shown against Himself. Hence, it is not advisable to show any hatred towards any of the creations of the Almighty Lord. By forcibly making one denounce his natural feelings and thrusting upon him the narrow views of another, great injustice is done to all other religions of the world which, again, is a gross contempt of the Supreme Lord, the One Object of worship of all these different schools of thoughts. Often we confuse the words 'service' and 'contempt' of the Lord. People, forgetting the love of Godhead, become the slaves to many creeds and practices in this world. Arresting their present courses of action, which are really detrimental to their everlasting good, is not to be confused as contempt for any religion or disregard to Godhead Himself. On the contrary, if instead of enlightening them with proper religious Truths and turning their mental disposition towards the Eternal Service of the Lord, any work is offered to them that engrosses them all the more in material environments and finally ends in their total perdition, it is not a sign of any kindness to them. In fact, it is a great injustice done to them. Such actions, though they outwardly appear as kindness and sympathy, are to be completely avoided.

Hence, I am acting in the way, the Lord has been pleased to guide my mind. The progress of a soul in the service of the Lord, entirely depends upon the causeless Mercy of the Lord Himself. We advance only to that extent, to which He permits us to proceed. "Those who worship Me with a loving heart, and are ever intent on communion with Me, are endowed by Me with such unmixed love, born of pure intelligence, as enables them to attain My Blissful Abode."¹⁰² If a Brahmin, discarding his religion, embraces the faith of Islam, how do you account for it? How can you check these happenings'? The deeds of every person are his own concern. Influenced by certain instincts, beings perform actions in this world. Those actions themselves, pay them in their own coin since actions have always their reactions accompanying them. There is no further necessity, of imposing special punishment on them. What is the good of killing one, who has already committed suicide? 'As you sow, so you must reap'. Good sir! Please judge my case now. If you still feel that I am guilty of any offence, you can punish me.

101 *Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 18.61)*

102 *teṣāṃ satata-yuktānāṃ bhajatāṃ prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṃ taṃ yena mām upayānti te
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 10.10)*

Religious rivalry - Its basis

There was a big gathering present to hear this peculiar case. All the Muslims gathered there, were highly satisfied by the genuine words of Haridas Thakur. All religions of the world, have many ideas common in them, that can impress the followers of any religion. When we undergo a careful study of all religions, we come across two important aspects in them, viz., the 'generic' and the 'specific'. The generic teachings of all religions of the world are more or less of a similar nature. But, the entire difference and rivalry arise when we expound religion in the 'specific way'. The specific study of any religion, clearly deals with all the intrinsic, and subtle problems in a profound sense. As Haridas Thakur did not go deeply into the specific aspects of the belief he was following, he could easily impress the common Truths of religion even upon the Muslim audience.

Sanatan Dharma - All-embracing religion

In fact, our noble religion 'Sanatan Dharma', inculcated by the Supreme Lord Himself, on the strong foundations of the infallible scriptures, has marvellous features in it. All the religions of the world, can be easily and beautifully accommodated into it. The various view of the different schools of thoughts, do find a meeting ground, in this eternal religion, known as 'Hinduism'. It is splendidly rich in philosophical achievements, and highly advanced theological realisations, which are reinforced with inspiring rules of social and moral principles, in the day to day life of mankind. This religion claims its origin in the Eternal Lord Himself. "It is not founded by Rishis or Yogis, Jnanis or Karmis - no, not even by celestial beings. **Bhagavan Himself is its Founder.**"¹⁰³ He expresses in the Gita, "I am the One to be known in the Vedas and It is I Who am the Author of the Vedanta and the Knower of it as well."¹⁰⁴ As it originates from Bhagavan, it is known by the name 'Bhagavata Dharma'. Its jurisdiction is very vast. It is a veritable repository of different creeds. As such, it claims the widest range, beginning from the lowest stage, of dedication of all actions, to the highest attainments of Transcendental Love. It also provides its followers with realisations of all the different aspects of the Absolute Reality.

Kazi's reaction on Thakur's exposition

Though Haridas Thakur, could win the hearts of all the persons present there by his lucid exposition of Truth, he could not convince the

103 dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam
na vai vidur ṛṣayo nāpi devāḥ
na siddhamukhyā asurā manuṣyāḥ
kuto nu vidyādhara-cāraṇādayaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.3.19)

104 vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 15.15)

sinful Kazi. He possessed an adamant heart, with no particle of human kindness in it. He said to the Governor, "Let him be punished. This wicked person will mislead many others, and ruin their lives. Denouncing our noble religion, the ideal that he has now set up, i.e., establishing the prominence of Hindu religion, will unfailingly pave the path for many others in the near future to follow in his footsteps. This will bring total discredit upon the Muslim race. Hence, in order to remove such a slur on our society, Haridas must be severely punished. If not, let Haridas Thakur repent for his sinful deeds, accept his guilt, and follow the sublime Muslim scriptures." Kazi is a religious authority, and hence, his words could not be ignored. So, once again on the appeal of the Kazi, the Governor spoke to Haridas Thakur. "Dear brother! Give up the practices of Hindus, and come back once again to our fold, recite our own scriptures, and be relieved of all these unnecessary worries. This is the only alternative for you now, if not, all the Kazis together, will impose heavy punishment upon you. Once again I warn you. In the long run, you will have to repeat our scriptures. Why should you suffer unnecessarily?"

Thakur's firm determination

Haridas Thakur was more firm in his faith and convictions than all of them put together in theirs. Neither the suggestions, nor the threatening attempts of the Governor, or the Kazis could make any change in the firm attitude of Thakur Haridas. He said, "None can go against the wishes of the Almighty Lord. Whatever the Lord wills one to do, he does the same. There is no power on the infinite number of worlds, that can revolt against God's Will. Be rest assured, that the fruits of one's actions, are befittingly rewarded by the ever just hands of God. The punishment for the various offences committed by ourselves are awarded by the same Almighty Lord. 'Thy will be done'. "Even if my body is cut to pieces, and my soul leaves the body, **I will not give up chanting of Sri Hari Nama.**"¹⁰⁵

What a brilliant example of firm determination, and a noble ideal of extraordinary will power! For every aspirant marching towards God-realisation, this example of Haridas Thakur, is like a guiding star. Anything that is genuine tending to our eternal good, is often beset with obstacles of obstinate nature. Unless the aspirant is firmly disposed to meet every hindrance, that occurs in his path, his progress becomes impeded, and disappointment only is in store for him. He must be prepared to face, any of these emergencies, with a cool brain. A firm determination, coupled with patience, that stands any test, can stem all the onslaughts, that are aimed, against our attempts. There is a wise proverb, which is worth recollecting always, 'Patience and perseverance will overcome mountains'. These two qualifications aid his cause to a degree that is beyond words. One of the four qualifications, mentioned by Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, for the constant chanting of the Holy Name is endurance greater than that of a tree. Let these words of Haridas Thakur, ring always in his ears. Let them

105 khaṇḍa khaṇḍa hai deha yāya yadi prāṇa
tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi hari-nāma
(śrī caitanya-bhāgavata ādi 16.94)

be branded on his brain. Let them make deep and permanent impressions in his weak heart, so that by following in his footsteps, and through his causeless mercy, he also can get strength to face all such obstacles on his religious path, with courage, and attain success in reaching his goal.

The cruel judgement

The words of Haridas Thakur, were like piercing shafts, released from a powerful bow. Everyone, there, was taken by great surprise. The Governor felt frustrated in dissuading Thakur Haridas. Noticing, the strong resolve of Haridas Thakur, he asked the Kazis, "What is your next move?" The wicked Kazis replied, "Let him be whipped in all the twenty-two streets of the town. That alone would open his eyes. He will understand the result of his sin, committed by taking the Name of Hindu God. Take out his life and have no consideration for him. If he continues to survive even after severe whippings, in all the twenty-two streets, then we shall believe the statement of Haridas Thakur. If he succumbs to the whippings we are satisfied that he is severely punished for his grave offence."

On the advice of the Kazis, the Governor ordered his men in a loud voice. "Whip him in all the twenty-two streets of the town. Execute your work, in such a way, that he should not survive. Being born as a Muslim, he practises Hinduism. Deliverance from such a sin, is possible only, at the heavy cost of his life itself." By the orders of the Kazis, and the Governor, a group of wicked men - nay brutes - caught hold of Haridas Thakur. They whipped him mercilessly, from street to street. Haridas Thakur meditated, on the blessed Name 'Krishna' continuously.

Deeply absorbed in the incomparable joy of Sri Krishna-Nama, Haridas Thakur did not feel, what was happening to him. He never felt any physical pain at all. The good and pious people of the town, were shocked at the sight of this heinous work. They felt greatly grieved at heart. But, what could they do? Some said, "The whole country is doomed, on account of this crime of torturing a saint, like Haridas Thakur." Some fired a round of curses on the Ruler, whereas, some did not hesitate to organise even a regular riot. Some fell at the feet, of those wicked ruffians, in charge of whipping Haridas Thakur, and offered tempting bribes, thinking that, such offers might soften their hearts, and make them desist from such severe beatings. These actions of the people, did not melt the stony-hearts of those cruel servants, of the wicked Governor. Without the least pity, they executed the order entrusted to them. They appeared as it were a separate creation, in whom the softness of the human hearts was utterly absent. By the continued executions of such orders, they were rendered absolutely devoid of any feelings in them. Above all, the strict orders of their master, urged them still more to the work. By the causeless Mercy or Sri Krishna, Haridas Thakur did not feel the slightest pain, in spite of such inhuman punishment.

Just as in the days of yore, the various tortures perpetrated by the Asuras, under the orders of Hiranyakasipu, on the person of the great Prahlada, proved an utter failure, even so, the continuous and pernicious

whipping of those wicked ruffians, did not do any harm to Thakur Haridas. This extraordinary endurance is the innate virtue of genuine Bhaktas. They remain so much intoxicated in the eternal service of the Supreme Lord, that they never feel the pains and sorrows of the various harassments inflicted on them by the demoniac elements of the material world. As one of the qualifications, for constantly chanting Sri Hari-Nama, we have already seen, that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has asked us to be more enduring than even a tree. If the devotees in daily life, get easily upset, and intolerant by the external events, their progress towards the goal is hampered. Often we see in this world, that the sincere exponents of Truth, are persecuted for no faults of their own. They have to face oppositions from a quantitative majority.

Thakur's compassion on the persecutors

It is not that only Haridas Thakur did not feel any mortal agony; but even those who remember with faith the great saint in such straits, can overcome their sufferings and calamities. Haridas Thakur was feeling sorry, for those innocent persons, who were involved in this terrible crime. He repeatedly prayed to Bhagavan Sri Krishna, to shower His blessings on those innocent Jivas, and pardon them for all their offences. Such wishes, for the welfare of even one's enemies, could never come out from a selfish man of this world. None, except the magnanimous devotees of the Lord, who are free from any prejudice can cherish such a wish. Men of the world are addicted to selfish pursuits. They always try to keep the other Jivas, in subjection to themselves, by exercising brute force over them. To achieve their selfish purposes, even the worst of the tyrants, do not change their cruel disposition. Even those, who appear to be apparently liberal, are keeping appearances, for their own purposes, and for earning a reputation in society.

All these people beat him severely, from street to street. They whipped him with all the force they could muster to end his life. But to their extreme surprise, there was not even the least change in Haridas Thakur. He was oblivious of what was happening to his physical body, as he remained lost in Divine Bliss. He looked as lively and cheerful as he was ever. They wondered over this fact again and again. They could not get a satisfactory clue to it. They thought with great astonishment amongst themselves. "Is it possible for any human being to stand such heavy beatings? Usually by the beating in two or three streets, men are killed. Whereas, we have beaten him with extreme severity, in all the twenty - two streets of the town. Let alone the idea of bringing death to him; it is wonderful that he laughs very often. As the people remark, is he actually some Pir (Muslim saint)?" Thus thinking, these wicked men said to Haridas Thakur. "Well, Haridas! You will be the cause of our destruction. It is indeed strange, that even such continuous, and vehement whippings, have not resulted in your death! We have beaten you to our utmost capacity. We are now completely exhausted, and there is not more strength left in us. Still, we are threatened with a heavy punishment, if our beatings do not cause your death. Our superior authorities would not trust

us. Kazis will certainly get enraged, and put us to death for our negligence in executing their orders."

On hearing these pitiable expressions of those people, Haridas Thakur said with a smile. "If by my survival any ill-luck befalls you even after your continuous beating me for long, I am the last person to wish it. Hence, in order to prevent such a calamity, and in your best interest, I shall give up my life now itself. You need not have the least doubt about it; you may witness it now." So saying, Haridas Thakur engaged himself in deep concentration of the Supreme Lord. It did not take much time for him to lose world-consciousness. Within the next few moments, the great Haridas Thakur became absolutely motionless. There was no sign of life on any part of the body. Those ruffians were greatly surprised at this sudden change in Haridas Thakur. How could those unlucky sinners know about the superhuman powers of Haridas Thakur? They took him to be dead. They bore his body and laid it down at the door-steps of the Governor's residence. The Governor immediately ordered them to remove his body for burial.

Even to this order, as to the disposal of the body, the cruel Kazi had his own opposition. He had his own explanation, which was purely based on his religious belief. He said, "If his body is buried after death, he is sure to attain salvation. In spite of his birth in a high family, and in a superior faith he was used to mean acts. Hence, he must be properly made to pay for the unpardonable sin he has committed." According to the religious belief of this brute of a Kazi, if the body of such a person is buried, he attains everlasting good, whereas, if it is thrown in the Ganges, he will suffer endless miseries.

This evil-minded Kazi, who was supposed to be an authority in matters concerning religion, had now exposed his heart to a greater extent than before. He was determined to wreak vengeance on Haridas Thakur even after his death. He wished him to take birth continuously amongst the Hindus, and to suffer heavily in all his births, as a penalty for taking the Name of Hindu God.

On the instructions of the Kazi, his employees lifted the body of Haridas Thakur, to be thrown into the Ganges. During this time Haridas Thakur, was deeply absorbed in the meditation of Sri Krishna, and tasting the ineffable joy arising from it. His body became so heavy that they could not move it, in spite of their great efforts. The Divine Lord, in Whose contemplation Haridas Thakur remained thus absorbed, made a special Descent into his body. The appearance of the All-Powerful Lord, the Upholder of the infinite number of worlds, into the body of Thakur Haridas, made it unbearably heavy. Haridas Thakur himself was floating in the eddies of the Nectarine Ocean of Divine Bliss. He was totally absorbed in his meditation, and as such, he was free from any gross feelings. He did not know where he was, whether he was in the air, on the bare earth, or in the flowing waters of the sacred Ganges. The devotion exhibited by the great Prahlada in days of hoary antiquity, by meditation on Sri Krishna, is the only illustration that can be adduced with reference to this particular incident. Srimad Bhagavata states that Prahlada had in him a natural

instinct for devotion to Bhagavan Sri Vasudev. He never used to waste his time in boyish games, as other boys of his age. By giving up all such useless sports, he used to engage himself single-mindedly in the meditation of Sri Krishna. By the effect of such meditation, he became saturated with the incessant flow of the Lord's contemplation, and as a result was absolutely unconscious of the physical world. His routine work, such as taking food, walking, sleeping, drinking water, etc. went on undisturbed like the movements of an automation.¹⁰⁶ A similar incident from the Ramayana can be narrated here. When Indrajita, the son of Ravana, could not catch Hanuman, he aimed the infallible Brahmastra at the latter by which he (Hanuman) fell down stunned and submitted himself to the blow to show his due respect to it.¹⁰⁷

In the same manner, Haridas Thakur, too, received the whippings of these wicked people, for setting a living example of the highest order of tolerance before the world. Haridas Thakur proves in action what he has already once spoken to the Governor and Kazi with great emphasis. "If I am to face Himalayan hardships and if my body is chopped off, and if life itself departs from my body, yet, I will not give up the chanting of Sri Hari's Name." The firm faith and the constant chanting of the Holy Name in the face of all risks, sacrifices, and hardships are the important teachings that Haridas Thakur, out of his overflowing kindness, leaves to the world. Otherwise, is it possible for any one, in all the worlds, even in dream, to harm Haridas Thakur, whose Protector is none else than Govinda, the Supreme Lord Himself? All the suffering of humanity come to an end by mere recollection of Thakur Haridas. Hence, how can anyone think of offending him?

Even after a regular struggle to lift the body of Haridas Thakur, by the strongest of the employees, they could not succeed. Later on, the Lord willed Haridas Thakur to allow himself to be thrown by them in the sacred Ganges. He floated in the flowing stream. By the Divine Will, he regained his consciousness soon. Saturated with incomparable joy, he came ashore, and chanting loudly as usual the Name of Sri Krishna, he came to Fulia once again.

All the Muslim inhabitants of the place were highly impressed by the marvellous powers of Haridas Thakur. They realised his greatness. They were freed from all malice. Their hearts were purified. They regarded him as a great Pir. They bowed down to him in all humility. By the

106 sa tat-kara-sparśa-dhutākṣhilāśubhaḥ
 sapady abhivyakta-parātma-darśanaḥ
 tat-pāda-padmaṁ hṛdi nirvṛto dadhau
 hṛṣyat-tanuḥ klinna-hṛd-aśru-locanaḥ
 astauṣīd dharim ekāgra manasā susamāhitaḥ
 prema-gadgadayā vācā tan-nyasta-hṛdayekṣaṇaḥ
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 7.9.6-7)

107 brahma astra te hi sām̐dhā kapi mana kīnha vicārā
 jāṁ na brahma sara mānaum̐ mahimā mihai apāra
 (śrī rāma-carita-mānasa, pr.533, su. ka., dro. 9)

unaccountable mercy of Haridas Thakur, all the Muslims there got deliverance.

Enemies of Thakur humbled

Haridas Thakur, who was all along in a mood of divine rapture, got back to his external consciousness in a short while. On receipt of information from the local public, the Governor himself hastened to the presence of Haridas Thakur to have his sight. The merciful and great Haridas Thakur did not look down upon the Governor and he had no idea to avenge himself for all the atrocities perpetrated by the Governor. He received the Governor with a merciful and smiling glance. This charming and uncommon behaviour of Haridas Thakur penetrated deep into the innermost chamber of the Governor's heart. It left a permanent impression on him, unchangeable for lives to come. With all sense of reverence and with folded hands, the Governor humbly uttered thus: -"Verily, indeed, I am now thoroughly convinced that you are a Pir. You have really realised the knowledge of the One and it is well proved beyond any doubt. The large host of Yogis and Jnanis only made a false claim by their high sounding words, but you have firmly attained it through incomparable joy of Lord's meditation. I have come over here to obtain a sight of you. O high-souled one! Forget and forgive all my offences. Everyone is equal in your view; you have neither a friend nor a foe. There is none in all the three worlds who can understand you in your essential nature. You may freely move anywhere at your sweet will. You are at perfect liberty to do so. You may continue to stay at your solitary cell on the banks of the Ganges. Have your own choice, stay wherever you like, and do whatever that pleases you. Nothing worldly can bind you."

The glory of Haridas Thakur is indescribable. Not to speak of those good natured inhabitants, the hard-hearted and prejudiced Muslims themselves forgot all their bitter feelings towards him by his mere sight. What a miraculous change? With burning wrath they brought him to the Governor to take out his very life, but lo! The marvel of marvels! His extraordinary patience and implicit faith in Godhead brought about a wonderful change in them, particularly in the Governor. He saw in Haridas Thakur a true messenger of Godhead. The wicked man repented for all his offences and without the least hesitation requested pardon for all his evil deeds. All fell at his feet, recognising him as a great Pir. In spite of the severe persecution, the magnanimous Thakur Haridas blessed all those Muslims.

Thakur on his persecution

Thakur Haridas now returned peacefully to Fulia. Loudly chanting the Name of Sri Hari, he arrived at the assembly of the Brahmins. They gave him a hearty reception. They were extremely joyful to have once again Thakur Haridas in their midst. They greeted the occasion with loud shouting of Sri Hari-Nama with inexpressible delight. Haridas Thakur danced with indescribable delight. Marvellous signs of spiritual

perturbations manifested on his body. Tears, shivering, laughter, swooning, hair standing on end, etc., were distinctly visible on him. Intoxicated with Divine Love he now and then fell and rolled on the ground. Witnessing these wonderful signs of Transcendental Love, all those assembled there were lost in an ocean of unbounded joy. After a while Haridas Thakur slowly composed himself and took up his seat. All the Brahmins sat around him with eagerness. Haridas Thakur was overcome by a feeling of utter humility for which he justly repented and said thus: - "O Brahmins! Please listen. I have reaped the consequences of my evil actions, in the form of hearing the blasphemies against the Lord, Who out of His causeless Mercy, punished me very lightly. I must consider myself very fortunate indeed to be thus pardoned by Him with a very mild punishment. One who hears the vilification of Sri Vishnu has to undergo endless sufferings in the infernal hell known as the 'Kumbhipak'. I have with my sinful ears heard much of impious talks. I have borne enough of mental tortures as Punishment, lest I should repeat such conduct in future."

By thus giving instructive piece of advice, Haridas Thakur consoled all the Brahmins present there, and performed with great joy the chanting of Sri Hari-Nama in their company. All those wicked people who had persecuted him were ruined in a short time with all their families.

Thakur and the venomous serpent

Haridas Thakur lived in a solitary cell, on the banks of the river Ganges, constantly uttering Sri 'Krishna', 'Krishna', he chanted three lacs of the Holy Name daily. The cave was a veritable Vaikuntha itself to him. A huge serpent also lived in the same cave. All the visitors to the cave suspected its presence by the unusual burning sensation prevailing there. No living being could stand the burning sensation, created by its poison. Haridas Thakur had a good many visitors every day. None of them could bear the influence of this poison, and remain there even for a short while. But to their great surprise, they noticed Haridas Thakur quite ignorant of this. All the Brahmins put together their heads and discussed among themselves. "Why is there so much of burning sensation in this cave of Haridas Thakur?" There lived at Fulia many physicians who were adepts in the treatment of snakebites. On receiving information from others, they came and diagnosed the real cause of the burning sensation. Till the arrival of these physicians, none was in a position to locate definitely, the origin of such a burning sensation. One of them said, "Just beneath this cave there is an extremely poisonous serpent. I am sure, it is its burning poisonous breath that is making impossible for any being to live in the cave. May Haridas Thakur forthwith shift from here to some other place. It is never advisable, to live in the company of a serpent, which is always cruel by nature. Let us all go to him and earnestly request him, to leave the cave without any further delay." As suggested by the physicians, all of them approached Haridas Thakur, apprised him of all the facts, and appealed to him to abandon it, and move to some other safer place.

On hearing the suggestions and requests of the Brahmins, and the expert physicians, Haridas Thakur replied, "I have been here for many days. So far I have neither felt in the cave, the presence of any poisonous nor burning sensation. But I feel sorry that you feel it and its unbearable burning. So I shall leave this place tomorrow, to some other place according to your suggestion. To be frank with you, I personally do not feel the least inconvenience. But since all of you are very interested in my safety, I must certainly satisfy you. If really there dwells in the cave a huge venomous serpent, as narrated by you all, and if it does not leave the place by tomorrow, then by all means, I shall quit this cave. It is sure that, either I, or the serpent, should leave this place tomorrow. Anyhow you need not be anxious. Avoid all these fears and let us have our discourses on Sri Krishna. "Let all the Brahmins met here, as well as the goddess Ganga herself take me to be a devotee, with my mind fixed on the Supreme Lord. Let the cheat of a Takshak bite me at his will, to fulfil the curse of Sringi. I only request you to sing the Divine Glories and Excellences of Bhagavan Sri Krishna."¹⁰⁸

As they were thus engaged in discourses on the Transcendental Sports and Qualities of Sri Krishna, a most wonderful event took place there. On hearing the words that Haridas Thakur would leave the place, a huge serpent came out of its hole. In the presence of all others, it slowly went away elsewhere. All who sat there uttered the Name of Sri Krishna out of great fear. On the departure of this dreadful serpent, all of them were filled with boundless joy. They were now completely relieved of all their anxieties and fears due to the presence of the serpent there. The people assembled there could not at all feel any burning sensation. Overwhelmed with wonder at the marvellous power of Haridas Thakur, the Brahmins there, became very much devoted to him. People who are wicked by nature and who feel great pleasure in harming other beings, are apt to fall victims to the cruelty of snakes, etc., or the ferocious nature of other wild animals. But even serpents, cruel by nature, do not harm Mahabhagavatas like Haridas Thakur; why, they even readily obey all their orders. This incident is an excellent example that illustrates our case. This is actually a very insignificant proof of the powers present in Haridas Thakur. By his mere kind glance the bondage of ignorance leaves the soul. Even the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna never opposes the words of Haridas Thakur

108 tam mopayātam pratiyantu viprā
gaṅgā ca devī dhṛta-cittam īse
dvijopasṛṣṭaḥ kuhakas takṣako vā
daśatv alam gāyata viṣṇu-gāthāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.19.15)

HARIDAS THAKUR AND THE SNAKE-CHARMER

Thakur under divine rapture

ON another occasion the King of the serpents (Nagaraj) spoke about the glories of Haridas Thakur. Once, a certain healer of snake-bites, was giving an entertainment of a musical dance at the house of a wealthy man of that village. At that time Thakur Haridas happened to arrive on the scene and avoiding the huge crowd, he stood on one side and watched the dance. By the efficacy of a Mantra, the King of serpents entered into the body of the dancer. In truth it was the King of serpents who danced, possessing the body of the snake-charmer, he was playing his part pretty well. The dance that was performed by Sri Krishna in the lake of Kaliya, was the subject of the pathetic song sung at a high pitch. By hearing the Glories of his Lord, by the influence of the enhancing excitant (Uddipan), Haridas Thakur, transported with Divine Ecstasy, fell down unconscious. There was not the least sign of life anywhere on his body. Within a short time he got back his consciousness. He thundered with incomparable joy and danced in ecstasy in manifold ways. This attracted the attention of the dancing snake-charmer. He suddenly stopped his dance, moved to one side and stood quietly allowing the great Haridas Thakur, to have his ecstatic dance undisturbed. Haridas Thakur rolled on the ground; all the eight spiritual perturbations, such as tears, shivering, hair standing on end, etc., manifested profusely on his body. On hearing of the incomparable display of mercy by his Beloved Lord Sri Krishna, on the cruel and wicked serpent Kaliya and on recollecting it he became saturated with His presence; he wept ceaselessly. All the spectators surrounding him, sang the Glories of the Lord. All this while, the snake-charmer witnessed the dance of Haridas Thakur, with folded hands and with all reverence. This divine spell of inspiration of Haridas Thakur lasted for a short time. On its completion, the original dancer once again continued his programme as usual. All the people, gathered there to attend the performance, were highly impressed and extremely delighted by witnessing the divine trance of Thakur Haridas. They, with excessive joy besmeared their bodies with the holy feet-dust of Haridas Thakur.

Artificial display of trance

A hypocritical and ambitious Brahmin from amongst the spectators, thought that he, being a Hindu, by imitating Thakur Haridas, would command greater respect than the latter. So he started his silly game of dancing in a mock fit of frenzy and fell down as if senseless, the snake-

charmer, noticing this cheat of a devotee, approached him and mercilessly thrashed him. Unable to bear the severe beatings, the Brahmin ran for his life and was not seen again. The snake-charmer restarted his joyous dance to the astonishment of all the spectators, who humbly requested him to explain to them the cause of his strange behaviour.

Thakur eulogised

On hearing the words of the spectators, the serpent through the mouth of the snake-charmer replied thus - "You were all moved by the devotional fervour of Thakur Haridas and began to admire this ardent devotee. This hypocrite of a Brahmin, to gain the admiration of all of you as a devotee, started aping Thakur Haridas, till I adequately punished him, when he ran away to save his skin." Such sort of shameless deceivers have no devotion to Sri Krishna. One may attain devotion to Sri Krishna only when he is completely freed from all such insincere desires. The dance of Haridas Thakur, which all of you have just now witnessed, is capable of bringing to an end all worldly bondage. Sri Krishna Himself dances, when Haridas Thakur dances and the entire universe is sanctified by beholding his dance. He is worthy of his name 'Haridas - the servant of Sri Hari'. Really the Beloved Supreme Lord Sri Krishna is constantly sporting in his heart. He is ever-merciful to all living beings, and a true benefactor of one and all. He appears with the Lord in every Manifestation of His. He is an eternal associate of the Lord. Being an eternal associate, he is ever free from all offences towards Bhagavan or His Bhaktas. He does follow the wrong path even in his unguarded moments. If anyone as a result of the accumulated heaps of meritorious deeds performed in previous births, is fortunate enough to get his company even for a short while, he undoubtedly attains eternal shelter at the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna. Even the great gods like Brahma, Siva, etc., derive extreme delight in the company of such devotees and always desire their association. In order to prove the utter uselessness of caste, creed, lineage, etc., in the performance of the devotional services of Bhagavan, he has taken birth in a family of low lineage, being directed by the Lord to that effect. All the scriptures unanimously declare that a devotee of the Lord, even if born in a family of a low caste, is still an object of worship. Conversely, if even after being born of high lineage, one fails to worship the Supreme Lord, he is unworthy of any attention being bestowed upon him. His high birth leads him only to the vortex of hell.¹⁰⁹

Like Prahlada in the clan of demons, and Hanuman amongst the monkeys, Thakur Haridas took his birth amongst the Muslims. Ordinarily men are always eager to get themselves purified by offerings to gods as well as by having a dip in the sacred water of the river Ganges. But, even those gods themselves long for the touch of Haridas Thakur. The holy Ganges herself desires that Haridas Thakur should bathe in her sacred water. Why a touch? The mere sight of Haridas destroys one's eternal

109 ya eṣāṃ puruṣāṃ sāksād ātma-prabhavam īśvaram
na bhajanty avajānanti sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.5.3)

bondage. By the sight of even those who have taken shelter in Haridas too, the bondage of worldliness is rooted out. You are all fortunate to enjoy the company of the glorious Haridas. What I told you now, is only a minute fraction of his greatness. I assure you in all sincerity that he who utters the name of Haridas even once will definitely attain the eternal realm of Sri Krishna." So saying the King of serpents concluded his narration; he became silent. All those assembled there, were highly satisfied on hearing this speech. Thus, the great serpent, a real devotee of Bhagavan Sri Vishnu, proclaimed to the world the glories of Haridas Thakur. The audience was convinced beyond a shadow of doubt about the high position of Haridas Thakur. They loved him more than ever.

Navadvip and its religious bankruptcy

Thakur Haridas passed his days in chanting the Name of the Lord. Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu was still silent and had not yet manifested the purpose of His Advent to the world. The world was badly in need of a religious awakening. Nowhere could one see devotion to Sri Vishnu. There was a small group of devotees living at Navadvip. These devotees were the targets of so many unpleasant taunts and criticisms from the utterly fallen materialists. In short, conditions all around, were pathetic and pitiable. Noticing the lamentable plight of the people and their utter indifference towards the path of devotion to Sri Vishnu, the magnanimous Haridas Thakur was immoderately pained at heart. He chanted the Name of the Lord loudly. Even to this, there was opposition from the atheistic neighbours. These sinners could not bear the Name of Sri Hari, chanted by others. The very ideal itself kindled burning wrath in them. A certain wicked Brahmin belonging to the village Harinadi in the district of Jessore in East Bengal, took serious objection to the procedure of Haridas Thakur. He lost his temper and angrily asked Haridas Thakur. "Haridas! Why do you behave like this? What makes you to utter the Name so loudly? Our religion advocates only low muttering of the Name. What is your scriptural authority to chant the Name so loudly? Who taught you to shout the Name of the Lord like this? Well, here is an assembly of pandits (scholars in Sastras). Let them judge your say on this matter."

The efficacies of loud chanting

"Well my friends! Haridas Thakur replied, "It needs no mention that you all know the marvellous Efficacy and Glory of the Divine Name. I have never read the Sastras with the object of collecting materials for arguing with others. I have been only recapitulating what I have heard, from all Sadhus like you, who have taken recourse to the Chanting of the Name and I would, at any cost, continue the same in future as well. By taking the Name aloud, the effect is increased a hundredfold. The Sastras do not condemn it; on the contrary, they all emphatically praise the benefits accruing from such a course. **"By loud chanting the effect is enhanced a hundredfold."** **"Meditation will succeed only when performed by one alone and in a lonely place, whereas, Sankirtan**

can be performed either in solitude, alone or in the company of multitudes."¹¹⁰

To this statement of Haridas Thakur, the Brahmin retorted. "Why should loud chanting of the Holy Name increase merit hundredfold? How do you account for this?" Haridas Thakur replied, "Hear me, sir: The Sastras, such as the Vedas, Srimad Bhagavata, etc., have answered this fact unambiguously." Haridas Thakur was not a layman He had an extraordinary command over all the Sastras. Absorbed in spiritual ecstasy, he gave an inspiring exposition on the above theme. "Listen, O Brahmin! **By hearing once the Holy Name of Sri Krishna, subhuman being - birds, insects, etc., attain the sacred realm Vaikunth.**" **"For he who utters Your Name purifies forthwith not only himself, but even all others who listen to him. Hence, what doubt is there that he who is blessed by the touch of your Lotus Feet can in all respects liberate others?"**¹¹¹

"Beasts, birds, insects, etc., are not endowed with the power of speech. They too are the creations of the Supreme Lord. In them also there exists a soul just as in the case of us, human beings. They can be helped only by making them hear the Holy Name. They attain final liberation only by this process. They are not accessible to any other course of religious training. **The muttering or the inaudible repetition of the Name of Sri Krishna helps to attain one's own spiritual progress, whereas, loud chanting helps the good of many others who happen to hear such utterance from a genuine Bhakta. Hence, the Sastras declare the effect to the hundredfold and advocate and praise loud chanting of the Name.**

"It is proper that chanting of Sri Hari-Nama aloud, should be hundred times better than repeating It inaudibly, as the latter sanctifies the reciters themselves, whereas, the former sanctifies all others who hear It."¹¹²

"Puranas praise a loud chanter of the Name a hundred times better than the low mutterer. If one, who mutters the Holy Name within himself, living in any lonely place, happens to hear other material sounds, he is

110 uccaiḥ sata-guṇam bhavet
(śrī caitanya-bhāgavata ādi 16.274)
nāmā saṅkīrtana cedamuccaireva praśastam
(krama-sandarbha)
ekākīrtvena tu dhyānam vivikte khalu sidhyati
saṅkīrtanam vivikte'pi bahūnām saṅgato'pi ca
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.157)

dhyānantu ekākīrtvena tatra vivikte nirjanapradāśa eva siddhyati khalviti
evameva siddhyennānyatheti niścīnoti | evam bahuvighnasattayā tattadabhāve
sati tasyā siddhiruktā kīrtanantu sadaiva siddhyatītyāhuḥ saṅkīrtanamiti

111 yan-nāma gr̥hṇann akhilān śrotṛn ātmānam eva ca
sadyaḥ punāti kiṁ bhūyas tasya spr̥ṣṭaḥ padā hi te
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.34.17)

112 japato harināmāni sthāne śata guṇādhikaḥ
ātmānañca punātyuccair japan śrotr̥n punāti ca
(nāradiya purāṇa; śrī caitanya-bhāgavata, ādi 16.283)

likely to be led away from his cherished goal and its ultimate realisation may be put off. Being ignorant of the doctrine of name, dim reflection of the Name (Namabhas), and offensive repetition of the Name (Namaparadha) and their respective positions, a low mutterer of the Name is always apt to commit a grave offence and thereby deprive himself of all the real benefits of the chanting of the Name. Please hear with rapt attention the real cause of this difference between both the types of aspirants. The inaudible chanting of the Name, as I have already mentioned, helps that particular individual alone, whereas, by the loud performance of the Sankirtan of Sri Govinda, all the beings, human as well as subhuman, are delivered from the clutches of Maya. Some are selfish in maintaining only themselves, whereas, a few help thousands of others in addition to themselves and their near ones to survive in this world. Of these two sections of people whom do you prefer most? You know yourselves. The same is applicable to the answer to your query." **From the above example we can understand that one who loudly chants the Name of the Lord is not only unselfish, but at the same time, a positively selfless and generous-hearted person. So it is obvious that the loud chanting of the Holy Name is hundred times better than muttering the same.**

"The performance of the chant of the Name of Sri Hari with a loud voice is alone the highest form of doing good to others. Selfish persons adopt the method of mental recitations, meditations, control of the breath, etc. The supreme goal of the individual soul is not realised by such mundane endeavours. The all round good of the Jiva can be achieved by the chant of the Holy Name and discourse on Sri Hari incessantly - without stopping for a single moment."

The above reply of Haridas Thakur did not satisfy this stiff-necked Brahmin to the slightest extent. It only provoked his anger. He burst out in all fury. "Now, this Haridas has become the maker of our philosophy. In India, we are having six famous philosophies founded by six different great personalities, such as (1) Sankhya by Kapil, (2) Yoga by Patanjali, (3) Vaiseshik by Kanada, (4) Nyaya by Gautam, (5) Purva-Mimamsa by Jaimini, and (6) Uttar-Mimamsa or Vedanta Darsan by Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyas. This is an addition - the seventh one. Strange are the ways of Kali! With the passage of time our Vedic religion will come to an end when exponents like Haridas spring up. Who knows how many more such philosophies we may have in future? The prediction of the Sastras that the Sudras will expound Veda towards the end of this dark age, has even now come true. We shall not have to wait for such a long time as the end of the Yuga".¹¹³

"By expounding the Sastras thus, you go about from house to house eating delicious food. If your explanation is not consonant with the Sastras, I shall see that your nose and ears are cut off immediately."

113 "In this dark age, wealth is the criterion to judge the position of birth or ancestry, moral character and qualities of a person, and in settling principles of righteousness and justice, physical might would be the deciding factor." Bh. 12.2.2

Haridas Thakur did not respond to this expression of irrepressible arrogance. He received it with a smile uttering the Name of Sri Hari. Forthwith he left the scene loudly singing the Holy Name and without giving any reply to this rank materialist, a pervert of the first magnitude. The people of the assembly there, were also of the same fibre as of the wicked Brahmin - a group of worst sinners. In a couple of days after this incident, this wretched Brahmin had to reap the bitter consequences of his action in the form of an attack of virulent small-pox which took away his nose.

The soft-hearted and merciful Haridas Thakur felt deeply pained at heart while brooding over the condition of the world. Frequently uttering

"By external marks alone, humanity would distinguish persons who belong to the Asramas like Brahmacharya, Sanyas, etc., and even the change from one particular Asram to the other too, is effected by the same process of outer signs and dress; paying respects on occasions of mutual meetings too, are based on the same standard. Financial bankruptcy would bring utter failure in deciding matters of justice, and a flow of words is considered as a sign of wisdom and learning." Bh.12.2.4

"Poverty alone is taken to judge a man, a vicious one, while an arrogant pretender passes off as virtuous; marriages are conducted on mere verbal agreements, and a mere bath is regarded as sanctify and piety in a man." Bh. 12.2.5

"The act of visiting any source of water situated at a long distance, would be treated as pilgrimage to a holy water, rather than visiting spiritual preceptors; careful hair dressing in fashionable ways is considered grace, filling one's own belly is regarded as the sole purpose of life, audacious and vociferous expressions are accepted as truthful sayings, maintenance of one's family is hailed as great skill in action, and the purpose of performing religious functions would be necessary only for attaining name and fame in the world." Bh.12.2.6

"Void of righteousness and any sense of honesty, businessmen, all born with loathsome mentalities, carry out their transaction. Humanity even when there is no alarming or calamitous conditions, take resort to courses of living highly condemned by the righteous, taking them to be appropriate." Bh.12.3.35

"Even the best of masters, who are repositories of all virtues, are deserted by their servants, when such masters are financially depressed. Masters too, mercilessly abandon their good old servants of longstanding service and of good heredity, if they become invalid or disabled or otherwise are in difficulty; likewise people discard supporting their old cows, when they cease to yield milk." Bh. 12.3.36

"In the age of Kali men will be so lamentably degraded as to become slaves of women. They will discard their parents, brothers, well-wishers, and agnates on the advice of their sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, due to centring their affection on these relations of the women, contributing to their sexual pleasures." Bh.12.3.37

"In this age of Kali people pickup unpleasant quarrels even for a single pie, forsaking all friendliness, and never hesitate even to risk their own precious and most affectionate lives, or to kill the nearest kith and kin." Bh.12.3.41

"People guided by selfish motives of gratifying their own sensual passions and voracious appetites, unscrupulously desert their old parents, their wives of noble ancestry, and their own children, and never care to protect them." Bh. 12.3.42

the Name 'Krishna' he heaved deep sighs of grief. He lost all his liking to live in the midst of such a decaying society, and longed ardently the company of some sincere devotee, and left for Navadvip.

Devotion to Bhagavan has become a disappointing subject which most people dislike. Men and women appear artificial and lose themselves totally, in what we call 'creature-comforts'. The nobler qualities of humanity are not to be seen anywhere. They are replaced by irreligious living, irreligious ideologies, selfishness, hatred, narrow sectarian bias, etc.

In this dark age, many of the Asurik persons, will be taking birth in Brahmin houses, to bring chaos and destruction to the divine social order, and to disturb the peace and happiness the really good few are enjoying. "The demons under the protection of Kali age, taking birth in Brahmin societies, would harass the few who are really versed in the scriptures."¹¹⁴

The above statement of the Sastras is not an exaggeration in the least sense. What we experience in our noble land at present, is already recorded earlier. If Brahmins, the highest according to the fourfold division of caste, and hence guides of the other three castes, are to meet with such a deplorable fall from the high status of morality, devotion, celibacy, religious sacrifices, etc., what would be the condition of those who depend upon them? If roots get rotten how can a tree survive? In fact, according to the Sastras, these are the real untouchables. All the Dharma Sastras strictly forbid us to have any relationship with them. Those who are very proud of their seminal birth, and cherish in them an inborn hatred to Bhaktas and Bhagavan, do not deserve any relationship whatsoever. If one meets such a person, he should forthwith try to avoid them by all means. Even to have a touch of such persons, will not only pollute one, but will pave the way to unending miseries. In our present fettered state, we are more prone to the influence of evil company than those of virtuous and holy saints. When a mere touch of those persons, involves us in unhappy

"In this Kali Yuga, misguided by the false representations of disbelievers, and deprived of proper understanding, men do not offer worship to the most glorious Primeval Lord Sri Hari, Whose Lotus Feet are the object of devotion and reverence, to gods like Brahma, Siva, etc." Bh.12.3.43

"People in this age, would never worship the Supreme Lord Sri Hari, Whose Name even if unconsciously uttered by a man, at his last moments of life, when he is bedridden, extremely afflicted, deprived of strength, and unable to move the limbs even, makes one attain the highest goal, completely rid of all evil bonds of Karma." Bh.12.3.44

"The Supreme Lord Sri Purushottam, by making His appearance in the devotional heart of one who meditates on Him, completely wipes out all evils, born during the courses of religious performances, due to defects of substance, place, and body arising by the working of Kali." Bh.12.3.45

"Men are freed from all their sins, committed in innumerable births by taking resort to listening, singing, meditating, worshipping, and reversing the glorious and omnipresent Lord and his Transcendental Deeds. It is Sri Hari present in everyone's heart that destroys all these sins." Bh.12.3.46

114 rākṣasāḥ kalim āśritya jāyante brahma-yoniṣu
utpannā brāhmaṇa-kule bādhante śrotriyān kṛṣṇān
(varāha purāṇa; śrī caitanya-bhāgavata, ādi 16.301)

consequences, what to speak of bowing down to them or to have exchange of ideas with them?

"Why should I speak any further on this subject? One should never have any contact or discourse even by mistake with those Brahmins, who are averse to Bhagavan Sri Vishnu."¹¹⁵

"Just as one avoids the company of a Chandala (living upon the flesh of dogs), one must not even glance at a Brahmin who has no devotion to Sri Vishnu. **A devotee of Sri Vishnu even if he is outside the Varnas, sanctifies the three worlds.**"¹¹⁶

In this phenomenal world, there is a twofold process of creation. The difference in process corresponds to a variation of aptitude in the created beings. Srimad Bhagavad-Gita says thus:-

"In this world there are two kinds of created entities, viz., Daiva, and Asura."¹¹⁷ Sri Vyasadev supports the same statement in Padma Purana with another equal version. There are two distinct classes of entities in the phenomenal world, viz., Daiva, and Asura. The devotees of Sri Vishnu are Daiva, while the Asuras have the opposite disposition.

One kind of creation concerns itself with Devas. There is a second variety, which is constitutionally opposed to the Devas, who are possessed of an enlightened disposition and polished behaviour. The functions represented by the spiritual classification in Society, according to the dispositions and activities (Varnasram), are in conformity with the Daiva nature. These twofold creations have been prevailing since time immemorial. Hiranyakasipu and Hiranyaksha, who lived in Satya Yuga, are designated as Asuras by reason of their hostility to Sri Vishnu and Vaishnavas. These two brothers were the sons of Kasyapa Rishi, who was a Brahmin. Although he was sprung from a Brahmin family, Hiranyakasipu degenerated into an Asura, by reason of his hostility to Sri Vishnu and Vaishnavas. On the other hand a Vaishnav or devotee of Sri Vishnu may manifest his birth in an Asura family. The great Prahlada, the son of Hiranyakasipu, is a vivid example of this. Visvasrava, in Treta Yuga, was an eminent Brahmin Rishi. But, his son Ravana was a well-known Asura. By reason of his antagonism to Sri Ramachandra, he turned out to be an Asura.

In Srimad Bhagavata, the following regulation is stated as underlying the institution of the Daiva classification by disposition and condition in life. "The characteristics by which the status of a person in theistic society is indicated have been already stated. If those characteristics are found in a person, belonging by birth to a different class, he is to be spoken of as

115 kim atra bahunoktena brāhmaṇā ye hy avaiṣṇavāḥ
teṣāṃ sambhāṣaṇaṃ sparśaṃ pramādenāpi varjjayet
(padma purāṇa; śrī caitanya-bhāgavata, ādi 16.303)

116 śvapākam iva nekṣeta loke vipram avaiṣṇavam
vaiṣṇavo varṇa bāhyo 'pi punāti bhuvana-trayam
(padma purāṇa; śrī caitanya-bhāgavata, ādi 16.304)

117 dvau bhūta-sargau loke 'smin daiva āsura eva ca
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 16.6)

one of the class that corresponds to his natural disposition. Mere birth alone is not sufficient for one to come under a particular class; conduct also is necessary."¹¹⁸ Sri Sridhar Svami while commenting on this Sloka mentions thus: - "In the classification, Brahmin, etc., the possession of corresponding qualities, like equanimity, self-control, etc., is important and not birth alone."

In other words, a person should be spoken of, as belonging to a particular class of his individual disposition. This is the basic principle of regulation of the institution of theistic society (Daiva Varnasram). Birth is not the only determining principle of caste. The determination of the respective classes, by the more important test of disposition, is the real Vedic regulation. Even if a person born in any class other than Brahmin, is found to possess qualities worthy of a genuine Brahmin, it is incumbent on the Brahmins to admit that person, without any reservation, as a Brahmin, by the test of disposition. If this is not done such abstention is sinful. Any connection with a person of atheistical disposition, destroys all the merits, that one has so far gathered by various good deeds.

118 yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiśet
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 7.11.35)

HARIDAS THAKUR AT NAVADVIP

HARIDAS Thakur had a cordial reception at Navadvip. The group of devotees there, were extremely delighted to have him in their midst. They rejoiced in his company beyond expression. The joy of Advaita Acharya outweighed that of all the rest. He treated Haridas Thakur as more than his own self. All other devotees too had a special attraction for Haridas Thakur. He also, in return was very obedient and devotional to them. In the sweet company of all these devotees, mutually discussing on the Excellences of the Supreme Lord daily, Haridas Thakur resided at Navadvip as a favourite guest of Advaita Acharya. While at Santipur, Haridas Thakur used to pay occasional visits to Navadvip, situated seventy miles to the north of Calcutta on the banks of the river Bhagirathi. During the time of Thakur Haridas, it was a progressive town, especially eminent in learning. It was here that Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Embodiment of Transcendental Bliss, the Greatest Exponent of Prem Bhakti and Nama-Sankirtan manifested his Advent towards the concluding years of the 15th century.

The then condition of Navadvip

During the time of Haridas Thakur, the conditions prevailing in Navadvip, that vast centre of education, were utterly disappointing. There was a lamentable deterioration of religious ideas and ideals there. Sri Vrindavandas Thakur in his celebrated work 'Sri Chaitanya Bhagavata' describes the then condition thus: - "The world was utterly bereft on any sign of religion. People appeared to be extremely busy in satisfying the baser instincts of humanity. Even those who expounded Srimad Bhagavad-Gita and Srimad Bhagavata, never observed or made mention of Bhakti or Nama-Sankirtan, nor did they ask their faithful followers to practise them in their lives."¹¹⁹

No sacred book of the Hindus is as popular as Srimad Bhagavad-Gita. It is regarded as a standard book of religion not only by the Hindus in India but even non-Hindus throughout the length and breadth of the globe. Emanating directly from the Holy Mouth of Bhagavan Sri Krishna, it is a synthesis of all the existing religious truths of the world, a reconciliation of all the conflicting theories, true essence of all the Upanishads, a benevolent guide and a loving companion to the travellers of life eternal. It is a veritable reservoir of inspiring religious truths of practical value.
Unconditional surrender and love to Bhagavan form the substance

119 ati paramārtha-śunya sakala saṁsāra
tuccha-rasa viṣaye se ādara sabāra
gītā bhāgavata vā paḍāya ye-ye-jana
tā'rā o nā bale, nā balaya kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana
(śrī caitanya-bhāgavata ādi 16.7-8)

of the entire scripture. It is a pity - nay, utter ill-luck on the part of the expounders of this book to twist precious Slokas to suit mere empiric sense and thereby misguide the ignorant public.

Who has not in India heard about Srimad Bhagavata? It is accepted as the greatest devotional work by all the sincere devotees of the Lord. It is the most splendid and authoritative commentary of the Brahma Sutras from the pen of the author himself the great sage Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa, an explanatory meaning of the great epic Mahabharata, a marvellous exposition of the sacred Gayatri **and an epitomised quintessence of all the revealed scriptures. This great book has exercised an enormous influence, on the life of numerous persons in India, who pine for the development in them of unalloyed devotion or Prem Bhakti in Bhagavan. This work is a perennial ocean of loving devotion to Sri Krishna.** It is equally disappointing, that the dry intellectual exponents of Navadvip, did not spare this favourite book of the loving devotees also, from their far-fetched habitual twisting of words into peculiar ways giving forth queer meanings. We must thank them, however, that they did not totally destroy it from the face of the earth, for promoting their materialistic views.

The Bhaktas of Navadvip gathered in solitary places, and performed Kirtan by clapping their hands. Even this unostentatious performance could not escape the scathing criticism of the anti-Godly elements of the town. They abused the devotees indiscriminately. "Why do these people bawl out like this? I am Brahma, that ever pure, eternal existence. Why should they make this difference as servant and master? For the purpose of securing alms, they have adopted this method as the most convenient procedure. Come on, let us break their houses and throw them out." From the few sentences stated above, one can have a vivid picture of the disposition of most of the inhabitants of Navadvip during the time of Thakur Haridas. They were in the terrible grip of a dangerous type of atheism. The theoretical philosophy that they favoured, denounced religion and its ideals as the worst possible hindrance to social unity. Every activity was viewed from the point of economic value and satisfaction of the material senses. Those few innocent devotees, the real benefactors of humanity, were unfortunately the target of all their attacks and humiliations.

Contemporary world

The state of affairs that is prevailing in our country at present, is not much better than what it was in Navadvip a few centuries ago. A mild but incomplete and superficial survey of the conditions then prevailing, may be helpful to us to realise at firsthand, the current shaping of events in our contemporary world. Though we boast in every field that we are living in a far superior and civilised world, the fundamental problems of life remain unsolved. Never before in the history of the world was humanity so badly in need of peace as today. We have totally forgotten the noble ideals of ancient heritage, and hence are being violently tossed about by the waves

of materialistic ideas and ideals, and are about to meet, with the worst possible destruction. Our native-land which was once a veritable granary, of all the noble qualities of humanity, is now converted into a hotbed of all ugly vices. How to save ourselves from this deplorable plight? Unless we make a desperate attempt to revive with full force our cultural civilisation, our spiritual heritage, and take absolute shelter in the infallible Truths of our noble religion, there is little hope of surviving this terrible catastrophe that is facing us today. The glory of our motherland, India, lies not in its high mountains or abysmal valleys, panoramic views or the splendidly rich plantations. No, not even in the snowclad lofty peaks, vast plateaus or the evergreen plains, neither in its industrial output nor in its economic advancements, neither in its political freedom nor in a network of well laid cement concrete roads, but in its unrivalled and inexhaustible spiritual treasures. In this sacred land Bharatavarsha, every true Hindu claims religion as his heritage, the alpha and omega of his life. Did not our elders fulfil this virtue in their everyday life? The soil itself in India has got a special feature. Yes, it is impregnated with a religious instinct.

"Religion, what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word
More precious than silver and gold
Or all that this earth can afford."

How impressive is the above poem! How inspiring! **Religion is an essential - nay, indispensable factor, a sine qua non of human progress. It is the back-bone of man.** He cannot escape it. The innumerable complicated problems facing man at every moment is found satisfactorily answered by religion alone. Man does not find help and solace in any sphere of life other than religion. Man without religion or belief in God is like a seed upon the wind, driven this way and that, finding no place of lodgement for germinating. The various calamities that are threatening us with destruction, moral and material and above all spiritual, can easily be tackled by a religious renaissance.

"Materialistic outlook and the worship of mammon and the neglect of God, are supposed to usher in this era when the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and pride of life degrade man." "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? (Matthew, Gospel 1, ch. 16, 26)". The above two statements from the Christian Scriptures too, reinforce the views that we have pursued so far.

The cause of all the sufferings that humanity is subject to at present, is due to his aversion to God. Someone has properly put it as follows: - "From irreligion is the real nature of everything perverted. Sorrow springs from irreligion only. When irreligion stalks the land, the seasons, the rains, the air, the earth, and plant-life all become vitiated. Then and then only do floods and droughts, pestilence and disease, rapine and bloodshed, sweep the unfortunate land and leave it a prey to disaster and destruction."¹²⁰

120 adharma mūlam vaigunyam vāyvādīnām prajāyate
adharmādhi bhavet choṣo jalānām nānyathā kvacit
adharmā bhībhavāddoṣād vikṛtiṃ yānti sarvathā
ṛtur vṛṣṭis tathā vāyur bhūmi roṣadhire vaca

Is service of God a necessity?

The service of God is the inherent and natural function of every pure soul inseparable from its very constitution. The dislike to the service of God is due to our close association with worldliness which clouds our natural disposition to serve our Maker. We are dynamic beings; stagnancy is alien to us. **Our true inclination is always Godward, towards the realisation of the divine consciousness, within and without. It is only this experience of the divine consciousness that enhances the irresistible urge or bent of our mind, that long-standing desire for Transcendental Bliss.** If we follow this true inward urge of the Jivatma, we become happy and perfect, failing which we get caught in the whirlpool of worldliness, worries, and woes, from which there is no escape. **Service to God is the only noble virtue that unites us, all beings together, inspiring in us the presence of the Divinity. It reveals to us the true vision of life and enables us to experience the manifestations of the divine mystery.** We also realise the true nature of all things around us, our own self, and its relation with all of them. The want of this virtue converts us to isolated beings, guided by selfishness, impelled by uncontrollable lust for power, which lashes out its bitterness leading to utter destruction. The one contagion that has eaten up the vitals of the present day world, is due to its aversion to the service of God, which is the backbone of every well regulated society and the bedrock of human solidarity.

Why does God create us?

Man is said to be an imperfect image of his Maker. The human souls in their real nature, are infinitesimal parts of the Supreme God - emanations of the Lord's marginal energy, like the rays of the sun, which owe their existence entirely to the latter. But the sun never owes its existence to the rays. A father finds expressions of delight, playfulness, etc., in the children. He always takes care of their well-being. They contribute towards maintaining a sprightly atmosphere in the house. They do not challenge his delightful ways and fancies; on the contrary, they submit and render whole-hearted services to him. **Similarly He removes the boredom of the world by mixing alternately in our lives, happiness and sorrow, to bring out the beauty of happiness against the background of the latter. Or else, all would get tired of even enjoying happiness continuously. He thus maintains the harmony and sprightliness in this world.**

Is God so heartless?

This is a baseless charge on the over Merciful Lord. If it were so, the condition of the world would be unimaginable and inhabitable. The cyclic occurrences of the seasons, supply of ample provisions for meeting the legitimate needs of humanity, unity, justice, etc., and over and above **the appearance of innumerable venerable saints, the favourites of the**

Lord to show proper light to us - fallen children groping in darkness and to lead us to life and light eternal, are nothing but genuine expressions of His true compassion to us. It is He, Who out of sheer Mercy, preserves us - ungrateful creatures, who audaciously question His right to do as He thinks best. The infallible scriptures too, that speak of the Eternal Truth and the appearance of His Advent, as Plenary and Partial Aspects, are nothing but the true expressions of His boundless Mercy to us. The Mercy of the Divine Lord manifests Itself in many ways. If we deeply and with an unbiased mind, study the world and its everyday occurrences, we surely do feel the Merciful Hand of our Maker, Who guides us - His children blind with lust of every kind. He tends us, as no mother ever does, with the Milk of His Divine Mercy and whenever we show signs of our dare-devilry, He mixes it with small doses of bitter sufferings to remove our incurable malady, and to redeem our erring souls. It is but quite natural that He should be partial to His ardent devotees or Bhaktas, like the father who likes his well-behaved children better than the erring ones, who even receive punishment from him for their betterment. If the children are not punished in time, the father will have to bear the opprobrium for the neglect of his children and dereliction of duty towards them. 'Spare the rod and spoil the child,' is a well known saying. He never fails to reward them when they are reformed. The father never punishes his children just to satisfy his sadistic or perverted tendencies. He is solely guided by the necessity to reform them and their welfare. **Similarly, the Lord too punishes us and will desist from doing so the moment we show the signs of reformation. On a careful scrutiny, a wise person will take the events as the best display of impartial justice and fairplay. He has endowed us with discretion. We make or mar our own destinies. **The Lord is always impartial. We cannot impute any ulterior motives to His actions, which are guided solely by a spirit of fair play.** 'As we sow, so we reap.'**

Where does God hide?

There are no hardships or restrictions too great to those who genuinely feel in them an incessant and uncontrollable craving to the realisation of the Lord. The obstructions on the onward march of certain aspirants are due to their extreme attachment to transitory pleasures, and transient objects of this world. As such, the Lord never imposes any restrictions, on any particular group of people, nor relaxes them in the case of others. The severity of the restrictions, and hardships felt by the aspirant, depends upon the degree of his attachment, to transient pleasures and worldly objects. Through the purificatory process of hardships and restrictions we are rendered fully eligible to experience the thrilling joy of seeing the Godhead, provided we sincerely practise loving devotion to Him. He never hides anywhere. We live in a maze of doubts and insincerity. We hide ourselves under a thick cloak of falsehood, like the ostrich that burrows its head in the desert sand. **We have to practise**

loving devotion to Him and incessantly chant His Name and He is as good as purchased. He has said in unequivocal words thus: - **"I neither stay in Vaikunth nor in the hearts of Yogis; but wherever My devotees chant My Names, there I am, O Narada!"**

Thakur joins the banner of Mahaprabhu

"Now we will revert to Haridas Thakur at Navadvip. When he paid occasional visits to Navadvip from Santipur, he halted in the 'Tol' (a school) of Sri Advaita Acharya situated in the neighbourhood of the house of Sri Srivas Pandit, a great devotee of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. There, Haridas Thakur got into touch with Srivas Pandit and others, and in their company he used to spend his time performing Kirtan. At this time, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was only a small Boy - a most wayward Boy, busy in his boyish games and funs. The purpose of His Advent was dormant deeply in Him. He had not shown any sign of manifesting charm and extraordinary features were unaccountably astounding and inspiring to the whole group of devotees - yes, even to the great Advaita Acharya. In course of time, when Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu after receiving His initiation at Gaya, changed altogether His whole outlook for a new one - the field of devotional ecstasy, the devoted residents of Navadvip including Advaita Acharya and Haridas Thakur felt highly encouraged and greatly delighted. Within a short period, the whole group found in Him their Saviour, and came under His banner, accepting Him as their accredited Leader. The new cult of Sankirtan that Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu inculcated among His devotees in the house of Srivas Pandit daily, met with tremendous opposition from a section of the community. They employed all their resources in stopping this, what seemed to them a novel religion, which they thought was against the traditions of the Hindu faith, and in harassing the devotees as well. With increasing vigour they started agitations and planned secret plots to destroy the whole movement out and out. They used filthy language and hurled abuses on the devotees; they even threatened these innocent devotees with dire consequences, including physical violence.

Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu felt the gravity of the situation. He pitied the deplorable decadence of the religious and moral principles in them, and the rapid turn of events from bad to worse. He wished to help humanity by popularising His Sankirtan principles throughout the length and breadth of His vast native town. He wanted to organise regular preaching from door to door and selected for this purpose from amongst His large list of followers, Sri Nityananda Prabhu and Haridas Thakur. He wanted them to convey His Message, **"Say Krishna, serve Krishna and practise Krishna"**¹²¹ at every door and it was executed by them faithfully. Haridas Thakur had gained the special favour of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He was now one of the most favourite followers of Sriman Mahaprabhu

121 pratighare ghare giyā kara ei bhikṣā
bala kṛṣṇa, bhaja kṛṣṇa, kara kṛṣṇa śikṣā
(śrī caitanya-bhāgavata, m. 13.9)

Thakur - The noted Bhakta of Mahaprabhu

When Sriman Mahaprabhu at another time started a crusade against the District Magistrate of Navadvip, Sirajuddin Maulana Chand Kazi, and avowed opponent of Sankirtan, by taking out a huge procession through the various streets of Navadvip, Haridas Thakur played a prominent part. The whole procession consisting of hundreds of thousands of people was divided into groups, and every group was having a party of Sankirtan to lead. Thakur Haridas was a leader of one of those Sankirtan parties, and he by his devotional dances and holy presence inspired every one of his followers beyond words. In all important activities of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu during His stay at Navadvip till His acceptance of Sanyas, there are not many incidents where we miss Haridas Thakur. He had a significant role to play in almost all events.

Mahaprabhu on Thakur

On the day of the 'Grand Revelation' by Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu at the house of Srivas Pandit, Sriman Mahaprabhu Himself in the presence of all other devotees proclaimed the glory of Haridas Thakur. He said, "Haridas! Look here. You are dearer to Me than My Own Body. I emphatically declare that there is no categorical difference between your caste and Mine. People under the influence of extreme ignorance may view things from merely the social aspect. They may attribute superiority to My Brahmin Body over your Muslim one. I say, they are utterly under the grip of sheer delusion. I assure you that there is not the least difference between ourselves. The atheistical section of the Hindus, at present consider their bodies as superior to those of Muslims. As a result of this, the Hindus are puffed up with the pride of a superior caste, which results in condemning even great devotees, who have taken birth in lower communities as inferior. These people, unfortunately, are under an erroneous notion. To a materialistic outlook, there would not be any difference between the holy body of a devotee who is exclusively engaged in the loving services of the Supreme Lord, and that of an ordinary man engrossed in material pursuits. This is, without doubt, an offensive attitude! Attributing superiority or inferiority to any, on grounds of seminal birth alone, is not the proper method of deciding such issues."

"Just as bell-metal is converted into gold by the occult potency of the touch-stone, even so, by the special influence of Bhakti, a material body is completely spiritualised. In order to establish the unparalleled glory of Bhakti, Bhagavan by His inconceivable potency, brings about the destruction of the material body of a Bhakta and blesses him with a spiritual body, and this is unnoticed by the materially minded people of the world. But, since the process is a hidden secret to the materialists, intellectualists, etc., they still hold the opinion that the devotees belong to a particular caste possessing human bodies like them and subject to

various reaction of their own actions."¹²²

"By recollecting all those atrocities inflicted upon you by those sinners, My heart breaks. When I saw you being whipped in the streets mercilessly by the employees of that wicked Kazi, I forthwith came down with My Disc with the intention of chopping them off. But what could I do? I was completely helpless, you prayed repeatedly for pardoning them. Even at the risk of your own life and the worst physical mortifications, you longed for the welfare of all those villains, your enemies. How could I refuse your prayer? I was forced to withdraw My disc. In order to relieve you from the severe pains of those whippings, I myself received them on My Body. Here they are, Even now you can see those marks of the beatings on My Body. I am not merely bluffing you. Your sorrows have made Me to hurry up to your rescue. Advaita Acharya has truly recognised your greatness. He has made Me a captive by his loving services."

Thakur sings the glories of the Lord

By hearing those words from the Holy Lips of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Haridas Thakur, transported with unbounded joy, fell down unconscious. He remained thus senseless, for awhile lost in an ocean of incomparable delight. Sriman Mahaprabhu woke him up from his spiritual swoon. He asked Haridas Thakur to witness His Revelation to his heart's entire satisfaction. Haridas Thakur could not see anything, he wept profusely. He had all the signs of spiritual perturbations on his body. He rolled on the ground; he heaved deep sighs; he swooned; why, he was overcome with divine ecstasy. His feelings had become uncontrollable. Composing himself in a short while, in all humility, and with folded hands, he praised Sriman Mahaprabhu thus:-

"O Lord! O Master of the universe! O Saviour and protector of the infinite number of worlds! Have mercy upon this sinner. You are my Sole Support. Bereft of any qualities, a fallen outcaste as I am, how can I speak of Your infinite Excellences? By my mere sight, people turned out sinners and after my touch, a complete bath was indispensable. It is Your solemn promise that You do not neglect even the lowest and smallest of Your creations, who remember Your Holy Feet and do not spare even sovereigns if they prove arrogant and ungodly. Out of Your causeless Mercy You afford shelter to all those souls who remember You. But, how unfortunate I am! I have not in me even that quality. Words fail me to express the wonderful effect of remembering You. What a marvellous

122 yathā kāñcanatām yāti kāṁsyaṁ rasa vidhānataḥ
tathā dīkṣā vidhānena dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇām
(tattva-sāgara; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 1.2.12)
dīkṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa
sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 4.192)
kṛṣṇa-bhakti-sudhā-pānād deha-daihika-vismṛteḥ
teṣāṁ bhautika-dehe'pi sac-cid-ānanda-rūpatā
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 1.3.61)

potency It possesses! What a tremendous force It carries! Did You not rescue Draupadi from the terrible grip of the villain Duhsasan, who, under the orders of his wicked brother, the arrogant Duryodhan, dragged her to a huge assembly of many eminent men, heroes, princes, ministers, etc., and made a shameless and boastful attempt to remove her clothes? Ah! How promptly and cleverly You dressed her in clothes when she wailed aloud piteously and surrendered unconditionally! Lo! In spite of all his efforts to undress her, he did not succeed in his efforts. Out of sheer exhaustion and shame he was compelled to leave the assembly, hanging his head down. "Hiranyakasipu did everything to kill his great son Prahlada. He was poisoned, thrown in the midst of huge and extremely venomous serpents, cast into burning fire, and into the sea that he might get drowned, but what was the result? Who amongst us does not know the final fate of Hiranyakasipu? By the efficacy of Your remembrance, the great Prahlada could stand all these atrocities perpetrated on him, without the least suffering.

"When once, in the midst of the wild forest, Yudhishtir remembered You, for saving them from the wrath of the sage Durvasa and his large retinue, You suddenly manifested Yourself there and saved the Pandavas by Your Mercy. You assured Yudhishtir that You would feed all the Rishis headed by Durvasa. Finally, by taking a small particle of some leafy vegetable from the vessel already kept washed, You freed Pandavas from all fear. The Rishis had to leave the place without a word, soon after their bath. They found their stomachs full, even swelling beyond capacity.

"Innumerable are Your Glories and their astounding effects! Constantly remembering You with unflinching love, is the highest of religious methods that is accessible to one and all. There is no wonder that by sporting in multifarious ways, You redeem all from the sufferings of the world.

"The life of Ajamil of yore, is another inspiring illustration that adds to the Glory of Your remembrance. Due to some unfortunate circumstances, Ajamil, giving up all his virtuous traditions, turned out a great sinner. He had not a single good deed to his credit, but, on the contrary, he was a repository of all sinful acts. During the concluding moments of his life, when the fearful messengers of death arrived to wrest his soul from his material body for carrying it to the hideous hell, he uttered the name of his last and affectionate son 'Narayana'; the whole scene changed to a new one; and by the causeless efficacy of Your remembrance he was saved from death. All his sufferings of that birth and for births to come, came to an end. There is nothing surprising in this action of Yours. All devotees are really eligible for the great treasure of Your remembrance. In spite of knowing all these wonderful effects of Your remembrance, I am such an unlucky and wretched person, that I am utterly destitute of this great wealth. But my Lord! You are an Ocean of Mercy, Overlooking all my defects, You are gracious to accept this insignificant servant. Therein lies the real nature of Your unparalleled magnanimity undeserving as I am in all respect, I have only one humble prayer at Your Feet." Before he could conclude all his words, Sriman

Mahaprabhu assured him that He would do the maximum in granting all his prayers. Sriman Mahaprabhu was immensely satisfied on hearing the devotional expressions of Haridas Thakur on the Glory of His remembrance and was looking ahead to confer upon him suitable boons. Thakur Haridas continued his prayer. "My Lord! I am an unfortunate wretch, but my demand is too high. It is like that of a dwarf aspiring after the moon. May I be blessed with the sacred remnants of those who serve You with their - body, heart, mind, and soul. May in every birth of mine, the same may be the objects of my devotion. May the idea of accepting their leavings be my duty - My religion. I have no desire for salvation or any other type of attainment of fruits. But, let not my mind even for an insignificant fraction of a moment, deviate from the above prayer of mine, i.e., for the sacred remnants of all Your favourite servants. Let this sinful life of mine bereft of your remembrance be sanctified by the holy leavings of Your genuine devotees. In all the infinite number of worlds there is no higher position than that of becoming a servant of all Thy servants. I am highly ambitious, hence I prayed for the highest position which I do not, in fact deserve. It is such a lofty position that even great gods are aspirants for it. Perhaps, my prayer may be an offensive one, owing to my ineligibility for achieving such a high attainment. O Lord! O Saviour of fallen souls! Please have the mercy to forgive and forget all the offences of this ignorant and unworthy servant committed consciously or unconsciously. O the Darling of Sachi! O my Lord! Grant me this favour, make me a dog and keep me at the house of Your devotee."

Mahaprabhu confers boons on Thakur

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was highly impressed and moved by this prayer of matchless humility. He said, "Listen, listen to Me, My dear Haridas! You are a jewel amongst the devotees. He who has gained your company even for a single day or, with whom you had conversation even for a fraction of a moment, would undoubtedly attain Me. I promise you this. Whosoever respects you, respects Me as well. I always remain in your body. It is My pride to have a servant of your mettle. You have for all time to come imprisoned Me in your loving heart. I assure you that you need not be afraid of any offence. Exempted from any offence either towards Me or towards My devotees, you are free to carry your devotional practices."

The boon conferred on Haridas Thakur was received by all other devotees with great pleasure. Who can estimate the fortune of Haridas Thakur? Neither high caste, nor birth in a great family nor the performance of noble deeds, nor even the possession of enormous wealth, would help a person to the attainment of the Lord. It is only an earnest longing, a burning appetite for the inexhaustible wealth of Divine Love that will enable one to have access to Sri Krishna.

"If the talent to be engrossed in the essence of devotion to Sri Krishna can be had anywhere, then purchase it by all means. For the price, too, is nothing but excessive passion for it, which

cannot be had even by pious deeds in crores of births."¹²³

"O Krishna! People who are puffed up with the vanities of high lineage, prosperity, scholasticism, and personal complexion are unfit to chant Your Name; it is possible only to Your sincere devotees who never identify themselves with any of the acquisitions in the world."¹²⁴

"O beautiful one! We have nothing of our own and we are always the beloved of the people who claim nothing for themselves as theirs. As such wealthy persons generally never render any service to Me."¹²⁵

"In course of this human life, if a person is not puffed up with pride due to the acquisitions of birth in noble ancestry, actions, age, personal complexion, learning, position, wealth, and such other laudable qualifications, it is to be understood as due to My Grace."¹²⁶

It is immaterial to worry about the birth of a devotee in any family. He is above all such limitations. The Sastras without a single exception declare it. "O Bhagavan! By listening to your Name and uttering Them by bowing down to You or even by remembering You, a Svapach becomes eligible to perform a Soma sacrifice. As such, what doubt is there regarding the attainment of one's goal who is favoured with Your Darsan (Presence)."¹²⁷

"O what a wonder! There are no words that can adequately describe the importance of a person who chants the Name of the Lord. He is an object of veneration to all, on the tip of whose tongue Your Name has appeared even once, be he a Svapach. Those who utter Your Name, have performed in previous births all the rites befitting Brahmins, such as all types of penance, sacrifices, bath in sacred rivers, the study of Vedas, rules of right conduct and as they, observing them completely, now in this birth, have taken resort to uttering Your Name."¹²⁸

"O Bhagavan! There is nothing surprising in the statement that Your Darsan frees mankind from all their sins; when by hearing Your Name,

123 kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvita-matiḥ kriyatām yadi kuto'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalaṁ janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate
(padyāvalī 14)

124 janmaśvarya-śruta-śrībhīr edhamāna-madaḥ pumān
naivārhaty abhidhātuṁ vai tvām akiñcana-gocaram
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.8.26)

125 niṣkiñcanā vyaṁ śaśvan niṣkiñcana-jana-priyāḥ
tasmāt prāyeṇa na hy āḍhyā māṁ bhajanti su-madhyame
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.60.14)

126 janma-karma-vayo-rūpa vidyaiśvarya-dhanādibhiḥ
yady asya na bhavet stambhas tatrāyaṁ mad-anugrahaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 8.22.26)

127 yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukīrtanād
yat-prahvaṇād yat-smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.33.6)

even once even a Chandal is delivered from the bondage of worldliness."¹²⁹

"I, the Soul of all souls and the Most Beloved of all saints, am attainable only by single-minded devotion, born of firm faith. Unflinching devotion to Me, purifies even the Chandalas from their low births."¹³⁰

"O Lord! I feel that the various qualifications, such as wealth, noble ancestry, beautiful complexion, severe austerities, vast learning, efficiency of the sense-organs, celibacy, popularity, physical strength, prowess, sharp intelligence, control of the external and internal senses, or even the practice of the eight-fold principles of Yoga are utterly incompetent to render satisfaction to the Supreme Lord."¹³¹

Prahlada was born as the son of demon Hiranyakasipu, Hanuman took his birth amongst sub-human beings - monkeys, and not in a civilised human society. But, both of them are revered as great devotees. Similarly, Haridas Thakur, born in a Muslim community too deserves the same adoration from all. Thakur Haridas preached the Holy Name of Sri Hari, in different parts of Bengal. He halted at various places with different devotees. He has left in all these places deep impressions, the influence of which, one can experience even to this day.

After the acceptance of Sanyas, Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu visited Santipur and halted at the residence of Advaita Acharya for a few days. There, on consultation with all devotees and finally with the permission of His mother Sachidevi, He determined to settle at Jagannatha Puri for the rest of His career. Haridas Thakur did not receive the news heartily. He wept bitterly, as diverse thoughts came to his mind. He anticipated gloomy days awaiting him and said piteously, "You are leaving for Nilachal. What about this unfortunate servant? How can I go over there? I am unfit for the same. This wretch is utterly deprived of your Darsan. Without seeing you, how can this sinner survive?" Sriman Mahaprabhu consoled Haridas Thakur with the most pleasing words. He

128 aho bata śva-paco 'to garīyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
brahmānūcur nāma grṇanti ye te
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.33.7)

129 na hi bhagavann aghaṭitam idaṁ
tvad-darśanān nṛṇām akhila-pāpa-kṣayaḥ
yan-nāma sakṛc chravaṇāt
pukkaśo 'pi vimucyate saṁsārāt
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.16.44)

130 bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām
bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā śva-pākān api sambhavāt
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.14.21)

131 manye dhanābhijana-rūpa-tapaḥ-śrutaujas-
tejaḥ-prabhāva-bala-pauruṣa-buddhi-yogaḥ
nārādhanaḥ hi bhavanti parasya puṁso
bhaktyā tutoṣa bhagavān gaja-yūtha-pāya
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 7.9.9)

said, "Haridas! Your unparalleled humility moves My heart passionately. I shall certainly plead before Sri Jagannatha on your behalf. I am sure, Sri Jagannatha will favour Me, and you will be taken there shortly."

Haridas Thakur had full belief in temples and the modes of worship followed there. Sriman Mahaprabhu's decision to leave Navadvip, had created a great fear in him. Devotees do not break the rules and regulations laid out by Sastras, nor even social customs. No non-Hindu was allowed to enter into the temple precincts. Hence, if Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu decides to reside inside the temple area, he thought he was undone. He would not have even a glance of Sriman Mahaprabhu. On account of this his condition was for some time, like that of a fish out of water or that of a bird with wings clipped off. Subsequently, when he came to know that there was no such objection for a member of any caste to reside in a certain sandy area, situated a little away from the said temple limits, he felt relieved of a great anxiety, he had his hopes revived. Soon after he received the news that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had decided to stay at the residence of Sri Kasi Misra, the joy of Haridas Thakur knew no bounds.

HARIDAS THAKUR AT PURI

Thakur - the inspiring ideal of humility

WITHIN a short period after Sriman Mahaprabhu settled at Nilachal, Haridas Thakur reached that place in the company of other devotees from Bengal. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had strong affection for Haridas Thakur. He was extremely delighted to hear the news of the arrival of Haridas Thakur and other devotees. All devotees except Haridas Thakur proceeded directly to Sriman Mahaprabhu. He received them all. But, Haridas Thakur was conspicuous by his absence. Sriman Mahaprabhu was very eager to meet Haridas Thakur and on inquiry, He received the surprising news that Haridas Thakur was lying prostrate at a long distance on the road itself. Sriman Mahaprabhu immediately sent for him, but Haridas Thakur preferred to remain aloof. He said, "I am of a low caste, a most unworthy person. I do not deserve to go to the temple limits. If I am favoured with a small space somewhere inside the garden close by, I could lead a lonely happy life by remaining there. I need not touch the Sevakas of Sri Jagannatha and pollute them, and thereby stand in their way of service of the Lord. Hence, I prefer to remain aloof; this is my humble desire."

Temple and ritualistic worship

Sriman Mahaprabhu was very happy to hear this decision of Haridas Thakur. Though there was none to stand in the way of Haridas Thakur going to the temple or to any other sacred place, he was never a supporter of entering the temple by his own initiative or by force, disregarding all the social barriers. Such entry into the premises of the temple is a deliberate denial of the importance of the temple as a place of religious worship, and hence of its very sanctity itself. Such entry, would not improve a man morally or spiritually. Temple is not a place where every individual can exercise his whimsical fads or idiosyncratic rights. It is not a place of exhibition or amusement or secular entertainment. It is neither a place for satisfying the political or social ambitions of men. It is invariably a place of religious worship that stands solely for the spiritual amelioration of mankind, a place from where thousands and thousands get spiritual inspiration. One should approach such a holy place with real submissiveness, united to a God-fearing temperament and faith in Divine Objects for purposes of prayer or worship and not for the satisfaction of one's turbulent material senses or with a challenging claim to social right.

A few words on temple entry

Entry into the temple is allowable only to those who seek the same for religious worship. Forcing entrance into the temple either at the points of bayonets or by offering bribe to those people who are unenlightened in the principles and conduct of even proper behaviour in the temple precincts, is a grave crime against the very institution. Those who are utterly ignorant of the importance of the temple, the sanctity of the worship and the real nature of the Object worshipped there, fail to receive any benefit even after entering into the temple. Thieves, who somehow manage to force their entry into the temple precincts, do not become spiritual persons, unless they are favoured by the Lord's Mercy. Similarly, the various employees, who have made temple as their residence too, remain in the same ignorant stage. By entering into the temple alone, men do not become broad-minded, cultured, or God-realised. 'Nearer the Church, farther from God', is a wise saying. To those who believe in the inspiring position of the temple, it is a place of great sanctity where the Archa (Holy Image) is worshipped with ritualistic principles as laid down in the Sastras. The Holy Image or Archa that is worshipped in the temple is not a product of matter designed by the imaginative brain of a mortal and carved out by any ordinary sculptor of the same category. It is not any ordinary piece of stone, wood, metal, marble, or any other lifeless object of this world as many of us think. It is the Visible Manifestation of the Lord in this mortal plane. There are hundreds of instances that illustrate the Divine Nature of the Holy Images and the wonderful deeds that They have performed in different places in relation to different devotees. If we patiently study the history of certain temples we are sure to have a marvellous revelation on certain hidden secrets and Glories of These Holy Images. In many places, Their origin is untraceable, and hence is a great mystery even today. They have manifested Themselves under peculiar circumstances. Though They appear to be lifeless and immovable Images to a completely materialised vision, They reveal Their Real Nature to the spiritual and unalloyed loving vision of true devotees. They talk with them, They move in their company, They accept their loving services and offerings, and They make repeated demands of them.

Sriman Mahaprabhu Himself came to meet Haridas Thakur. He was engaged in performing his usual Kirtan with overflowing love for Sri Krishna. Noticing Sriman Mahaprabhu, he fell prostrate at His Feet. Sriman Mahaprabhu, raising Haridas Thakur from the ground, embraced him with boundless joy, though the latter, out of his characteristic humility tried to prevent Sriman Mahaprabhu from touching Him. He said, "O my Lord! Pray do not touch this untouchable, this meanest of the beings." For sometimes, both of them were lost in spiritual rapture, and tears of ineffable joy flowed from their eyes.

Sriman Mahaprabhu too properly retorted. "I touch you for My Own purification. I am not favoured with the power to purify others as you are. At all times you are having bath in all the sacred rivers and you are ever performing all the sacrifices, penance, and charity. Always you are

studying the Vedas and you are purer than and superior to all the so called Brahmins or Sanyasis." "O Lord! What a Marvellous feat! Even a Svapach (one who lives upon the flesh of dogs) becomes highly venerable, on the tip of whose tongue Your Name exists. Not even this much, those who utter Your Name have indeed practised all austerities and penance, performed all the great religious sacrifices, had their bath in all the sacred rivers and have even studied all the Vedas."¹³²

Thakur settles at Siddha Bakul

So saying Sriman Mahaprabhu conducted him to the flower garden situated close by and offered a solitary place for his residence, which Sriman Mahaprabhu had reserved specially for him earlier and advised him thus: - "Make yourself comfortable here and carry on your devotional practices undisturbed. I shall certainly meet you daily. Bow down to the disc of the temple of Sri Jagannatha from here. I shall make necessary arrangements to send for you Mahaprasada daily here." Haridas Thakur carried out the advice of Sriman Mahaprabhu to the letter.

On another occasion Sriman Mahaprabhu invited Haridas Thakur for taking Mahaprasada in the company of the other devotees and insisted on his presence. But, the latter, a living embodiment of humility, preferred to remain at a long distance. Sriman Mahaprabhu used to feel inexpressible joy, on the high sense of humility which adorned Haridas Thakur, who stayed in the solitary hut and performed Nama-Kirtan peacefully. That particular spot inside the flower garden of Kasi Misra is now known to the public by the name 'Siddha Bakul'. An ancient Bakul tree, the stem of which is mostly hollow, is the only sacred remnant that one can witness there. This tree is supposed to be there even long before Haridas Thakur, and later on was fortunate enough to offer shade and shelter to the great Haridas Thakur. While staying there, he purposely avoided the main streets, lest he might, by accident, touch some Pujari of Sri Jagannatha and thereby disturb him in the performance of Puja. Whenever he moved out of his residence, he was always very particular in observing these rules as strictly as possible.

Thakur and Sanatan Gosvami

Sri Sanatan Gosvami, one of the most zealous followers of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and prominent amongst the six Gosvamis of Vrindavan, visited Puri, and halted with Haridas Thakur. Sri Rupa Gosvami, the most prominent amongst all the followers of Sriman Mahaprabhu too, when he came to visit Sri Jagannatha, remained quite close to the hut of Haridas Thakur, who had the good fortune of witnessing the close association of Sriman Mahaprabhu with Sanatan Gosvami and listening to His personal instructions to him. One day Haridas Thakur said thus to Sanatan Gosvami: - "I fail to find adequate words to describe your immense luck. Sriman Mahaprabhu Himself declared your body as His Own

132 See footnote 128.

property. What an enviable fortune! Truly, no other devotee is as fortunate as you are. Those functions which Srīman Mahāprabhu Himself could not carry out, were entrusted to you for proper execution and that too in the sacred Vrīndavan, the crest-jewel of all the pilgrim spots and the most favourite playground of our Beloved Lord Śrī Krishna." Out of immoderate humility Harīdas Thakur continued; "This unfortunate body of mine has not served any purpose. I could not utilise this in the service of our Beloved Lord. It is a matter of utter regret that having taken a human form in this sacred land-Bhāratavarsha, the gift of this precious human body has been sheerly wasted."

Sanatan Gosvami on Thakur

On hearing the praise from Harīdas Thakur, Sanatan Gosvami said, "You are the most fortunate and specially noted amongst the followers of Srīman Mahāprabhu. I do not find an equal to you. Srīman Mahāprabhu took His Advent into this world to relish and thereby spread the Glory of the Divine Name adjunctively. He spread the glory of the Name through you¹³³. Daily you utter three lacs of Names of the Lord. You speak the Glories of the Divine Name before all."¹³⁴ "To have a beautiful blending of both preaching and practice in religion in one and the same person is the rarest of the rare achievements. We see some practise certain teachings of the Sastras and refrain from any preaching. We also notice some who speak much of the Sastras in impressive language with the least practice of the same in their own life. A real preacher is he, who puts all the teachings of the Sastras into the practical living. He is an 'Acharya'. He alone is fit for preaching religion in public. **In you, I see both. You are a living and vivid expression of both practice and preaching in one single personality. You are truly the teaching in one single personality. You are truly the teacher of all.** You deserve the highest veneration from the whole world."¹³⁵ Thus Sanatan Gosvami spoke out the rare excellences of Harīdas Thakur - the great Acharya of the Holy Name.

133 sanātana kahe, — "tomā-sama kebā āche āna
mahāprabhura gaṇe tumi — mahā-bhāgyavān!
avatāra-kārya prabhura — nāma-pracāre
sei nija-kārya prabhu karena tomāra dvāre
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 4.99-100)

134 pratyaha kara tina-lakṣa nāma-saṅkīrtana
sabāra āge kara nāmera mahimā kathana
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 4.101)

135 āpane ācare keha, nā kare pracāra
pracāra karena keha, nā karena ācāra
'ācāra', 'pracāra', — nāmera karaha 'dui' kārya
tumi — sarva-guru, tumi jagatera ārya
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 4.102-103)

Mahaprabhu's Sermon to Thakur and Sanatan Gosvami

Another day Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave an inspiring sermon to both Sanatan Gosvami and Haridas Thakur for the benefit of the world. He said, "It is sheer foolishness to disregard a devotee in this world by means of his social status, birth, etc., or even on the ground of his physical health, beauty, and the like. The body of a true Vaishnav is perfectly transcendental by nature. It is not of a stuff of the material world. It is formed of transcendental ingredients of eternal existence, eternal intelligence, and eternal bliss. Jivas by their real nature are the eternal servants of the Lord. It is his aversion to the Supreme Lord and the abuse of the freedom of will - a special endowment conferred on the Jivas, that brings the souls imprisoned in various bodies into this material world. Even in this forgotten state, our merciful Lord never forsakes us. He works for our uplift and helps us to accumulate spiritual merits by enabling us to render service, though unaware, to His favourite associates, which again, in the long run brings us into contact with spiritual masters, who are all-time servants of the Supreme Lord. The fortunate Jiva receives his training under this master. He understands his position in the material world and his relationship with the Supreme Lord and with all other objects, animate and inanimate. He realises his helpless position and the folly that had made him come down as a prisoner in this gross body. He simultaneously feels an urge to surrender unconditionally to his spiritual preceptor; he does so and the preceptor initiates him into the spiritual practice. He is no longer the same old person engrossed in material thoughts. He now becomes a perfectly spiritualised individual, free from any touch of worldly blemish in him. His body together with all his senses has become the object of the transcendental realm to be utilised in the exclusive service of Sri Krishna - the Transcendental Alchemist. They are no longer objects of this perishable and imperfect world. He is engaged for eternity in the Transcendental Services of Sri Krishna in the specific devotional activities that are allotted to him by the spiritual preceptor, a chief representative of the Lord Himself and enjoys the perennial flow of incomparable bliss emanating from such eternal service."

Thakur's ideal life - An eye-opener to Sadhakas

One day as usual with great joy Govinda, the personal attendant of Sriman Mahaprabhu came to Haridas Thakur with Mahaprasada from Sri Jagannatha temple. To the surprise of Govinda, Haridas Thakur lay still on his bed, a rare thing at that time of the day. He was chanting the Holy Name in a low voice and speed too. Govinda said, "Kindly get up and have your prasada." Haridas Thakur replied that he would observe a fast on that day as he could not complete his usual quota of Nama. He could not also disregard the Mahaprasada. So he got up, bowed down to it, and honoured the same by partaking a small quantity of it.

Haridas Thakur, by his exemplary life lasting up to even ripe old age left deep impressions as to the spiritual conduct a sincere Sadhak should necessarily pursue. It is essential that he must perform his practice of

chanting the Holy Name by keeping a regular number under any circumstances; even at the sacrifice of food, rest, sleep, etc., he must unflinchingly stick to the chanting of the Name till he completes his fixed quota of Names daily. Keeping an unfinished portion of the number of Names for the succeeding day on some lame excuse or other is totally forbidden. Irregular chanting of the Name fixing varying numbers for different dates is also to be given up. At the time of receiving the Name from the proper spiritual preceptor, the disciple will be told the minimum number that he should everyday utter. The disciple has not the choice in selecting a number according to his convenience. Strict observance of such regular chanting only, will awaken in us a steadfast addiction to the Divine Name. Without having any attachment to the Name and the process of Its chanting, the aspirants cannot become eligible for the Mercy of the Holy Name.

Once, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, on hearing the news about the sincere renunciation of a great devotee of His, was extremely pleased and expressed the following remarks for the edification of the fallen humanity. "Persons who have renounced the world, their hearths and homes, and their favourite relations, must engage themselves in the constant chanting of the Holy Name. They must maintain their existence by securing alms. Such persons, who depend upon other worldly-minded people for their maintenance, are sure to fail in their spiritual attempts. They do not succeed in their goal. Sri Krishna also never favours them; He passes them by. Those of the mendicants who run mad after satisfying the various tastes of their tongue, sustain a deplorable fall from their high spiritual living and become slaves to the evil influences of the palate. Constantly chanting the Name, the recluses must live upon harmless food, such as fruits, roots, leafy vegetables, etc. Prompted by the evil temptations of the tongue, those of the recluses, who run after delicious varieties hither and thither, are only gluttons. They do not attain Sri Krishna."¹³⁶ "O King! Those whose quota of meritorious deeds is insignificant, will neither have faith in Sri Govinda, His Divine Name, His Mahaprasada nor His devotees."¹³⁷

Another day, Srīman Mahaprabhu came to meet His favourite devotee, the great Haridas Thakur and inquired, "How do you feel Haridas?"

Haridas Thakur replied, "My Lord! Physically I am fit, but mentally and intellectually I am rather feeling weak."

Mahaprabhu insisted on him, "What is the trouble with you? Speak frankly."

Haridas Thakur, "I am unable to complete my regular quota of Names."

136 jihvāra lālase yei iti-uti dhāya
śīśnodara-parāyaṇa kṛṣṇa nāhi pāya
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 6.227)

137 mahā prasāde govinde nāma brahmani vaiṣṇave
svalpa puṇya-vatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate
(padma purāṇa)

Mahaprabhu, "Haridas! You are pretty old now. Why don't you reduce the quota of Names? You are a realised soul. Why should you now insist on completing your daily set quota of Names? You have taken your advent for redeeming the world. You have tasted the sweetness of Name enough; you have also spread the Glory of the Divine Name in the world. Now reducing your daily quota of Names, perform the Sankirtan."

Haridas Thakur, "Pray, hear the humble request of this unworthy servant. I have taken birth in a mean community and with a most censurable body. The whole of my life is wasted in loathsome activities, the most unlucky and fallen wretch. You have delivered such a person, utterly unworthy of even being seen by others, and a right specimen of an untouchable, from the unfathomable depths of the worst hell and lifted him to the most coveted land of incomparable bliss, Vaikunth. You are the Supreme Lord Whose Will is Law. The infinite universes move by Your Free Will and move at Your bidding. By Your inconceivable Powers You perform unimaginable marvels. You convert in no time a crow into the King of birds. By Your causeless Mercy You made me dance in various ways. By Your Grace, I, though an untouchable by caste, could eat the food prepared by the most orthodox of Brahmins on Sraddha-day. Since long I am having a great premonition in me. Somehow, I know not why, it appears to me that You may conclude Your role in this world soon. O my Lord! Be merciful to save me from that most heart-rending scene. I shall not be able to bear it. Let me be permitted to breathe my last before You conclude Your Lila. **"Holding Your Lotus Feet on my breast, my eyes gazing on Your moonlike Face and my tongue uttering your Name, - Sri Krishna Chaitanya, I yearn to give up my life¹³⁸**, if you are gracious to me, O Embodiment of Kindness! Have the Mercy to grant me this favour. Let this blameable body of mine fall before You. Be pleased to fulfil the long cherished desire of this insignificant servant." On hearing this humble, devotional, and touching words of Haridas Thakur, Sriman Mahaprabhu replied thus: - "Haridas! Sri Krishna is an Ocean of Mercy. Certainly He will fulfil your desire. What about Me? All My happiness is in your company. Hence, is it proper on your part to leave Me and go away?"

Thakur's last request to Mahaprabhu

At this pathetic expression of Sriman Mahaprabhu, Haridas Thakur caught hold of His Feet and prayed, "My Lord! Kindly do not deceive me. Be pleased not to have any more attachment to this trifling being. Undoubtedly You will grant me this prayer of mine. There are innumerable devotees of great eminence who are always present here to assist You in Your Pastimes. How does it matter if a worm like me leaves You? Does Mother Earth feel the loss of an ant in any way? You are Ever-Merciful to

138 hṛdaye dharimu tomāra kamala caraṇa
 nayane dekhimu tomāra cānda vadana
 jihvāya uccārimu tomāra 'kṛṣṇa-caitanya'-nāma
 ei-mata mora icchā, — chāḍimu parāṇa
 (śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 11.33-34)

Your devotees. I am a humble reflection of a true devotee of Yours. Have Mercy to fulfil my prayer."

On hearing these repeated entreaties of Haridas Thakur, Sriman Mahaprabhu assuring him that He would meet him the next day, embraced him and departed for performing His noon-ablutions to the sea.

The next morning after paying respects to Sri Jagannatha, Sriman Mahaprabhu visited Haridas Thakur early in the morning, accompanied by all His devotees. Haridas Thakur worshipped the Feet of Sriman Mahaprabhu and all other devotees.

Mahaprabhu asked, "Haridas! What is the news?"

Haridas Thakur, "My Lord! As you command."

Forthwith Sriman Mahaprabhu asked His devotees to perform Sankirtan. Prominent devotees like Sri Svarup Damodar, Sri Vakresvar Pandit, Sri Rai Ramananda, Sri Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, etc., joined the Sankirtan. Sriman Mahaprabhu Himself sang the glories of Haridas Thakur in a most impressive way and seemed totally lost in them. His words moved the heart of every devotee present there.

Haridas Thakur was now convinced that the Merciful Lord granted his prayer and that he must avail himself of this best opportunity for fulfilling his long cherished desire. Haridas Thakur, accordingly requested Sriman Mahaprabhu to take His seat exactly in front of him. How can the Merciful Lord ever devoted to His Bhaktas disappoint a favourite devotee like Haridas Thakur? Did He not commit Himself to many still greater deeds to satisfy His devotees? How fascinating is His attachment and love for His devotees! Did He not swallow fire for the sake of His Vrajavasis? Did He not hold the reins of the horses to work as a Charioteer of Arjun on the great battlefield of Kurukshetra causing even His Own soft Body to be pierced by the never-ending shafts of the Kaurav opponents? How many times He broke His Own vows for fulfilling those of His devotees? Was He ever reluctant to act as an Ambassador to the Pandavas before the wicked Kaurav chiefs or as a gate-keeper at the palace of Mahabali?

Thakur's prayer granted

Yes, Sriman Mahaprabhu sat in front of His devotee. Haridas Thakur fixed his eyes on the Face of Sriman Mahaprabhu like bees on a lotus. He clasped both the Feet of Sriman Mahaprabhu to his bosom, took the feet dust of all other devotees on his head, **repeatedly uttering the Name of Sri Krishna Chaitanya, drinking the Nectarine Beauty of His moonlike Face. With the holy Name in His mouth, the great Namacharya breathed his last.** The departure of Haridas Thakur at his sweet will, reminds us of the passing away of the great Bhisma of yore.

Thakur's Samadhi

Loud Sankirtan rent the sky. Srīman Mahāprabhu transported with spiritual ecstasy, became extremely uncontrollable. He lifted up the body of Haridas Thakur and danced in spiritual rapture. Every other devotee present there, could experience an irresistible inspiration. All of them were dancing and singing the Name of the Lord in the company of Srīman Mahāprabhu, saturated with unbounded joy. After performing Sankirtan for some time, they placed the body of Haridas Thakur in a specially decorated palanquin, and took out a great procession amidst loud chanting of the Holy Name. Srīman Mahāprabhu Himself led the procession, dancing ahead. The procession marched directly to the sea. There, the body of Haridas Thakur was given a bath, while doing so Srīman Mahāprabhu declared, "The sea has become a great Tirtha from today". Since then, that bathing Ghat of Haridas Thakur is considered to be a holy spot in the sea at Puri. Thousands of pilgrims from different parts of India perform their bath daily at this particular spot. Every devotee took the feet-wash of Haridas Thakur. They applied to his body the sandal paste brought for the occasion from the temple of Sri Jagannatha, and with all customary observances, his body was placed in the earth amidst loud Sankirtan by all the devotees. Srīman Mahāprabhu Himself placed the sand first on his body. A beautiful 'Samadhi' was constructed and even today it is a place of great importance at Puri. Haridas Thakur's Samadhi is visited by thousands of people throughout the year. Regular worship too is carried out there daily.

The party of devotees headed by Srīman Mahāprabhu, after performing Sankirtan for some time, circumambulated the Samadhi and came to the 'Simhadvar', i.e., the gate of Sri Jagannatha temple. Srīman Mahāprabhu Himself, spreading His own cloth, begged alms of Mahāprasada. Everyone dealing with Mahāprasada parted wholeheartedly whatever quantity they could afford to part with. Within a short interval, a huge quantity of Mahāprasada was collected and a grand feast was given. Srīman Mahāprabhu with His Own hands served Mahāprasada sumptuously to one and all. On completion of honouring Mahāprasada, He presented to all devotees garlands and sandal paste and showered boons on all those who partook in the function. He assured them all the attainment of Sri Krishna soon, as the proper result of the Darsan of Haridas Thakur. He said, "Sri Krishna by His causeless Mercy favoured Me with his company. Sri Krishna's Will is independent. He has deprived Me today of Haridas's company. When Haridas willed that he must leave the world, how could I retain him here? By his sweet will he left the world as the great Bhishma of hallowed memory. Haridas was the crest-jewel of the world. By his departure, the earth is devoid of her treasure." With these words Srīman Mahāprabhu danced uttering the words, "All glory to Haridas." All the other devotees followed Srīman Mahāprabhu. They too repeated, "Glory to the great Haridas who proclaimed the Transcendental Glories of the Holy Name." Thus, the most glorious, inspiring, and exemplary career of Haridas Thakur as the great 'Namacharya', to our utter ill-luck, is closed from the view of the people of this world. No

material words, however rich they may be, are adequate enough to express the glories of this great saint, one of the most favourite eternal associates of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Descent and ascent of Bhaktas

The appearance and disappearance of the eternal associates of the Supreme Lord, are not to be confused with the births and deaths of ordinary mortals. The devotees of the Lord who make their appearance into this world, do so according to the sweet Divine Will. They do not come here on any compulsion of Karma as in our case. They are not under the influence of the divine illusory energy (Maya) even when they are here. Maya cannot exercise any power on the true devotees of her Lord. They are not under her control. Hence, their appearance is not actuated by the compulsion of Maya, to reap the reactions of their past actions (Prarabdha). Neither have they any bondage for any of their actions in this world. Actions themselves are not dangerous if they are properly utilised. Actions are harmful to the core and are the very cause of this repeated cycle of births and deaths, only when they are done without the least desire of pleasing the Supreme Lord. Actions when performed for the pleasure of the Lord result in Bhakti. Acts of Bhakti not the cause of Samsar as godless and selfish actions are. Hence, a devotee, whose very existence itself is to render the maximum pleasure to the Supreme Lord, is not responsible for his various actions in this world. He is an unconditionally surrendered person, who is invariably under the direct guidance of the Supreme Lord. He has no option independent of the Lord, his only Object of Worship. Every action of his, however insignificant it may be, is in full accord with the Divine Will. As such, there is no Karma Bandha or bondage of actions for him.

The sanctity that follows the Advent day of Bhagavan, is also equally shared by the birthday of His devotees. Just as Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Sankarshana, Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrugna, etc., accompany the Lord whenever He makes His Manifestation in this world, the devotees too, take births according to the Lord's desires. They only follow the Lord in all His Manifestations and retire to the eternal realm along with Him when the purpose of their birth is fully accomplished. The devotees are not bound by any of their actions here.¹³⁹

139 vaiṣṇavera sei-mata tithira caritra
(śrī caitanya-bhāgavata, ādi 3.48)
ye rūpe pradyumna aniruddha saṅkarṣaṇa
yei rūpa lakṣmaṇa bharata śatrughna
tām hārā ye rūpa prabhu-saṅge avatare
vaiṣṇavere sei rūpa prabhu ajñā kare
ataeva vaiṣṇavera janma-mṛtyu nāi
saṅge āisena saṅge yāye na tathāi
dharma karma janma vaiṣṇavera kabhu nahe
padma purāṇete ihā vyakta kari 'kahe
(śrī caitanya-bhāgavata, antya 8.171-174)

The appearance of a devotee of the Supreme Lord is as much an important and eternal even as the Advent of Bhagavan Himself. The devotees of the Lord, are not separate entities entirely different from Him. They appear along with Bhagavan for fulfilling various purposes of His, sometimes in advance, and some of them by the Will of the Lord, appear even after His departure from this world. The same is the process in their disappearance as well. The devotees make their appearance fully retaining all their spiritual powers and save us from all the awful sufferings. The career of Thakur Haridas is a glorious and living example of all these infallible facts. If we fail to understand these basic truths on the real position of devotees, our failure to understand it is in itself the proof of our aversion to Godhead, the vital cause of our imprisonment into these material bodies.

yathā saumitri-bharatau yathā saṅkarṣaṇādayaḥ
tathā tenaiva jāyante martya-lokāṃ yadṛcchayā
punas tenaiva yāsyanti tad viṣṇoḥ śāśvataṃ padaṃ
na karma bandhanaṃ janma vaiṣṇavānāṃ ca vidyate
(padma purāṇa, u. 247.57-58)

MAHAPRABHU'S DISCOURSE ON NAMA

AFTER the acceptance of Sanyas, Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu toured all over India for a period of six years sanctifying all the places on His way and converting lacs and lacs of people to His unique religion of Transcendental Love by spreading the Divine Dispensation of Nama-Sankirtan. He conquered the whole of India, from the great Himalayas to Cape Comorin by this most efficacious, catholic, and simple method. This new process is profound and easy at once. It has got the dual capacity of satisfying a profound scholar well-versed in the Sastras and gifted with the art of debate, and an ordinary unlettered man of the street. This marvellous combination in bringing together persons, diametrically opposite, under a single banner was never before experienced by anyone in the religious history of the world. Such a unique and sublime religion accessible to the classes and masses was never popularised to the inhabitants of India or the world by any of the Prophets, Messiahs, Acharyas, Saints, Philosophers, or even the Descents (Avataras) of the Supreme Lord prior to the Advent of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. This is an undisputed fact. Making full use of this wonderful weapon of the highest potency, He did marvels which human language cannot adequately express. The tremendous influence of the Nama-Sankirtan has pierced through all our adamant coatings, the result of the worst type of the accumulated heaps of sins of many births, and left Its impressions of firm faith and love to the Beloved Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Why? Even the very haters of Hindu religion, also could feel the inexpressible glory, the universal and all round efficacy of the Name. That a good many of them have lately adopted this cult, is the solid proof of Its efficacy and popularity. Even the wild animals were no exceptions; inspired by the Divine Influence of the Holy Name, they forgot their ferocious nature - the worst animal instincts in them - they danced; they kissed each other, they rubbed their faces; they shouted with extreme joy; they rolled on the ground and what other wonderful actions they did, can be adequately expressed only by an eyewitness.

Mahaprabhu at Benares

After visiting many places in the South, Sriman Mahaprabhu came to Benares on His way to Vrindavan. The inhabitants of Benares, and especially the huge Sanyasi section, headed by Prakasananda Sarasvati, proved for Him a hard nut to crack. Sufficiently reinforced with the highly intellectual, barren, and abstruse philosophical arguments of monism, for which Benares was the greatest stronghold, these Sanyasis and particularly their leader were at their wit's end to strike at the every root of this Universal Religion inculcated by Sriman Mahaprabhu, Who had done wonders in other parts of India. But for these dry intellectualists, His religion appealed to be a failure. Elsewhere He has mentioned thus:

-"Bhagavan is always kind to people who have in them the virtue of humility, but, to those who are extremely proud of their learning, ancestry, lineage, wealth, etc., the Mercy of Bhagavan continues to be unattainable."¹⁴⁰

"Me thinks that a Svapach, who has dedicated his body, mind, soul, word, wealth, and all his activities to the service of the Supreme Lord Bhagavan, is far superior to a Brahmin of high lineage and esteem, with a dozen merits, but averse to the worship of the Lotus Feet of Sri Vishnu. The former purifies himself with his entire clan, whereas, the latter does not."¹⁴¹ Their position takes as still more dangerous turn than ever before, when such arrogant persons become mendicants. Prakasananda Sarasvati was of this disposition then. The very sound 'devotion' or Bhakti to Bhagavan was nauseating to him. Intellectual disputations and verbal juggleries were conceived by him as the fundamental principles of religion and the pinnacle of its achievement. When Srīman Mahāprabhu was at Kasi, i.e., Benares, a fortunate Marathi Brahmin, who happened to meet Him, was highly impressed by Him. While Prakasananda Sarasvati was expounding Vedānta Sūtras before his disciples, this Brahmin apprised him of all the news about Srīman Mahāprabhu thus: -

Maratha Brahmin impressed by Mahāprabhu

"A Sanyasi has come here from Jagannatha Puri. His Glories and mystic Powers defy description. He is of extraordinary Features and Deeds. He is a marvellous example of beauty having a colour similar to that of molten gold and well developed limbs, with all accompanying signs unusual in an ordinary human being. He is shining with all signs of Godhead and His sight kindles in one the belief that He is the veritable Lord Narayana Himself. Those who look at Him, automatically chant the Name 'Krishna' again and again. All the signs of Mahābhāgavata described in Srīmad Bhāgavata can be seen fully displayed in His Person. He constantly utters the Name 'Krishna' and tears roll down on His cheeks like the flowing waters of the river Ganges. Sometimes He dances, sometimes He laughs, He sings, He weeps incessantly on some occasions, sometimes He thunders like the roar of a lion. This great Personage, by name Sri Krishna Chaitanya, is the Real Benefactor of the entire world. His Name, Form, Qualities, Activities - are all unparalleled. A first-hand experience of His sight will convince one beyond any doubt."

140 dīnere adhika dayā kare bhagavān
kulīna, paṇḍita, dhanīra baḍa abhimāna
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 4.68)

141 viprād dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutād aravinda-nābha-
pādāravinda-vimukhāt śvapacaṁ variṣṭham
manye tad-arpita-mano-vacanehitārtha-
prāṇaṁ punāti sa kulaṁ na tu bhūrimānaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 7.9.10)

Prakasananda's remarks

Prakasananda took this description of Sriman Mahaprabhu from the Marathi Brahmin in a very slighting way. He laughed at it with utter scorn and said, "Yes, yes, I have heard about Him, that Sanyasi of Bengal - a great sentimentalist, a disciple of Kesav Bharati, and a notorious deceiver of the public. His name is Chaitanya, and with His group of similar sentimentalists, He roams in different parts of the country, even in villages, dancing all along. He, who sees Him, takes Him to be Isvar. Such is His capacity to delude the people; all those who see Him feel the spell of His magic. Leave aside others, even the eminent Vedantic scholar Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya has fallen a prey to His great spell. I came to know of late, that Bhattacharya has become mad after this Chaitanya. He is a Sanyasi only by name; but He is a great wizard. In this city of Kasi, his emotional exhibits would not fetch Him anything; He would not succeed here. Do not go to Him again, but listen to Vedantic discourses. The company of such unrestrained people will spoil your life here and hereafter."

The Marathi Brahmin was a fortunate person. He was not convinced by Prakasananda's words; on the contrary, he felt too much wounded at heart by the remarks of the Sanyasi leader. He silently left the place and reported all these criticisms to Sriman Mahaprabhu and requested Him to save him and the other devotees from the attacks of these people. Sriman Mahaprabhu patiently heard his grievances. His merciful heart longed to do something to redress the sorrows of His true devotees. He waited for a proper opportunity. He did not do anything on that occasion. He proceeded to Vrindavan. While returning from Vrindavan, He halted at Kasi for a considerable time. By the repeated requests of His devotees, He decided to try the remedy at His disposal at Kasi as well. This is not a big feat for Him to do.

Mahaprabhu accepts Maratha Brahmin's invitation

One day the Marathi Brahmin invited all the Sanyasis for taking alms of food at his place. Sriman Mahaprabhu too, was specially invited. All the invitees gathered. The extraordinary features, the unusual brilliance and the charming Personality of Sriman Mahaprabhu were noticed with great wonder and respect by one and all present there. Everyone, including Prakasananda felt an urge to show Him respect. The Sanyasi leader wished to cultivate his friendship. He approached Sriman Mahaprabhu and led Him to his side and offered a seat quite close to him. Prakasananda was eager to know why Sriman Mahaprabhu had given up the study of Vedanta, the duty of Sanyasis and had taken to this emotional life of chanting the Name, dancing, singing, etc., - a very low type of religious practice.

Mahaprabhu expounds the Divine Name

Sriman Mahaprabhu had accepted the invitation of this Marathi Brahmin purposely to teach a lesson to Prakasananda and his group. He replied, "Well, my revered sir! Kindly hear my answer to your query. My spiritual preceptor found out that I was a dull-witted person. You know fairly well that such persons are not eligible for the study of Vedanta. My master informed Me kindly that I did not deserve that course and suggested to Me to chant the Mantra 'Krishna' constantly, as this Mantra is the essence of all the Mantras. **By the effect of uttering 'Krishna Mantra', one is delivered from the bondage of Samsar; but, by the efficacy of singing the Name 'Krishna', one attains to His Lotus Feet. In this Kali Yuga, no other practice, except the practice of Nama is effective, as Nama is the essence of all Mantras and Sastras.**¹⁴² So saying, My master taught Me an important Sloka and I got the same studied by heart. According to the instructions of My master I started repeating the Name constantly, with the result that in a short time My mind became dazed. All My patience was lost. Yes, I turned out definitely frantic. I laughed, I wept, I danced, sang songs, like one who is out of his senses. After a while I composed Myself and thought seriously on this peculiar change in My disposition. I concluded beyond doubt that I have become utterly mad as a result of the-practice of chanting the Name. Yes, I am lost to Myself, having lost all self-control. I was eager to find out an immediate remedy for it. I approached My spiritual master and placed all My grievances before him. "What Mantra My lord hast thou imparted to Me? What power It has! By continuing to recite It mentally the Mantra has made Me mad. It makes Me laugh, dance, and cry." "This indeed is the nature of the Maha Mantra of the Nama 'Sri Krishna' that whoever recites It, experiences a loving attachment to Sri Krishna."¹⁴³

142 prabhu kahe — śuna, śrīpāda, ihāra kāraṇa
guru more mūrkhā dekhi' karila śāsana
mūrkhā tumi, tomāra nāhika vedāntādhikāra
'kṛṣṇa-mantra' japa sadā, — ei mantra-sāra
kṛṣṇa-mantra haite habe saṁsāra-mocana
kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa
nāma vinu kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma
sarva-mantra-sāra nāma, ei śāstra-marma
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 7.71-74)

143 eta bali' eka śloka śikhāila more
kaṇṭhe kari' ei śloka kariha vicāre
harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatiṛ anyathā
ei ājñā pāñā nāma la-i anukṣaṇa
nāma laite laite mora bhrānta hāila mana
dhairya dharite nāri, hailāma unmatta
hāsi, kāndi, nāci, gāi, yaiche madamatta
tabe dhairya dhari' mane kariluñ vicāra
kṛṣṇa-nāme jñānācchanna ha-ila āmāra

"After hearing My words, he replied, **"This is the real nature of chanting the Name 'Sri Krishna'. It awakens 'Prem to Sri Krishna', in the devotee, who performs Its utterance sincerely. Love for Sri Krishna is the *summum bonum* of human existence.** In comparison to this attainment, which is otherwise called the fifth achievement of humanity, i.e., Panchama Purushartha, all the other four attainments, viz., Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksa are insignificant like a blade of grass. **Prem or this fifth attainment of humanity is like a vast and unfathomable ocean of nectarine bliss,** whereas the happiness derived from the realisation of the Attributeless Brahman of the Upanishads is not even a drop in the ocean. **The real fruit of chanting the Name 'Sri Krishna' is the attainment of this highest goal - His unalloyed Love.** This is the unanimous verdict of all the Sastras. The signs of dancing, etc., are the accompanying characteristic developments of this sublime achievement of Prem. I am immensely pleased to learn that You have attained this result in a short period. Now, You sing, dance and perform Sankirtan in the company of devotees and deliver the people of the world by imparting them the Name 'Sri Krishna'."¹⁴⁴

"Thus advising Me, he taught Me a Sloka from Srimad Bhagavata which forms the gist of that holy book, the crest-jewel of all the Sastras.¹⁴⁵ As I have complete confidence in these words of My master, I constantly

pāgala ha-ilān āmi, dhairya nāhi mane
eta cinti' nivediluṅ gurura caraṇe
kibā mantra dilā, gosāñi, kibā tāra bala
japite japite mantra karila pāgala
hāsāya, nācāya, more karāya krandana
eta śuni' guru hāsi balilā vacana
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 7.75-82)

- 144 kṛṣṇa-nāma-mahā-mantrera ei ta' svabhāva
yei jape, tāra kṛṣṇe upajaye bhāva
kṛṣṇa-viṣayaka premā — parama puruṣārtha
yāra āge ṭṛṇa-tulya cāri puruṣārtha
pañcama puruṣārtha — premānandāmṛta-sindhu
mokṣādi ānanda yāra nahe eka bindu
kṛṣṇa-nāmera phala — 'premā', sarva-śāstre kaya
bhāgye sei premā tomāya karila udaya
premāra svabhāve kare citta-tanu kṣobha
kṛṣṇera caraṇa-prāptye upajāya lobha
premāra svabhāve bhakta hāse, kānde, gāya
unmatta ha-iyā nāce, iti-uti dhāya
sveda, kampa, romāñcāśru, gadgada, vaivarṇya
unmāda, viṣāda, dhairya, garva, harṣa, dainya
eta bhāve premā bhaktagaṇere nācāya
kṛṣṇera ānandāmṛta-sāgare bhāsāya
bhāla haila, pāile tumi parama-puruṣārtha
tomāra premete āmi hailān kṛtārtha
nāca, gāo, bhakta-saṅge kara saṅkīrtana
kṛṣṇa-nāma upadeśi' tāra' sarva-jana
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 7.83-92)

perform this Sankirtan of the Name 'Sri Krishna'.¹⁴⁶ **It is this grand Name and Its unaccountable Mercy that makes Me often sing or dance in spite of Myself. I do not betray these signs or deeds wilfully with any purpose. The ever-increasing ocean of bliss that one can enjoy by the chanting of the Name 'Sri Krishna', is very great in comparison with the joy that one can experience by realising the Undifferentiated Brahman of the Jnanis or even merging into it.** The former is vast like an unfathomable surging ocean, while the latter is like a cow's hoof-mark filled with water."¹⁴⁷

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's reply was most instructive and highly impressive to the assembly of Sanyasis. To convince them further, He gave a splendid discourse on Srimad Bhagavata at great length. This exposition revolutionised the entire audience. All of them felt deeply inspired with the teaching of Sriman Mahaprabhu and being overcome with deep feelings of respect, addressed Him thus: - "We realise You as the veritable Sri Narayana. Our ears are indeed blessed by hearing Your most illuminating discourse. We are charmed by the sweetness of Your all-alluring complexion. We are all overwhelmed by Your grandeur. What You say is quite true."¹⁴⁸

Another day, Sriman Mahaprabhu, visited Sri Bindu Madhava and was engrossed in Sri Nama-Sankirtan and ecstatic dance in the company of His devotees. Soon thousands of people joined the Kirtan. They slowly wended their way through the streets of Kasi. Eventually, they reached near Prakasananda's residence. The loud chanting of the name attracted his attention. He came out with his disciples to witness what it was. He witnessed the impressive Personality of Sriman Mahaprabhu surrounded by a huge crowd dancing in ecstasy. What a wonder! He could not resist the Divine Influence. Prakasananda with a vast number of his disciples, felt the magnetic urge of Sriman Mahaprabhu's Sri Nama-Sankirtan. They loudly uttered the Name 'Sri Hari', and joined the crowd. The inhabitants of

145 See footnote 22

146 ei tānra vākye āmi dr̥ḍha viśvāsa dhari'
nirantara kṛṣṇa-nāma saṅkīrtana kari
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 7.95)

147 sei kṛṣṇa-nāma kabhu gāoyāya, nācāya
gāhi, nāci nāhi āmi āpana-icchāya
kṛṣṇa-nāme ye ānanda-sindhu-āsvādana
brahmānanda tāra āge khātodaka-sama
tvat-sākṣāt-karaṇāhlāda-viśuddhābdhi-sthitasya me
sukhāni goṣpadāyante brāhmāṇy api jagad-guro
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 7.96-7.98)

148 ihā śuni' bale sarva sannyāsīra gaṇa
tomāke dekhiye yaiche sākṣāt nārāyaṇa
tomāra vacana śuni' juḍāya śravaṇa
tomāra mādhuṛī dekhi' juḍāya nayana
tomāra prabhāve sabāra ānandita mana
kabhu asaṅgata nahe tomāra vacana
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 7.103-105)

Kasi were astounded with incomparable joy. Prakasananda did not waste his time any further. He worshipped the Holy Feet of Srīman Mahāprabhu, Kasi, with all its impenetrable intellectual fortifications was carried away by the unconquerable Divine force of Nama-Sankīrtan, reinforced and commanded by the All-Loving Personality of Srī Krishna Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.¹⁴⁹

Kasi is a blessed city. All the opponents yielded to the Divine Srī Hari Nama. There was Sankīrtan everywhere in the town. Sanyasis and scholars giving up all their intellectual jugglery and discourses on Vedānta, took to the study of Srīmad Bhāgavatā. What a magical conversion overnight! All Glory to the Divine Name! Let Srī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu be glorified!

For all sincere souls aiming at the realisation of the ultimate goal of human existence, the above incident is of invaluable significance. Sincere and unbiased aspirants, searching after the Absolute Truth, can take those expressions as the final authority since they come out from the Holy Mouth of Srī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. He, out of His causeless Mercy, has explained the whole process of His all-embracing cult of 'Nama-Sankīrtan' as simply as possible. Beginning from the lowest stage of spiritual life; till the attainment of the final goal, the royal path is clearly and vividly described for the benefit of any unsophisticated and unbigotted aspirant who intends to proceed on such a course.

Nama and Mantra

"The Mantra is composed of three, four or five Sanskrit words beginning with what is called the Seed Word with the Name of Srī Krishna and a dedicatory word attached to it. The Seed Word is the Seed of Srī Krishna's Love. It awakens in the heart spiritual passion. This Seed Word, if mentally repeated with intense concentration, bursts open the shell of the Sound-Form of Srī Krishna - His Name, which contains the Nectar of Absolute Love. The word 'Sanskrit' means pure, refined. The Sanskrit language is the language of the pure, undefiled voice of Nature. Hence, it is called 'the language of gods' who are representatives of nature's attributes. These attributes are blendings of forces. Each force has a name (sound), a form, and a quality. A man in intense pain expresses it in such sounds, like "Oh-h" or "Ah-h". This "Oh-h", or "Ah-h" may be called the sound (voice) of pain, contortions of the face the expression of its form, and the feeling it produces is its quality. The quality is the substance of the force called pain and its sound and sign (form) are its expressions. If there were a microscope powerful enough to reveal to our view the figures which sound vibrations create on Ether, we would then find that the above mentioned sound expressions of Pain create forms in Ether much like the combined letters "Oh-h" or "Ah-h". This means that it is from the impressions of sound vibration on Ether that characters of all languages

149 saba kāśī-vāsī kare nāma-saṅkīrtana
preme hāse, kāṇde, gāya, karaye nartana
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, m. 25.165)

have been formed; the pictures reflecting themselves on the inventor's mind through the medium of its subtle force called inspiration."*

"The characters (Sanskrit 'Charitra') of the Sanskrit language, the parent language of all languages, are born with creation. They are entities in Nature, form-expressions of her forces. They are eternal and indestructible - Akshar, as characters are called. The vowels are the masculine forces. The masculine characters (vowels) are independent, the feminine characters (consonants) are dependent. The vowels can be pronounced by themselves, the consonant can be only pronounced when united with the vowels. The vowels are the expressions of the Essence of the Deity (Sri Krishna), the consonants are the expressions of the Will-force of the Deity (Prakriti that which procreates), Nature is born of sound, the attribute of Ether (Akas) which was the first manifestation of creation. The first sound was 'AUM' misspelled and mispronounced in English as 'OM'. The vowel 'A' (pronounced AU in Sanskrit), the initial letter of the word 'AUM' is the parent of all letters and languages. This 'AUM' in sound, represents the distant vibrations of Sri Krishna's Flute, the music of Love, while its character-form in Sanskrit resembles the form of Sri Krishna playing on His Flute. This is the mystery of what Sri Krishna Himself says in the Gita, "I am the Word 'AUM'."

"The different combinations of the other Sanskrit characters (form of natural forces), called words, represent, similarly pictures of sound forms of different attributes and objects. Sanskrit words, in fact, are sound-shells which hold within them essences of the attributes they represent and the object they signify. **The letters 'K, R, I, SH, N, A', joined together form the word 'Krishna', Which is the Sound-shell of the Essence of Love, Nature's Absolute Attribute, produced by the fusion of the forces of which the composing characters are sound-forms. When frequently repeated together with the Love-Passion Seed-Word, its vibrations, after purifying the atmosphere of the mind, illumine in time its inner chamber, the heart, which is the door of the soul, and fills it with the ecstasy of Bliss.**"*

The Mantra that comes from the holy mouth of the Guru and imparted to the disciple is not an ordinary formula composed of material alphabets. It is a special formula consisting of the Names of the Lord in which special power is infused. It saves us from the mental hallucinations. The material mind is always busy in its twofold functions of forming ideas, and dissolving them the next moment. Without the help of these Mantras, the conditioned souls remain helpless dupes under the terrible influence of the materialised mind.

In Mukundamala Stotra the Glory of the Mantra is stated thus: - "O my tongue! You want to prattle always and waste the precious time for nothing. You do not remember even for a single moment that the time once spent, can never come back at any cost. There is no power on earth that can give back the lost time. You waste this precious time without

* Extracts from 'Sri Krishna - the Lord of Love'

* Extracts from 'Sri Krishna - the Lord of Love'

understanding that death is fast approaching. Like frogs on the banks of tanks, lakes, or rivers who by their usual croakings, invite their own death in the form of snakes who make them their easy prey, you too, by your idle gossips shamelessly waste the valuable time unmindful of the fast approaching death with its wide open jaws. You do considerable havoc to a human being by your prattles and by your uncontrolled eating. Do not waste the time any more like this, be wise. Go on repeating the Divine Krishna Mantra constantly, which has the capacity to destroy all your enemies, both internal and external, the One that is specially worshipped by all the Upanishads, the One that eradicates the very root cause of our repeated cycle of births and deaths, the Mantra that dispels the accumulated heaps of nescience, the One that is the very source of all noble and high achievements, the Mantra that marvellously saves us from the virulent poisonous influence of the powerful sense-objects and their fleeting pleasures of this world and the blessed Mantra that fulfils the very purpose of this precious human birth."¹⁵⁰

'Mantra' and 'Nama' are not quite different; yet there is a difference in results. The Mantra of Sri Krishna saves us from the evil grips of the materialised mind, and delivers us from the thralldom of Maya. Mantra is formed of the Names alone; but with a suffix indicating self-dedication of the disciple at the Feet of the Lord. **Whereas the Name is addressed directly in the vocative case as in, "O Hari-Nama! I take absolute shelter in You, Who are ever being resorted to by the eternally liberated souls."**¹⁵¹

"And man drew Love from the Name, for the Name the potency of love contained, even as the seed the tree doth hold or the bud the fruit of the tree enfolds."

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu continuously stayed at Puri for eighteen years. Devotees from Bengal used to visit Puri every year, greatly eager for His Darshan, on the occasion of the Ratha-Yatra (chariot-celebrations). While returning after the festival, they used to get many of their spiritual problems solved by receiving enlightenment directly from Srīman Mahaprabhu. Once, some important devotees of a village by name 'Kulingram', on the eve of their departure, requested Srīman Mahaprabhu to enlighten them with the nature of duty that should be performed by householders.

150 śatru-cchedaika-mantram sakalam upaniṣad-vākya-sampūjya-mantram
saṁsāroccheda-mantram samucita-tamasah saṅgha-niryāṇa-mantram
sarvaiśvaryaika-mantram vyaṣana-bhujaga-sandaṣṭa-santrāṇa-mantram
jihve śrī-kṛṣṇa-mantram japa japa satataṁ janma-sāphalya-mantram
(śrī-mukunda-mālā-stotra 31)

151 ayi mukta-kulair upāsyamānaṁ
paritas-tvāṁ hari-nāma saṁśrayāmi
(stava-mālā; śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭakam 1)

Mahaprabhu's advice to householders

Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj Gosvami, the author of Sriman Mahaprabhu's celebrated biography, 'Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita' describes the incident in Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu's Own Words, as follows: - **“Serve Sri Krishna and His devotees and constantly perform the Sankirtan of the Name of Sri Krishna.”**¹⁵² **“By the single Name of Sri Krishna all your sins are destroyed and it helps the appearance of nine-fold devotion, viz., (1) hearing the Glories of the Lord, (2) utterance of the Name, (3) remembrance, (4) showing respect by touching the Feet, (5) ritualistic worship, (6) offering prostrations, (7) serving like a faithful servant, (8) friendship, and (9) absolute self-surrender. The Name is independent and All-Powerful. Hence, It does not require the assistance of any other process for the fulfilment of Its Efficacies. It does not even wait for initiation or such other ritualistic observances. No sooner the Name 'Krishna' appears on the tongue, than It redeems all persons, irrespective of their status, right from the Chandal upwards. As a secondary effect, It destroys our earthly bondage and its cyclic effect and as the primary result, It attracts our mind to the Feet of Sri Krishna and confers unflinching Love for Him.”** “This Maha Mantra formed of the Names of Sri Krishna which attracts the hearts of all pure souls who have to their credit an abundance of accumulated heaps of religious merits, which strikes effectively at the very root of the worst type of sins, which is easily accessible to all human beings endowed with the power of speech, beginning with a Chandal (a low caste outside the pale of the fourfold classification of society), and which enables us to the attainment of the great wealth 'liberation', bestows Its result the moment It comes in touch with the tongue.¹⁵³ It never waits or depends upon initiation (Diksha),¹⁵⁴ or any other forms of preparatory ritualistic observances

152 prabhu kahena, — 'kṛṣṇa-sevā', 'vaiṣṇava-sevana'
'nirantara kara kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana'
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, m. 15.104)

153 śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanam vandanaṁ dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavaty addhā tan manye 'dhītam uttamam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 7.5.23-24)
eka kṛṣṇa-nāme kare sarva-pāpa kṣaya
nava-vidhā bhakti pūrṇa nāma haite haya
dīkṣā-puraścaryā-vidhi apekṣā nā kare
jihvā-sparśe ā-caṇḍāla sabāre uddhāre
anuṣaṅga-phale kare saṁsārera kṣaya
citta ākarṣiyā karāya kṛṣṇe premodaya
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, m. 15.107-109)

154 divyam jñānam yato dadyāt kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ
(viṣṇu-yāmala; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 1.2.9)

(Purascharana),¹⁵⁵ and such other holy performance for the success of this Mantra."¹⁵⁶ Diksha is a purificatory process by which the disciple is completely freed from all his sins and spiritual knowledge is imparted to him by the spiritual preceptor. Purascharana, is for the attainment of success of the Mantra, the Sastras recommend a preparatory ritualistic course consisting of fivefold religious practices to be observed daily. They are (1) worship of the Lord on the three special junctures of the day, i.e., early morning, midday, and evening, (2) repetition of the Mantra received from one's Guru, (3) daily libations, (4) religious sacrifices with oblations, and (5) daily feeding of Brahmins. These fivefold observances are unavoidably necessary for achieving success in the chanting of Mantras. But in the case of uttering the Name, such observances are not necessary or essential.

Vaidhi Bhakti

On another occasion, Srīman Mahāprabhu gave the following bit of precious advice to Sanātana Gosvāmī, when the latter visited Puri from Vrīndāvan.¹⁵⁷ When compared with the practice of the various forms of devotional observances mentioned in our Purānas, the nine-fold¹⁵⁸ ways of devotion declared in Śrīmad Bhāgavatā, occupy a very high position. Purānas have described about sixty-four methods of devotional practices.¹⁵⁹

155 pūjā traikālikī nityam japas tarpaṇam eva ca
homo brāhmaṇa-bhuktiś ca puraścaraṇam ucyate
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.17.11)

156 ākṛṣṭiḥ kṛta-cetasām su-manasām uccāṭanam cāmhasām
ācaṇḍālam amūka-loka-sulabho vaśyaś ca mukti-śriyaḥ
no dīkṣām na ca sat-kriyām na ca puraścaryām manāg īkṣate
mantra 'yam rasanā-sprḡ eva phalati śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmātmakaḥ
(padyāvalī 29)

157 bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava-vidhā bhakti
'kṛṣṇa-prema', 'kṛṣṇa' dite dhare mahā-śakti
tāra madhye sarva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana
niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 4.70-71)

158 See footnote 153

159 guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam
viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā sādhu-vartmānu-vartanam
(śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.74-95/1.2.97-237)

1. śrī guru pāda āśrayaḥ Accepting shelter at the feet of the spiritual preceptor, 2. śrī kṛṣṇa dīkṣā ādi śikṣaṇam Receiving initiation and enlightenment on spiritual truths from the Guru, 3. viśrambheṇa guroḥ seva Serving the spiritual master faithfully, 4. sādhu vartma anu vartanam Following the examples laid out by saints, 5. sat dharmapṛcchā Enquiry into the details of true religion, 6. kṛṣṇa ārthe bhoga ādi tyagaḥ Renunciation of enjoyment of material luxuries for the sake of Śrī Krishna, 7. dvārakā ādi nivāsaḥ Dwelling in sacred places of pilgrimage or shrines like Dvaraka, etc., or on the banks of the Ganges, Yamuna, etc., 8. yāvat arthā anurve vātaitā Accepting means, etc., just enough to meet one's bare necessities of life, 9. hari vāsara sammānaḥ Observing fasts on every Ekadasi day, 10. dhātry akṣatyādi gauravam Showing respect to the sacred trees like Dhatri, Pipal, Tulasi, and to cows, Brahmins and Vaisnavas, 11. bhagavad vimukha jana saṅga Avoiding the company of those who are averse to Godhead, 12,13,14. śiṣyā dina anubandhitva aditrayam Refraining from enlisting unfit disciples, the study of various books, and the arts of unnecessary controversy on the meanings of Sastras, 15. vyavahāre api akārpaṇyam Giving up of meanness in one's day to day dealings, 16. śokadi avaśa vartitā Remaining undisturbed on account of sorrows, 17. anya devān avajñā non-disparagement of other Gods, 18. bhūtān udvega dāyitā Never wound the heart of other beings, human or subhuman, by words, deeds or thoughts, 19. sevā nāma aparādhānām vrajanam Giving up all type of offences against the service of the Lord and His Name, 20. bhagavān ninda ādi asahiṣṇutā Intolerant in listening blasphemies on Bhagavan, His Bhaktas etc., 21. vaiṣṇava cihna dhṛtiḥ Wearing the external signs of Vaishnav such as Tulasi beads, beads made of lotus seeds, etc., putting perpendicular signs, specially prescribed, on the forehead and other parts of the body imposed by the Sastras, etc., 22. nāma akṣaradhṛtiḥ Writing the Names of the Lord on the body by 'Gopi-Chandan' or sandal paste, 23. nirmālya dhṛtiḥ Accepting and wearing the previous day's offering to the Lord, such as garlands, scents, clothing, etc., 24. agretāṇḍavan Dancing before the Lord with devotion, 25. danḍavat nnatīḥ Prostrated obeisances, 26. abhi uthānam Respecting the Lord and His devotees by welcoming them by getting up from one's seat the moment he happens to see them coming in palanquins, chariots or on any other such vehicles or arrangements, 27. anu vrajyā To accompany the Lord or His Bhaktas on such occasions as mentioned in the previous one on either sides, in front or rear, according to the situation, and as necessity of service arises on the spot, 28. bhagavat sthāne gatiḥ Visiting temples of the Lord and other holy places of pilgrimage, 29. parikramaḥ Circumambulation of holy places, 30. arcanam Ritualistic worship, 31. paricaryā Servitude, 32. gītām Singing devotional songs, 33. saṅkīrtanam Loud recital of Lord's Name, Form, Qualities or Activities, 34. japaḥ Muttering of Mantras or Names, 35. vijñaptiḥ Accepting one's insignificant and helpless position before the Lord by different types of supplications, 36. stava pāṭhaḥ Uttering various hymns on the Lord, 37. naivedya

asvādaḥ Honouring the sacred offerings like Mahaprasada, Tulasi, etc., 38. pādya asvādaḥ Taking the holy Feet-wash, 39. dhūpa sa aurabhyam Smelling the consecrated incense, 40. śrī mūrteḥ sparśanam Touching the Holy Image, 41. śrī mūrter darśanam Beholding the Holy Image, 42. ārātrika darśanam Witnessing the waving of lights and other rituals, 43. śravanam Listening to excellences, 44. tat kṛpa ikṣam Solely depending upon His Mercy, 45. smṛtiḥ Remembrance, 46. dhyānam Meditation, 47. dāsyam Accepting the servitude of the Lord, 48. sakhyam Friendship, 49. ātma nivedanam Complete self-surrender, 50. nijā priyaupaharaṇam Offering the best of articles liked by one, 51. tad arthe akhila ceṣṭitam To please the Lord is the be-all and end-all of all the activities, 52. śaraṇa apattiḥ Submissive attitude in every activity in words, deeds and thoughts, 53-56. tadiyanam sevnam Service of Bhaktas, Tulasi, Srimad Bhagavata and Mathura, Vrindavan, etc, 57. yatha vaibhava mahotsavaḥ Celebrations on important occasions like the appearance and disappearance of great Bhaktas, Acharyas, Advent Days of the Avatars in the company of Bhaktas, 58. kartika vrata Observance of Kartikavrata, Damodaravrata or Urjavrata in accordance with the rules of Sastras, 59. śrī janma dina yatra Celebrating 'Janmashtami' - the Advent Day of Sri Krishna, 60. śrī murtera aghri sevane pritiḥ Special liking for the worship of the Lord, 61. śrī bhagavata artha asvadaḥ Listening to and relishing the reading and exposition of Srimad Bhagavata in the company of Bhaktas of a higher order, 62. sādhu sanghaḥ Association of Bhaktas, 63. nāma saṅkīrtanam The loud chanting of the Lord's Name, 64. śrī mathurā maṅḍale sthitiḥ Residing at the holy places

NINEFOLD DEVOTION

WHEN compared to the sixty-four modes of devotional practices, the nine-fold ways¹⁶⁰ of devotion are highly powerful. In fact, all the above ideas are included in the nine-fold ways of devotion. Each method in this subsequent group is independently potent enough to procure us the loving devotion to Sri Krishna and even Sri Krishna Himself.

"Those who constantly listen to your Glorious Topics again and again, sing Them with spontaneous love, utter Them before others, contemplate on Them, and rejoice with great delight when spoken by others, alone behold Your Lotus Feet that put an end to the repeated cycle of births and deaths, before long."¹⁶¹ "Therefore, O descendant of Bharata! He who is desirous of attaining the eternal fearless state, the abode of perpetual happiness, should listen to, recite, and meditate upon the Transcendental Glories of the Supreme Lord Sri Hari, the Lord of all Jivas, the Sole Shelter of the entire universe."¹⁶²

Sravana

Sravana means the act of listening the Names, Divine Pastimes, Attributes, etc., of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. The scrupulous observance of any one form of the nine-fold ways of devotion brings success to its aspirant. Yet, for the purification of one's heart, it is desirable to follow the laid-out course. Accordingly the first procedure is to hear the Holy Name. On hearing the marvels of the Name, when the mind is purified, the next stage of hearing the topics relating to the Transcendental Form of the Lord is to be followed. This renders the aspirant eligible to realise the nature of the Form of the Lord. When he is fortunate enough to have a full realisation of the Form, he is spontaneously favoured with the experience of the various Transcendental Qualities. Similarly, the other effects of hearing in succession bring gradually the realisations of the Entourage and finally the Transcendental Pastimes. This is the proper order for hearing. The same course is effective and prescribed for Kirtan, and Smarana as well. If the exposition of the Sastras on the Name, Form, Qualities, Pastimes, and Entourage of the Lord is heard from a genuine Bhakta, it is far more effective than having the

160 See footnote 153

161 śṛṇvanti gāyanti gṛṇanty abhīkṣṇaśaḥ
smaranti nandanti tavehitam janāḥ
ta eva paśyanty acireṇa tāvakam
bhava-pravāhoparamam padāmbujam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.8.36)

162 tasmād bhārata sarvātmā bhagavān īśvaro hariḥ
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca smartavyaś cecchatābhayam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 2.1.5)

same from a Sadhak. Hearing from one who is a disbeliever and who does the same, influenced by various worldly desires, often brings a detrimental effect. Lifeless and mercenary explanations may be no doubt, charming, learned, humorous, and even sometimes, rationally convincing, but they fail to stir up the dormant feelings in the hearers and awaken in them any sense of detachment from the worldly objects or devotion to Godhead. Their words do not touch the heart or leave any permanent impression there, since they do not originate from the depth of their hearts. These expositions of Sastras can only attract the admirations of the public towards these mercenary speakers, and that too, of a superficial nature, resulting in their sympathetic outlook and lavish presents.

Sastras caution us to hear only such spiritual topics as are narrated, composed, or approved by great realised Bhaktas, ancient or modern (Mahat Kirtita or Mahat Prakatita). Any composition - may be on Godhead - from the pen of worldly-minded people, does not provide us with the desired result. They shape things in their mental mould, and give often an entirely new form or even wrong shapes. As such, it is beneficial, preferable - nay, compulsory - to hear spiritual discourses from persons who have realised what they preach and whose lives are living examples of the same valuable teachings.

Of all kinds sacred books prescribed for the purpose of hearing (Sravana), the act of listening to Srimad Bhagavata is spoken of as the best. In it we get the combination of both the aforesaid qualifications. It is composed by the great Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa, one of Lord's Manifestations, and narrated by great Bhaktas like Sukadeva, etc. In addition, it contains the quintessence of all the Sastras of the world. "O Rasikas (devotees belonging to any of the five important spiritual Rasas of Santa, Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya, and Madhura), and Bhavukas (in whom the spontaneous love for Bhagavan has made its manifestation)! Drink deep this Nectarine Rasa till you are completely saturated with the ocean-like Everlasting Bliss. Srimad Bhagavata is the fully ripened fruit of the wish-yielding tree-like Vedas. This fruit has dropped down from the tree to the earth from the holy mouth of the great sage Sukadeva and this fruit is unlike other fruits, in that, this is free from any waste substance, such as the skin, fibre, seed, etc., and is condensed Rasa itself (the most marvellous and captivating Transcendental Pastimes of the Name, Qualities, etc., from the nectarine contents of this Incomparable fruit)."¹⁶³

It is imperatively necessary to verify the authenticity of what we have heard and get fully convinced of it. Before starting with any course of spiritual procedure, we must be thorough with its theoretical side. Hence, Sravana occupies the first place in the list of devotional practices. The act of listening is prayed for by many devotees even after realising Bhagavan. They have prayed to Bhagavan to bless them incessantly with the benefits

163 nigama-kalpa-tarora galitam phalam
 śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-saṁyutam
 pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam
 muhur aho rasikā bhuvī bhāvukāḥ
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.1.3)

of hearing His Transcendental Glories. Some of the Bhaktas, like Prithu Maharaj, etc., went a step further in their demands influenced by this burning ardour for hearing. They have accepted the inadequacy of having only two ears and appealed to the Lord to provide them with a thousand ears to do full justice to the act of listening the Divine Topics, wherever They are told.

"Those who are desirous of crossing this terrible ocean of triple afflictions extremely difficult to cross over, have no other vessel than hearing, i.e., enjoying the Nectarine Narratives of the Glorious Deeds of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna."¹⁶⁴ "Sri Krishna, the Eternal Benefactor of those Sadhus, the hearing and chanting of Whose Name are great purifying factors, manifesting in the hearts of those who listen with rapt attention His Transcendental Glories, uproots the evil propensities of their hearts as their Indwelling Guide."¹⁶⁵ "Those who drink in the narration of the nectar-like Glorious Deeds of the Lord, Who is the Delight of the devotees, poured into the cavities of their ears by the Bhaktas, purify their hearts which are awfully contaminated by the thoughts of the senses and sense-objects and attain his Lotus Feet."¹⁶⁶ "The Elixir of Thy Narratives is life itself to those who are distressed by the pangs of Thy separation. Great devotees like Prahlada, Dhruv, etc., too sing Thy Glories, the best remedy to strike at the very root of all sins, most auspicious to hear, capable of imparting all prosperity and above all the sublime gift of Divine Love. As such he who spreads it in this world is the best and the most munificent of all the generous-hearted persons."¹⁶⁷

Kirtan

Chanting aloud the Names, Form, Qualities, Entourage, Lilas, etc.¹⁶⁸
All the instructions that we have so far heard in Sravana are equally

-
- 164 saṁsāra-sindhūṁ ati-dustaram uttīrṣor
nānyaḥ plavo bhagavataḥ puruṣottamasya
līlā-kathā-rasa-niṣevāṇam antareṇa
pumso bhaved vividha-duḥkha-davārditasya
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 12.4.40)
- 165 śrṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt-satām
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.2.17)
- 166 pibanti ye bhagavata ātmanaḥ satām
kathāmṛtam śravaṇa-puṭeṣu sambhṛtam
punanti te viṣaya-vidūṣitāśayam
vrajanti tac-caraṇa-saroruhāntikam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 2.2.37)
- śravaṇe na iva maṅgalaṁ nāmadheyam yasya
(bhāvārtha-dīpikā 2.7.15)
- 167 tava kathāmṛtam tapta-jīvanam
kavibhir īḍitam kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ
bhuvī grṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.31.9)

applicable to Kirtan. The order of performing Kirtan also is the same. "After hearing the blissful and auspicious Glories relating to the Divine Births and Deeds of Sri Krishna manifested in the world, one must chant Them unabashed, moving in the world undisturbed by the ups and downs, and unattached to the sense objects and its evil temptations."¹⁶⁹ "Anyone who has fallen into this stormy ocean of worldliness and is caught in its eddies of births and deaths, can get deliverance from it in no time, by uttering His Name, even helplessly, of whom even Mahakal, the personification of fear itself, is awfully afraid."¹⁷⁰

Smarana

Remembering the Name, Form, Qualities, and Sportive Activities of the Supreme Lord is known as Smarana. Smarana is fivefold, according to its stages of development: - (1) The primary stage of Smarana¹⁷¹ consists in recalling to one's mind the Holy Name, Form, Attributes, etc., of the Lord, as in a flash, the chief aim being the purification of the heart. As this is inferior to Kirtan, no specific instances are quoted. (2) Dharana¹⁷² - This is a hard stage reached after regular struggle by the striver. A regular tug-of-war between him on one side and his mind with all its senses as the other is in progress. The mind running mad like a mad horse escaping from its keeper, is to be restricted from its wanderings. Withdrawing the mind from all its diverse objectives, and fixing it in remembering the Lord is the meaning of this state of mental pursuit. (3) Dhyan¹⁷³ - Special concentration of the mind on the Form, Activities, etc., of the Lord is meant by Dhyan. In this, the striver has succeeded in his attempts to control the mind. Free from outside distractions and the mad influence of the fickle mind, he can concentrate it upon the Lord. (4) Dhruvanu Smriti¹⁷⁴ - The incessant flow of the mind (like a continuous stream of nectar

168 nāma līlā guṇādīnām uccair bhāṣā tu kīrtanam
(śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.145)

169 śṛṇvan su-bhadrāṇi rathāṅga-pāṇer
janmāni karmāṇi ca yāni loke
gītāni nāmāni tad-arthakāni
gāyan vilajjo vicared asaṅgaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.2.39)

170 āpannaḥ saṁsṛtiṁ ghorāṁ
yan-nāma vivaśo grṇan
tataḥ sadyo vimucyeta
yad bibheti svayaṁ bhayam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.1.14)

171 yat kiñcid anu sandhānam
(śrī-bhakti-sandarbhāḥ 278)

172 sarvataś cittam ākarṣya sāmānyākāreṇa mano-dhāraṇam
(śrī-bhakti-sandarbhāḥ 278)

173 viśeṣato rūpādi cintanam
(śrī-bhakti-sandarbhāḥ 278)

174 amṛta dhārāvāt aviñcchīṁ tat
(śrī-bhakti-sandarbhāḥ 278)

towards the Lord like the unbroken flow of oil - to bring the simile nearer to us). (5) Samadhi¹⁷⁵ - The spontaneous manifestation of the Lord in the heart. This stage of Samadhi is different from the one that is attained by the Jnanis generally known by the Asam-Prajnata-Samadhi or Brahma-Samadhi. In the case of Bhaktas, they get an uninterrupted realisation of the Transcendental Sports of the Supreme Lord. Their heart is converted into a stadium for the Lord to play and the various alluring sports take place in their hearts like the surging waves of a rough sea.

There is also the act of remembrance both in the process of chanting the Name (Name Smriti), and in muttering the Mantra (Mantra Smriti). The remembrance that automatically materialises while chanting the Divine Name, keeping the number on a rosary of Tulasi beads is known as Nama Smriti. The remembrance that takes place while muttering the Mantra keeping its number on one's finger, is the process of Mantra Smriti. "Just as we do not dream when we attain the waking state, even so, by the mere entrance of the Supreme Lord into the heart by His inconceivable power, all the illusions displayed by the Asurik forces are completely dispelled. Because remembrance of the Lord is the remedy for all our calamities."¹⁷⁶ "O Lord! I am extremely fortunate to behold Your Lotus Feet today. The purpose of my birth is fulfilled by beholding Your Feet that are being constantly meditated on in their hearts by Brahma and others of incomprehensible learning; Your Feet are highly blissful and are the eternal resort of all devoted souls, and the only recourse to those fallen souls struggling in the deep well of worldly sufferings. Have mercy upon me so that the memory of Your Lotus Feet may remain incessantly in me and I may be able to roam about in this world, constantly meditating upon Them."¹⁷⁷ "O Nalinanabh (Sri Krishna)! Your Lotus Feet are being constantly meditated on in their hearts by Brahma and other masters of Yoga and vast learning. They are the only support for deliverance of all Jivas from the depths of this well of worldly existence. May the remembrance of Your Lotus Feet continuously manifest in our hearts, enmeshed, as we are, in domestic life."¹⁷⁸

175 dhyeyamātra sphuraṇam
(śrī-bhakti-sandarbhah 278)

176 tasmin praviṣṭe 'sura-kūṭa-karmajā
māyā vineśur mahinā mahīyasaḥ
svapno yathā hi pratibodha āgate
hari-smṛtiḥ sarva-vipad-vimokṣaṇam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 8.10.55)

177 dṛṣṭam tavāṅghri-yugalam janatāpavargam
brahmādibhir hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam
dhyāyaṁś carāmy anugṛhāṇa yathā smṛtiḥ syāt
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.69.18)

178 āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindam
yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam
geham juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.82.48)

Padasevan

This mode of devotion is the act of seeing, touching, circumambulating the Holy Image and the sacred temple, sacred abodes like Vrindavan, Mathura, Jagannatha, Dvaraka, Ayodhya, etc., going on pilgrimages, bathing in the holy rivers like the Ganges, Yamuna, etc. Taking shelter in any of the sacred abodes of the Lord, or a holy temple for life, also comes under the category of Padasevan. The service of the sacred Tulasi, the most favourite of Bhagavan Sri Hari is also included in this mode of devotion.

"Discarding the performance of daily routine religious rites enjoined by the Varnasram Dharma, those who serve the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna, need not in the least be afraid of any evil befalling them, even if they meet with a fall from their devotional practices or with a premature death, owing to the inborn indifference to past fruitive activities. In whatever circumstances they are placed or in whichever species of births they are born, no evil shall befall those who are devoted to the Lord. Because of their natural inclination to render service to the Lord, they never experience any failure. Whereas, those who regularly perform their daily routine religious rites, but lack in devotion to the Lord, achieve nothing substantial."¹⁷⁹ "O Lotus-eyed Lord! The wise ever fix their mind in deep contemplation of You, the Abode of all goodness. Following in the footsteps of the great sages of yore, they have adopted Your Lotus Feet as an ever safe boat and find this vast ocean of worldly existence as a mere small pit of water made by the hoof of a calf."¹⁸⁰ "O Krishna (Primeval Being)! If a mortal, inhabiting this mundane world, being scared by the serpent of death and after roaming about in all the worlds including that of Brahma and finding no safe shelter free from fear, fortunately and through the blessings of saints, happens to take shelter at Your Lotus Feet, he then rests in peace. Death itself runs away from him."¹⁸¹ "O God! O Bhagavan! One who is fortunate enough to receive even particle of Grace from your Twin Lotus Feet, alone knows the Truth of Your inconceivable Glories. No one else is capable of realising It even if he devotes his whole time and

179 tyaktvā sva-dharmam caraṇāmbujam harer
bhajann apakvo'tha patet tato yadi
yatra kva vābhadram abhūd amuṣya kim
ko vārtha āpto'bhajatām sva-dharmataḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.5.17)

180 tvayy ambujākṣākhila-sattva-dhāmni
samādhināveśita-cetasaike
tvat-pāda-potena mahat-kṛtena
kurvanti govatsa-padam bhavābdhim
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.2.30)

181 martyo mṛtyu-vyāla-bhītaḥ palāyan
lokān sarvān nirbhayaṁ nādhyagacchat
tvat pādābjam prāpya yadṛcchayādya
susthaḥ śete mṛtyur asmād apaiti
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.3.27)

energy till eternity."¹⁸²

Archan

Ritualistic worship of the Lord is Archan. Every householder is expected to follow this process. This ultimately leads him to the Lord. **"Just as watering the root of a tree nourishes its branches, and twigs, so also the worship of Sri Vishnu results in the satisfaction of all souls including him."**¹⁸³ **"Just as watering the root of a tree, nourishes its trunk, branches, sub-branches, leaves, flowers, seeds, and all its other parts and by feeding the body alone (by taking food), all its other parts including all the organs of senses are nourished, so also by worshiping Sri Krishna alone, all the other gods are as good as worshipped, without their being actually worshipped, either individually or jointly.** The analogy lies in the fact that, we have to take the food through the mouth alone and not through other parts like the eyes, ears, nose, etc., which means that all the other parts of the body require to be fed through the proper channel of the mouth only. **Similarly, if Sri Krishna is served, all the lesser gods are definitely served."**¹⁸⁴ "When a sincere person, with a clean heart, who pours water at Your Lotus Feet and performs Their worship by offering even tender blades of Durva grass, attains the sublimest goal; how can this Bali who with a cheerful mind and loving heart dedicated the three worlds to Your Lotus Feet, come to any grief?"¹⁸⁵ "Wise men, viewing through the medium of the Sastras on the eternal welfare of all human beings, have declared this worship of Sri Vishnu as the best method of attaining mental peace and the righteous course that invariably brings deliverance from the thralldom of miseries and complete satisfaction of the Atma."¹⁸⁶ "He who worships Me thus adopting the regulated processes

182 athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya-
prasāda-leśānugṛhīta eva hi
jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavan-mahimno
na cānya eko 'pi ciraṁ vicinvan
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.29)

183 yathā hi skandha-śākhānām taror mūlāvasecanam
evam ārādhanaṁ viṣṇoḥ sarveṣāṁ ātmanaś ca hi
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 8.5.49)

184 yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena
ṭṭpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopaśākhāḥ
prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇām
tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 4.31.14)

185 yat-pādayor aśaṭha-dhīḥ salilam pradāya
dūrvāṅkurair api vidhāya satīm saparyām
apy uttamām gatim asau bhajate tri-lokīm
dāśvān aviklava-manāḥ katham ārtim ṛcchet
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 8.22.23)

186 cittasyopaśāmo 'yaṁ vai kavibhiḥ śāstra-cakṣusā
darśitaḥ su-gamo yogo dharmaś cātma-mud-āvahaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.84.36)

prescribed by the Vedas and Tantra texts, receives from Me rewards in fulfilment of all his desires here and hereafter."¹⁸⁷

Vandan

Vandan, though it forms an item in Archan, is spoken of as an independent process too. The sense of extreme humility on hearing the unparalleled Glories of the Lord is the main basis of this method. The word Namaskar indicates the giving up of all types of material ego. Sashtanga Namaskar means bowing down to the Lord as a mark of respect and in utter humility, utilising all the Indriyas, viz., (1) the arms, (2) the legs, (3) the knees, (4) the breast, (5) the head, (6) the eyes, (7) mind, and (8) words.¹⁸⁸ One must bow down to the Lord with his heart and soul, with the eyes slightly opened and earnestly feeling and uttering. "O Lord! I am Thine with my body, mind, and soul." Besides this there is the other method known as the Panchanga Namaskar, which means prostrating oneself before the Lord with (1) the knees, (2) the hands, (3) the head, (4) with words and (5) mind dedicated to Him.¹⁸⁹

"Therefore, he who bearing all the consequences of his previous actions, anticipating Thy Mercy with eagerness, and surrendering himself to Thee unconditionally in body, mind, and words, lives by offering salutations to Thee, richly deserves to attain Thee (Muktipadam - Sri Krishna himself)."¹⁹⁰ "Today, all my evils have left me, the very purpose of my birth is fulfilled; because I offer my prostrated obeisances at the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna, which are always meditated upon by Yogis."¹⁹¹ "With single-minded devotion, one should bow down to all movable and immovable objects, such as the sky, air, fire, water, earth, stars, planets like the moon, etc., all living beings, the cardinal points, trees and the like, rivers, ocean, etc., as the limbs of Bhagavan Sri Hari."¹⁹² "He who has fallen in a well, a ditch, or a pit, etc., or has slipped from a staircase, and is afflicted in manifold ways, and utters even once loudly "I bow down to

187 evaṁ kriyā-yoga-pathaiḥ pumān vaidika-tāntrikaiḥ
arcann ubhayataḥ siddhiṁ matto vindaty abhīpsitām
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.27.49)

188 dorbhyāṁ padbhyāṁ ca jānubhyāṁ urasā śirasā dṛṣā
manasā vacasā ceti praṇāmo 'ṣṭāṅga īritaḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 1.8.360)

189 jānubhyāṁ caiva bāhubhyāṁ śirasā vacasā dhiyā
pañcāṅgakaḥ praṇāmaḥ syāt pūjāsu pravarāv imau
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 1.8.361)

190 tat te 'nukampāṁ su-samīkṣamāṇo
bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam
hṛd-vāg-vapurahir vidadhan namas te
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.8)

191 mamādyāmaṅgalaṁ naṣṭaṁ phalavāṁś caiva me bhavaḥ
yan namasye bhagavato yogi-dhyeyānghri-pañkajam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.38.6)

Thee - Sri Hari", is freed from all his sins."¹⁹³

Dasya

A sincere feeling that one is the servant of the Lord and the accompanying acts of servitude are the signs of Dasya mode of devotion. Let alone the various efforts of the votary of this method in the worship of the Lord, the very feeling itself is alone capable of leading him to the realisation of the Supreme Lord. A servant of the Lord occupies a position second to none. In all forms of devotion this feeling of rendering service to the Supreme Lord plays the most important role. In this connection our Sastras, in a single voice, emphatically declare the incomparable glories of the servants of the Lord. To attain the position of a servant of the Lord needs Herculean efforts. "Is there in all the worlds anything yet to be attained on the part of the servants of the most auspicious Feet of the Supreme Lord, by the mere hearing of Whose Name, the fallen Jivas get rid of all their sins?"¹⁹⁴ "O Krishna! As long as man does not become Your servant, so long alone love, etc, act as thieves (as they deprive us of our inherent knowledge and bliss), the house becomes a prison (owing to the existence of endless sufferings), and delusion as fetters on legs."¹⁹⁵ "Whatever man does, guided either by the rules and regulations of the sacred scriptures, or inspired by natural instincts, through the medium of his physical body, words, mind, senses, intellect, or even by inherited habits, he should dedicate them all to the Supreme Lord Sri Narayana."¹⁹⁶ "O Achyuta! O the Benefactor of the universe! Though great gods like Brahma prostrate themselves with their splendid crowns, the tops of which brush against Your Footstool, You, in Your Descent as Sri Raghuram, accepted the alliance of friendship of the monkeys. Hence, what wonder is there, that You exhibit Your extreme addiction and subservience to Your great servants who have taken absolute shelter in You alone and none

192 kham vāyum agniṃ salilam mahīm ca
jyotiṃṣi sattvāni diśo drumādīn
sarit-samudrāṃś ca hareḥ śarīram
yat kiṃ ca bhūtaṃ praṇamed anyathā
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.2.41)

193 patitaḥ skhalitaś cārtaḥ kṣuttvā vā vivaśo gṛṇan
haraye nama ity uccair mucyate sarva-pātakāt
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 12.12.47)

194 yan-nāma-śruti-mātreṇa pumān bhavati nirmalaḥ
tasya tīrtha-padaḥ kiṃ vā dāsānām avaśiṣyate
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 9.5.16)

195 tāvad rāgādayaḥ stenās tāvat kārā-gṛham gṛham
tāvan moho 'ṅghri-nigaḍo yāvat kṛṣṇa na te janāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.36)

196 kāyena vācā manasendriyair vā
buddhyātmanā vānusṛta-svabhāvāt
karoti yad yat sakalam parasmai
nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayet tat
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.2.36)

else."¹⁹⁷

Sakhya

Great confidence and friendly relationship form the features of Sakhya devotion. Attending to the various comforts and timely service of the Lord in a Friendly way, is the characteristic of a Bhakta of this order. Just as a sincere friend in the world, is always eager for the welfare of his companion, so too a genuine devotee of this order, puts in all his loving efforts in the interest of the Lord. This feeling of friendship is twofold: - (1) Mixed with reverence (Gaurav), and (2) undiluted friendship (Visrambha). "Lo! How incomparable is their fortune! It is simply impossible to measure the luck of Sri Nanda Maharaj and other Vrajavasis, whose Dear Friend is the Eternal Lord Sri Krishna - the very Embodiment of Bliss!"¹⁹⁸

Atmanivedan

Complete self-surrender is the essence of this form of Bhakti. This consists of surrendering unconditionally one's body, mind, words, soul, and all that one feels as his own to the Lord. A devotee of this order is utterly indifferent to make efforts even for his own purposes. But, he never abstains from rendering services to the Lord. Even the very idea of maintaining himself, does not cross his mind, as he ever remains busy in the service of his Lord. Service to the Lord is the very essence of his existence. Their condition is like that of a beast that has been sold. When once it is sold to a new customer, the entire responsibility of maintaining it rests on the shoulders of the new master. The beast too, is out of his hand and never renders any service to its erstwhile master. Even so, after complete self-surrender, the surrendered soul feels that he is the property of the Lord and he has nothing that he can claim as his. Accordingly, such a devotee never worries for his daily necessities, such as food, clothing, etc., or even medicine during all sorts of illness. Atmanivedan distinguishes itself from Saranagati in respect of certain special characteristics. In a word, Atmanivedan is the fully developed condition of saranagati.

"He engaged his mind in meditating on the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna, his words in glorifying the excellences of the Lord, his hands in cleaning the temples and performing such other necessary services there and his ears in listening the Holy Narrations of Lord Achyuta."¹⁹⁹ "His eyes were engaged in beholding the Holy Images of Sri Mukunda, sacred Abodes like Mathura, Puri, etc., and in seeing great devotees, the organ of touch in

197 kiṁ citram acyuta tavaitad aśeṣa-bandho
dāseṣv ananya-śaraṇeṣu yad ātma-sāttvam
yo 'rocayat saha mṛgaiḥ svayam īśvarāṇām
śrīmat-kirīṭa-taṭa-pīḍita-pāda-pīṭhaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.29.4)

198 aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām
yan-mitraṁ paramānandaṁ pūrṇam brahma sanātanam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.32)

close embrace of the devotees, the sense of smell in experiencing the sweet perfume of the sacred Tulasi and other flowers offered at the Feet of the Lord and his tongue in tasting what is offered to the Lord."²⁰⁰ "His feet were employed in circumambulating sacred places and temples of Sri Hari, and his head in offering prostrated obeisances at the Feet of Sri Hrishikes (the Lord of the senses). He did all these, prompted solely by his love for the service of the Lord alone and not for the attainment of any of the worldly prosperities. The practice of such actions enables one to derive great delight in the association of genuine devotees of the Lord or to have attachment to the Lord similar to that of His favourite devotees."²⁰¹

As long as we are afflicted with worldliness, so long we do not feel any relish to speak of the Glories of Godhead. Because of the fact that we have not been able to develop a taste for such objects, are we to give it up completely? No, not at all. That is the only course for us to attain our eternal good. If we give up the spiritual course of action, our next alternative is to indulge grossly, once again, in extreme worldliness. Just as to a patient of biles, a piece of sugarcandy tastes bitter, so also to one who is completely lost in transitory pleasures of this transient world, the Glorious Excellences and Charming Deeds of Bhagavan are insipid tales. Yet, the procedure is to be continued with firm endeavour, having full faith in its results. In the chanting of the Holy Name, these two qualifications are unavoidable factors: (1) a constant endeavour, and (2) firm faith in Its marvellous results. If an adequate longing to be in the incessant service of the Lord with one's heart and soul is in the Sadhak, the Name will be perceptible to his sense-organs automatically. The third Sloka in 'Sri Sikshastak' composed by Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu throws sufficient light on the eligibilities necessary for chanting the Name. For experiencing the immediate effects of the Kirtan of Lord's Name, it is essential that we should equip ourselves with these qualifications. "He who feels himself humbler than a blade of grass, is more forbearing than a tree and without coveting any respect for himself duly respects others, should chant the Holy Name constantly."²⁰² Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in His above Sloka

- 199 sa vai manaḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayor
vacāmsi vaikunṭha-guṇānuvarṇane
karau harer mandira-mārjanādiṣu
śrutim cakārācyuta-sat-kathodaye
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 9.4.18)
- 200 mukunda-liṅgālaya-darśane dṛśau
tad-bhṛtya-gātra-sparśe 'ṅga-saṅgamam
ghrāṇam ca tat-pāda-saroja-saurabhe
śrīmat-tulasyā rasanām tad-arpite
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 9.4.19)
- 201 pādaḥ hareḥ kṣetra-padānusarpaṇe
śiro hr̥ṣīkeśa-padābhivandane
kāmaṁ ca dāsye na tu kāma-kāmyayā
yathottamaśloka-janāśrayā ratiḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 9.4.20)
- 202 tṛṇād api suṅcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 3)

has prescribed four qualifications as compulsory prerequisites for constant chanting of the Holy Name.

Humility

The first qualification is 'humility', i.e., feeling oneself humbler than a blade of grass, as 'humility is the foundation of all virtues'. A blade of grass has got its own utility in this world. It allows itself even to be trod upon without raising any protest. As such, amongst the created objects of the world, grass is taken as an emblem of humility. As long as we are bent upon satisfying the needs of our physical body and the subtle mind, the virtue of humility lies farther than the farthest star in the heavens. Our present condition is undisputedly one of soul in bondage. It identifies itself, sometimes, with its physical body and at other times with its subtle covering, but in no case with its real and uncontaminated status. All our egoistic outbursts are due to the misidentification of the soul with the gross body and its surroundings. This is the worst part of human nature. How wise is the saying, 'pride goeth before fall'? For enabling us to utter the Name of the Lord continuously, we are to free ourselves from this unpleasant and uncongenial trait. How to overcome this false ego? A relief from these false pretensions is possible by the understanding of one's true self and its relationship. In fact, the real 'I' that is working in us, the one that is vital in us, due to the presence of which we function in all fields of activities, is altogether a different entity having nothing whatsoever material in it. Unfortunately, we have erred in making a misuse of the freedom of will, a special gift to us by the Supreme Lord and this misuse has brought about this deplorable condition to us, the children of the Immortal Lord, free from false ego that is at the root of our undoing. Denouncing boldly all our egoism and its basis - the false misidentification - we can experience the charming sentiments expressed by Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu in another composition of His. "I am neither a Brahmin, nor a Kshatriya, nor a Vaisya, nor even a Sudra. I am neither a Brahmachari, a householder, a Vanaprasthi nor a Sanyasi. I am a humble servant of the servants who serve the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna, the Beloved of the Gopis, the most sublime and the Embodiment of an Ocean of Eternal Bliss."²⁰³ Thus, Srīman Mahaprabhu has marvellously impressed us with our real nature. This should be our worthy feeling, diametrically opposed to the false one. This is the true nature of our 'self'. All our identifications other than this, are thrust upon us by the divine illusion as a penalty for our foolish misuse of our will-power. By the Mercy of the Lord, when any soul is blessed with the knowledge of his true relationship with Him that fortunate man becomes very meek. He is humbler than a blade of grass and hence a worthy aspirant for constantly chanting Sri Hari Nama. He has attained the virtue of humility, free from any tinge of material ego arising from high or

203 nāhaṃ vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśyo na śūdro
nāhaṃ varṇī na ca gṛha-patir no vanastho yatir vā
kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda-pūrṇāmṛtābdher
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ
(padyāvalī 74)

noble birth, age, prosperity, etc. "O Killer of the demon Madhu and Kaitabh! O Lord of the Universe! May this be the true result of all my births, the real fruit of my long coveted desire, my only prayer and this alone be Thy favour to me, that Thou wouldst remember me as the servant of Thy servant's servant, in the long line of Thy servants ever engaged in Thy service."²⁰⁴ Let the essence of these expressions and their real spirit be the ideal motto of everyone of us, desiring to march along the path of constant chanting of the Name inculcated upon the people by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Forbearance

The second qualification is 'forbearance', greater than that of a tree. Even when the tree is cut to pieces, not only it tolerates all our ingratitude, but it extends help to us with every part of its trunk or branches. Exposed to all extreme climates, it never asks for any help from anyone.²⁰⁵ A religious career in this world, in contrast to the worldly course, is often beset with utterly discouraging events. A new convert has to face vehement oppositions in multitudes. The way to God-realisation is not strewn with soft and sweet smelling roses, but it is a path laid with great barriers and insurmountable difficulties. Hard tests from all corners, from the society, from relations, friends, from gods, and even by one's own body and mind, form but few of the major problems for the aspirant to tackle calmly. Merciless persecutions on one side, piercing words on the other side, inhuman behaviour still to add to these, one has to experience in this world the moment he selects this noble path. If the sight of these threatening external barriers, surrounding the perennial spring of everlasting happiness, kindles fear and disappointment in him, he is totally undone. If he yields to doubts and despair and falls back from his original enthusiasm, he will be forthwith hurled down to the vortex of utter disappointments. This failure in the life of the aspirant may sometimes bring to him a grave doubt even in the existence of our Beloved Lord. He may accuse Him of cruelty, partiality, etc., and sometimes he may find fault with himself for adopting such a path. He may fall a prey to innumerable drawbacks of this nature, if he is found wanting in the one virtue, 'forbearance'. 'Patience and perseverance will overcome mountains', is a wise and appropriate saying. How inspiring is the example of Haridas Thakur! What a glorious illustration of this sublime ideal! Let his words echo and re-echo in the heart of every aspirant who intends to chant the Name of the Lord!

All these extraneous factors, however disappointing they may be

204 maj-janmanaḥ phalaṁ idaṁ madhu-kaitabhāre
mat-prārthanīya-mad-anugraha eṣa eva
tvad-bhṛtya-bhṛtya-paricāraka-bhṛtya-bhṛtya-
bhṛtyasya bhṛtya iti mām smara loka-nātha
(śrī-mukunda-mālā-stotra 25)

205 vṛkṣa yena kāṭiḥ kichu nā bolaya
śukāñā maileha kāre pānī nā māgaya
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, antya 20.23)

apparently, are to be treated as sympathetic expressions of kindness from so many well-wishers, for our rectification arranged by the Lord Himself. With this belief, one must cast away the least sense of revenge or retaliation. He should remember the wise words, 'not by hatred is hatred stilled, but by love alone, is hatred killed'. What did the great Haridas Thakur do? Did he ever try to wreak vengeance on his persecutors? Never, never. On the contrary, he prayed to the Lord to forgive them. One should never be a burden to anyone in the world, but at the same time, by rendering the maximum service even at the risk of his comforts, he must contribute to the eternal benefit of mankind.

Absence of pride

The third qualification is 'to give up all desire for getting fame or respect'. One may be a living example of ever so many virtues, but he should be free from any pride, because 'pride goeth before a fall'. Even a slight tendency in any form for worldly gains, undoubtedly brings him a fall from his spiritual path. "If there be any good in thee, believe that there is much more in others, so that, thou mayest conserve humility within thee."²⁰⁶

Honouring others

The fourth and the last one is 'to give due respect to one and all'. Feeling the presence of the Lord in every being helps us to practise this ideal. This belief must not be guided by a verbal loyalty or a mere philosophical understanding alone. It must have its basis well rooted in our vital constitution itself. Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu assures immediate success to all those who chant the Name constantly, fully equipped with the above described four qualifications. Rarely, we meet a soul in this world endowed with all these qualifications in him. Does this mean that people must give up the chanting of the Name before attaining these qualifications? No, not at all, they are at full liberty to utter the Name of the Lord. Everyone is humbly requested to take the Name of the Lord, but the real fruit of such performance is assured on the attainment of these qualifications.

Names - Specific and Generic

The Names of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna are grouped under two heads: (1) 'Specific', and (2) 'Generic'. **Calling Him by His 'Specific' Names, attracts Him and brings automatically in the mind His awareness, Form, Attributes, Lilas, etc. These Names are "Krishna, Hari, Govinda, Gopal, Nandakisor, Radharamana, Murari, Mukunda, etc."**²⁰⁷ **The Sastras and sages insist upon the aspirants to call Him by His 'Specific' Names only, which attract Him surely and quickly.** He has no attraction for His 'Generic' Names,

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such as 'Brahman, Paramatma, Bhagavan, Isvar, Jagadis, Vibhu, Prabhu, etc.', denoting His Transcendental Powers, though the Latter are applicable in Their fullest significance to Him alone, in preference to His Partial Manifestations. **Sri Krishna is enamoured and ensnared by His 'Specific' Names only.**

207 śrī-kṛṣṇa gopāla hare mukunda govinda he nanda-kiśora kṛṣṇa
hā śrī-yaśodā-tanaya prasīda śrī-ballavī-jīvana rādhikeśa
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.4.7)
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa, gopīnātha gokula-nandana
vṛndāvana candra, vrajaramaṇī jīvana
"kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa" sāranāma-e dui akṣara
eka kṛṣṇa nāme haya koṭi grantha phala
(kṛṣṇa-prema-taraṅginī)

SAFEGUARD AGAINST NAMAPARADHAS

AS we have already heard, the nine ways of devotion are comparatively far more powerful than the rest of the sixty-four ways of practicing devotion. Even, amongst the ninefold ways of devotion 'Nama-Sankirtan'²⁰⁸ tops the list. It is the cream churned out of all the devotional activities. No other course is so potent as this one. This course of Nama-Sankirtan, as the verse expresses is to be performed free from all the offences. Nama-Sankirtan of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna is capable of bringing to us the thrilling experiences of Divine Love. The following verse speaks about the efficacies of one single utterance of the Name of the Lord. All the accumulated heaps of our sins committed in the present, as well as previous births are destroyed by the power of a single utterance of the Name and awakens ardent devotion, the cause of Prem. By the appearance of Prem, he is favoured with all the accompanying experience of incessant flow of tears, shivering, hair standing on end, etc. He is not in the least affected by worldliness and is blessed with the eternal loving service of Sri Krishna. A single utterance of the Name has got so much power in it. Even after uttering such a highly potential Name again and again, if one fails to achieve the spiritual experience of unalloyed love for the Lord, it may be only on account of the existence of too many offences in him. The seed of Sri Krishna Nama never sprouts in the heart of one who commits offences against the Name. **But Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu and Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Who are quite independent, are very munificent and do not at all take into consideration the aspirant's offences. If one utters Sri Krishna Nama, They immediately and invariably impart to him loving devotion, which causes floods of tears to gush out of his eyes. If one does not adopt Both of Them as his Sole Resort, there is no salvation for him.**²⁰⁹ According to Padma Purana, there are ten

208 See footnote 157

209 'kṛṣṇa-nāma' kare aparādhera vicāra
kṛṣṇa balile aparādhīra nā haya vikāra
tad aśma-sāraṁ hṛdayaṁ batedaṁ
yad gṛhyamāṇair hari-nāmadheyaiḥ
na vikriyetātha yadā vikāro
netre jalaṁ gātra-ruheṣu harṣaḥ (ś. bhā. 2.3.24)
'eka' kṛṣṇa-nāme kare sarva-pāpa nāśa
premera kāraṇa bhakti karena prakāśa
premera udaye haya premera vikāra
sveda-kampa-pulakādi gadgadāśrudhāra
anāyāse bhava-kṣaya, kṛṣṇera sevana
eka kṛṣṇa-nāmera phale pāi eta dhana
hena kṛṣṇa-nāma yadi laya bahu-bāra
tabu yadi prema nahe, nahe aśrudhāra

offences²¹⁰ that an aspirant is likely to commit against the Name. **These offences, if not nipped in the bud, will postpone the realisation of the fruit of Sri Nama-Sankirtan, which is Krishna Prem. Aspirants indulging in such offences will not taste the incomparable Bliss flowing from the Eternal Fount of Sri Krishna Nama. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in spite of all the liberal sanctions He had made in favour of the Holy Name, insisted on all to take the Name without committing any offence against It.** (See footnote 157)

First Offence

To disparage Sadhus or Absolute-realised souls.²¹¹ Speaking ill of sadhus, publishing false scandals about them, causing harm or injury to their persons, or adopting other violent methods, like disrespecting them, speaking harsh and impolite words to them, form an offence against the Name. Treating a genuine Sadhu on the same level as that of a non devotee, also comes under the same category of offence. Most people are ignorant of the meaning of the word 'Sadhu'. They take it in a very light and general way; but, really the word 'Sadhu' indicates a Bhakta of Sri Hari, who, like the Lord, is a living embodiment of eternal qualities, viz., existence, knowledge and bliss.

On a careful scrutiny of the religious trends in India, we come across with two different groups of people. From time immemorial, they are pursuing two different courses of approach to realise the Absolute Truth. One group follows an indirect course of ascending process, depending

tabe jāni, aparādha tāhāte pracura
 kṛṣṇa-nāma-bīja tāhe nā kare aṅkura
 caitanya-nityānande nāhi esaba vicāra
 nāma laite prema dena, vahe aśrudhāra
 svatantra īśvara prabhu atyanta udāra
 tāhre nā bhajile kabhu nā haya nistāra
 (śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 8.24-32)

210 satām nindā nāmnaḥ paramam aparādham vitanute
 yataḥ khyātim yātam katham u sahate tad vigarhām
 śivasya śrī viṣṇor ya iha guṇa nāmādi sakalam
 dhiyā bhinnam paśyeta sa khalu hari nāmāhita karaḥ
 guror avajñā śruti śāstra nindanam
 tathārtha vādo hari nāmni kalpanam
 nāmno balād yasya hi pāpa buddhir
 na vidyate tasya yamair hi śuddhiḥ
 dharma vrata tyāga hutādi sarva
 śubha kriyā sāmnyam api pramādaḥ
 aśraddadhāne vimukhe'py aśṛṇvati
 yaś copadeśaḥ śiva nāmāparādhaḥ
 śrute'pi nāma mātmye yaḥ prīti rahito 'dhamaḥ
 aham mamādi paramo nāmni so 'py aparādha kṛt
 (padma purāṇa, brahma khaṇḍa 3. a., 25.15-18; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa
 2.11.521-524)

211 satām nindā

entirely on their own efficiency and reasonings, mostly based on empiric foundations. They give a good deal of lip-loyalty to some of the selected Sastras which they interpret to suit their purpose. According to them, the Absolute is void of any specialities, Name, Form, Quality, Activity, or Entourage. It is designated as the undifferentiated and unqualified Brahman, Who is indescribable in positive terms and hence explained in the Sastras in negative terms. Whereas, the other group, adopt a direct course of descending process and through complete surrender and love to the Supreme Lord, they proceed. They are fully confident of their utter helplessness in realising the Godhead by dint of their researches and efficiency. Forgetting their ego and depending solely upon His Mercy they realise Him as a Transcendental Person abundantly rich with all auspicious qualifications, possessing an Eternal Form - a Miracle of Beauty - with sweet Names. They assert with all emphasis that He by His causeless Mercy manifests Himself in the uncontaminated life of a fortunate individual and makes him fit for positively describing Him in a language that is intelligible to persons who are not envious of His Transcendental Svarup.

A majority of the prominent section of our religious population belongs to the first group. Those few who are following the second group are termed as 'Bhaktas'. To them Bhagavan, Bhakti, and Bhakta are eternal objects. They do not destroy the eternally distinct positions of these three by merging them into one which is none of the three. To place the followers of these two methods having fundamentally opposite views into one class is a grave offence against the Holy Name. **A genuine devotee of the Lord, mentioned in the second category is not an aspirant for wealth, luxuries, or name and fame; no, not even for the realisation of any of the five kinds of liberation. He is exclusively engaged in the constant chant of the Holy Name. The service of the Divine Name is the very essence of his existence. He never expects anything in return from the Lord. 'Love is Its Own reward'**. This offence committed against the Sadhus is of a grave nature because the Glory of the Holy Name comes down to this material world through the medium of these Bhaktas. It is their mercy that helps us to derive the benefit of hearing the Divine Name or even realising Godhead. They are the greatest and real benefactors of humanity who save us from the innumerable sufferings of this world of imperfections. They are the living embodiments of the Mercy of the Supreme Lord; His most favourite associates, dearer than His Own Self. As such, He would not tolerate any wrongs, however insignificant they may be, to these devotees.

"No wonder, that those foolish people who misidentify themselves with their gross body would disparage a Sadhu. All Bhaktas are above malice. They are ever-forgiving of any misdeed committed against them. But, the holy dust of their feet never tolerates such offensive actions of these foolish people. They bring doom upon the offenders. Disparaging great Bhaktas is in the very nature of these sure infidels; because, thereby

they dig their own graves."²¹² "Guided by a malicious propensity, due to the prevalence of excessive Rajas quality in them, they are lustful, cruel-minded like the venomous serpents, irrepressibly arrogant, vainglorious, and awfully disposed to sins; these proud people, the unfortunate victims of the baser elements of humanity, laugh at the devotees of the Lord."²¹³ "Those wicked people puffed up with the vanities of wealth, lordliness, learning, high lineage, charity, personal complexion, physical ability, the performance of Vedic sacrifices, deprived of any wisdom in them indiscriminately slander the Supreme Lord Sri Hari and His devotees."²¹⁴

Second Offence

To regard Sri Vishnu as absolutely different from His auspicious Names, Form, Qualities, etc., or to treat Him on a par with the other lesser gods,²¹⁵ constitutes an offence. **Sri Krishna is the Supreme Godhead, the Transcendental Autocrat. He is the Prime Cause of all other causes, the God of all gods, and the Origin of all objects and entities. All other gods are powerful owing to the inspiration they receive from Him. They are all delegated with certain powers by Him. Just as even a costly and highly powerful electric bulb is of no use without current from the power-house, even so, deprived of Sri Krishna's energy, all these gods are powerless entities. Sri Krishna is the Transcendental Power-house from Whom all these gods receive inspiration.** Some of the Upanishads have impressively illustrated this fact by a certain incident. No doubt, these minor gods are more powerful than the most powerful man in this world; but they too are subject to the influence of time. They do take birth and though they live for more number of years than we all, they are also to leave this world one day. Sri Hari is free from these transitory influences. He is ever existing above the influence of the time factor, birth, growth, or death. **To treat Him as on a par with the other gods who are not independent and who receive strength from Him is an offence against the Holy Name.** "O King! God Siva is always united with his Sakti (Durga or Maya). He is associated with the three Gunas. The quality of Tamas is his predominant attribute. Being associated with the three Gunas, viz., Sattva,

212 nāścaryam etad yad asatsu sarvadā
mahad-vinindā kuṇapātma-vādiṣu
serṣyam mahāpūruṣa-pāda-pāṁsubhir
nirasta-tejaḥsu tad eva śobhanam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 4.4.13)

213 rajasā ghora-saṅkalpāḥ kāmukā ahi-manyavaḥ
dāmbhikā māninaḥ pāpā vihasanty acyuta-priyān
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.5.7)

214 śriyā vibhūtyābhijanena vidyayā
tyāgena rūpeṇa balena karmaṇā
jāta-smayenāndha-dhiyaḥ saheśvarān
sato 'vamanyanti hari-priyān khalāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.5.9)

215 śrī viṣṇu sakāśāt śiva nāmādeḥ svātantry amananam

Rajas, and Tamas, he is called 'Trilinga'."²¹⁶ "On the other hand, Bhagavan Sri Hari is the Supreme Godhead, beyond Prakriti and fully free from the material qualities. He is the Omniscient Lord, the Supreme Witness of all hearts. Those who worship Him get freed from the Gunas and attain His sublime state being void of material attributes."²¹⁷

Third Offence

Disregarding the spiritual preceptor.²¹⁸ **He who performs the chant of Sri Hari-Nama at all times is the real preceptor. Such a spiritual master has no other function, even for a fraction of a moment, than the chanting of the Name of 'Sri Hari'. He is the greatest exponent of the Holy Name.** The Guru, though he appears before us, talks to us in our language, dresses like us, takes food like others, and behaves with us like a human being, is not an ordinary mortal, but he is purely a transcendental personage. An aspirant to the chanting of Nama, and desirous of achieving success in his efforts, should treat the Guru as a merciful converter of all our evil propensities, erroneous notions, and whimsical behaviours. Unhesitatingly and whole-heartedly, we should obey the commands of our Guru. The advice of the Guru should be obeyed unconditionally without any discrimination. Therein lies the duty of the disciple, his real status. Discarding the Guru and his words of advice, no disciple can realise the Absolute Truth. Deprived of the mercy of the divine Guru, a disciple's endeavours do not fructify. The Name of the Lord never manifests on the tongue of one who disregards his Sad-Guru. "O King! The qualities of Rajas and Tamas are to be conquered by means of the quality of Sattva, which again is to be subdued by indifference to mundane affinities. But, by the grace of the spiritual master, one can easily conquer all these undesirable qualities. He who treats his divine master - a visible manifestation of the Supreme Lord on the mundane plane, and who imparts spiritual knowledge, as an ordinary human being, is doomed for ever. All that he has heard from his Guru or all that he has studied from the Sastras become utterly futile like an elephant's bath."²¹⁹

Fourth Offence

Speaking too lightly or contemptuously of the sacred and infallible

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- 216 śivaḥ śakti-yutaḥ śaśvat tri-liṅgo guṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ
vaikārikas taijasaś ca tāmasaś cety ahaṁ tridhā
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.88.3)
- 217 harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā taṁ bhajan nirguṇo bhavet
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.88.5)
- 218 guror avajñā
- 219 rajas tamaś ca sattvena sattvaṁ copaśamena ca
etat sarvaṁ gurau bhaktyā puruṣo hy añjasā jayet
yasya sākṣād bhagavati jñāna-dīpa-prade gurau
martyāsad-dhīḥ śrutam tasya sarvaṁ kuñjara-śaucavat
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 7.15.25-26)

Sastras.²²⁰ The Sastras are not the creations of any mortal. They originate directly from the Supreme Lord Himself; accordingly, they are understood by the wise as self-revealed truths. Sri Vyasadev, one of the Manifestations of the Lord expounded and expanded the same for the enlightenment of the ignorant world. "People who are under the influence of Maya, have no recollection of Sri Krishna or the knowledge about Him. Hence, for the benefit of those forgotten souls, Sri Krishna has manifested out of His Mercy, the Vedas and Puranas."²²¹ Ignorant souls are always under the influence of numerous erroneous notions. They are utterly ignorant of their eternal welfare and the effective methods to retrieve it. They are mostly indifferent too. Guided by everchanging views, sometimes they whole-heartedly support complete renunciation while at other times, they run mad after material objects and their enjoyments. For saving these fallen souls from such a pitiable condition and to show them proper light as to their duties, responsibilities, real nature, and their relationship, the Merciful Lord has manifested by His sweet Will, the great Sastras. They do not contain any record of the defective and deceptive arguments and conclusions of human brains.

"From the very breath of the Supreme Person, Isvar, have originated the four Vedas, the great epics, all the Puranas, Upanishads, Sloka, Sutras, Anuvyakhya, etc."²²² "This knowledge of the Brahman, the basis of all other types of learning, was originally taught by Brahma, the primal god, creator, and protector of this world to Atharvan, his first-born son."²²³ "When these Transcendental Words giving all the detailed knowledge about My proper Self, were totally lost in course of time during the great deluge, once again at the beginning of the creation I explained the very same Truth to Brahma."²²⁴ "Srimad Bhagavata dealing with the Pastimes of the Lord must be specially honoured; but on no account other Sastras should be treated with contempt."²²⁵ "Thou art the Supreme Origin, the

220 śruti tadanuyāyi śāstra nindā

221 mājā-mugdha jīvera nāhi svataḥ kṛṣṇa-jñāna
jīvere kṛpāya kailā kṛṣṇa veda-purāṇa
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, m. 20.122)

222 asya mahato bhūtasya niśvasitam etad yad ṛg-vedo
yajur-vedaḥ sāma-vedo 'tharvāṅgirasah itihāsa
purāṇam vidyā upaniṣadaḥ ślokāḥ sūtrāṇy
anu vyākhyānāni sarvāṇi niḥ śvasitāni
(bṛhad-āraṇyaka upaniṣada 4.5.11)

223 brahmā devānām prathamah sambabhūva
viśvasya kartā bhuvanasya goptā
sa brahma-vidyām sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭhām
atharvāya jyeṣṭha-putrāya prāha
(muṇḍaka upaniṣada 1.1.1)

224 kālena naṣṭā pralaye vāṇīyam veda-samjñitā
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā dharmo yasyām mad-ātmakaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.14.3)

225 śraddhām bhāgavate śāstre 'nindām anyatra cāpi hi
mano-vāk-karma-daṇḍam ca satyam śama-damāv api
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.3.26)

very Life behind all the senses like eyes, ears, etc. Thou art the Self-evident Knowledge. Thou art Its Exponent Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa. Thou art the Source of all the Sastras and hence, the wise address Thee as the Sastra-Yoni. Thou art the Propounder of scriptures, the veritable Nigama that speaks of both Pravritti (path of attachment to worldliness) and Nivritti (path of renunciation from worldly pleasures). We offer our prostrations to Thee again and again."²²⁶

Fifth Offence

To be under the impression that the whole Glory of the Divine Name explained in the Sastras is merely an exaggeration far from the real facts.²²⁷ "Knowers of the truth of this mundane world, such as Manu. etc., are not Mahajans or saints in the spiritual spheres. Their intellect is badly bewildered by the influence of Maha Maya. The honeyed flowery words of the three Vedas have benumbed their mentality to such a pitch that it is greatly entangled in the shackles of fruitive actions. They are of opinion that the praises on the efficacy of the Holy Name are simply hyperbolic."²²⁸ "Greatly confused and distracted by the flowery words of the Vedas without understanding their hidden meaning, the proud and the greedy do not find any relish in My Topics."²²⁹ "O King! Just as a pot polluted by the bad smell of wine is not purified even by the efforts of all the rivers put together, even so, the various expiations mentioned in the Sastras relating to fruitive works, however great or powerful they may be, cannot purify a fallen soul averse to Sri Narayana."²³⁰ "O Supreme Being! The Lord of my soul! Practice of complete silence, observance of vows, hearing of the scriptures, asceticism, study of the Vedas, practice of daily duties, exposition of the Vedic aphorisms, solitary life, muttering of Mantras and deep absorption in meditation - all these practices of attaining liberation are very often employed as the means of livelihood by those, who are the slaves of their senses, but for arrogant persons it is extremely doubtful whether these will be of any use or not."²³¹

226 namaḥ pramāṇa-mūlāya kavaye śāstra-yonaye
pravṛttāya nivṛttāya nigamāya namo namaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.16.44)

227 hari nāma mahimni artha vādamātra me taditi mananam

228 prāyeṇa veda tad idaṁ na mahājano 'yaṁ
devyā vimohita-matir bata māyayālam
trayyāṁ jaḍī-kṛta-matir madhu-puṣpitāyāṁ
vaitānike mahati karmaṇi yujyamānaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.3.25)

229 evaṁ puṣpitayā vācā vyākṣipta-manasāṁ nṛṇāṁ
mānināṁ cāti-lubdhānāṁ mad-vārtāpi na rocate
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.21.34)

230 prāyaścittāni cīrṇāni nārāyaṇa-parāṇmukham
na niṣpunanti rājendra surā-kumbham ivāpagāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.1.18)

Sixth Offence

Taking all the efficacious and incomparable Names of the Lord as imaginary.²³² Most people are given to a belief that Godhead has no Name. They are of opinion that any object with a name or form is the production of Maya. They are perfectly right in their view as far as objects of the mundane world are concerned. But, their opinion on Transcendental Object is totally mistaken. They make a gross confusion in treating both Transcendental and material on the same level.

Seventh Offence

Committing sins repeatedly and intentionally on the strength of the Name.²³³ After listening to the marvellous Glories of the Divine Name, none should continue with their loath-some activities and sinful tendencies, knowingly or unknowingly. **A firm conviction on the efficacy of the Name is highly praise-worthy and most needed by all. The Divine Name, by chanting which Divine Love is achieved, should never be used for destroying one's sins.** Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, while at Navadvip, converted two rowdies - Jagai and Madhai, overnight into great saints, an incident that revolutionised both men and gods. According to the records of the court of justice, there were no sins that these two did not commit before their conversion. By some accident, these two had to face Sriman Mahaprabhu. In a couple of minutes, both became His slaves, i.e., were transformed into ideal devotees. They surrendered unconditionally to Him; by His causeless Mercy they were filled with remorse and were ultimately reformed. He promised to them that He would see that they will not even have to bear the consequences of the sins of their crores of births, on condition that they should not commit sins again. He got an assurance from them to that effect. He said, "You must not commit any more sins." They replied, "We would not do it again."²³⁴ From then onwards, they started chanting Sri Krishna-Nama and became great devotees of Sriman Mahaprabhu.

Eighth Offence

Regarding the Holy Name in the same category as that of all other religious practices, such as moral duties, religious vows, renunciation,

231 mauna-vrata-śruta-tapo 'dhyayana-sva-dharma
vyākhyā-raho-japa-samādhaya āpavargyāḥ
prāyaḥ param puruṣa te tv ajitendriyaṅām
vārtā bhavanty uta na vātra tu dāmbhikānām
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 7.9.46)

232 tatra prakāraṅtarenārtha kalpanam

233 nāma valena pāpe pravṛttiḥ

234 prabhu bale, - "tora āra nā karis pāpa"
jagai-mādhai bale, - "āra nāre bāpa"
(śrī caitanya-bhāgavata, m. 13.225)

sacrifice, etc.²³⁵ **Chanting of Sri Hari-Nama is His direct service. Sankirtan should not be compared with other practices. "One utterance of the Name "Krishna" is more beneficial than the performance of even crores of horse-sacrifices. Yama - the god of death will punish that infidel, who compares a single utterance of Sri Krishna-Nama with even crores of horse-sacrifices."**²³⁶ Altruistic or utilitarian activities that are often advertised as the sole purpose of human life, are useful so far as the attainment of material happiness, which is transitory. Not even an iota of spiritual sincerity can be felt in any of those acts, what to speak of pleasing the Lord? Inattentiveness while chanting the Name must be avoided at all costs. **Diligence in uttering Sri Krishna-Nama will assuredly hasten the achievement of Sri Krishna Prem.**

Ninth Offence

Imparting the Holy Name to persons who Have no faith in and are averse to chanting the Holy Name and who are irreligious from their very birth, constitutes an offence.²³⁷ The Holy Name should not be immotives, such as receiving money, earning a name and fame, etc., as that would amount to a misuse of the Holy Name. A person who is ignorant of the true nature of the Divine Name, and is not only of a receptive disposition but also very anxious to hear and practise it, may be enlightened on the Glories of the Holy Name, according to his capacity and all efforts should be made to inspire him with faith in the Name and the necessity for chanting It with faith.

Tenth Offence

Want of taste for the chanting or hearing of the Name owing to extreme addiction to worldliness even after listening the Excellences of the Name repeatedly is one of the extremely grave offences that we are prone to commit.²³⁸ This attachment to the physical body and the pursuit of worldly pleasures detracts the mind from its true function of devotion to the Name and provokes us to commit offences very often. **The commission of the Namaparadhas must under all circumstances, be eschewed by the aspirant. There should be no bargaining with the Holy Name for worldly gains. The Name must be uttered for Its Own Sake. The aspirant should chant the Name in a spirit of self-surrender, invoking at every step the blessings of his spiritual master, and make strenuous efforts depending upon the Mercy of the Divine Name to free himself from the aforesaid offences. At**

235 *anya śubhakri yābhir nāmnām sām̐ya mananam*

236 *koṭi aśvamedha eka kṛṣṇa nāma sama
yei kahe, se pāṣaṇḍī, daṇḍe tāre yama
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 3.79)*

237 *aśradadhāne vimukhe ca nāmopadeśaḥ*

238 *śrute 'pi nāmnām mātmy etatrāpītirhi*

every moment he must be conscious of his insignificant position and from the bottom of his heart, wail aloud for help from the Divine Lord. An ardent longing and a sincere prayer from the depth of his heart can never result in nothing. Bhagavan is an Embodiment of Mercy. He is always moved by the sincere entreaties of a helpless person. He is the Lord of the destitute and forsaken. If the entreaties are from an anguished heart, drenched with genuine tears the Lord will never remain adamant. He saves him from all the offences.

Constant chanting of the Name is the sole remedy to escape from these offences. "A person who has stumbled down, makes repeated attempts to get up once again, taking support on the very same earth from where he has once slipped."²³⁹ **Similarly, the Name is the only refuge for one who has offended It. Hence, chanting the Name incessantly, depending upon Its Mercy, is the surest way that would save an aspirant from the various offences, he has committed against the Name.**"²⁴⁰ "Now even the greatest crime for which there is no atonement, which cannot be forgiven even by Sri Bhagavan Himself and which does not disappear unless endured, does disappear thus - **"Those who are always engaged in oppressing the saintly personages in this world, become not only blessed and pure by the incessant, loud, and clear chanting of Sri Hari-Nama but also become the purifiers of others too. By constantly uttering Sri Hari-Nama, his sins are not only destroyed, but he also becomes Dhanya, i.e., blessed. He becomes perfectly pure himself and acquires the power to purify others too. He also becomes the fittest recipient of the precious wealth of loving devotion to Godhead.** It is stated in Stotra, etc., that censure of the good and saintly people constitutes the greatest offence against the Name. If such censure means an offence against the Name, then words fail to describe adequately the magnitude of the most heinous crime of incessantly oppressing the Sadhus, who not only never harm anyone, but always do good to all. How unpardonably heinous a crime is meant by the words 'Sajjananam sadadrohaparata'. The Sastras say 'Namnopi Sarvasuhridah aparadhat Patatyadhah' i.e., one certainly has to suffer in an infernal hell as an aftermath of an offence against the Name, **Which is the Friend or Well-wisher of all.** Is there then no expiation for such an offender? Certainly there is! **By always resorting to the Name alone, he atones for his offence against the Name. This shows that he, who is always engaged in the service of the Name, is not prone to commit an offence; on the contrary, he advances further in devotion leading him to the achievement of the special Prem Bhakti or loving devotion. Hence it is aptly said of him that he becomes pre-eminently blessed.**"^{240.1}

239 bhūmau skhalitapādānām bhūmire vāvalambanam
tvayi jātā parā dhānām tvam eva śaraṇam prabho

240 nāmāparādha-yuktānām nāmāny eva haranty agham
aviśrānta-prayuktāni tāny evārtha-karāṇi ca
(padma purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.526)

NAMABHAS AND UTTAMA BHAKTI

Namabhas Defined

WE now take up the subject of the "dim reflection of the Name (Namabhas)." If we compare the Name to the sun, this dim reflection of the Name or Its Abhas, can well be compared with the dawn, when the earth is lighted by the reflected light of the sun, even before the sun rises above the horizon. Sri Krishna, out of His unaccountable Mercy, has manifested Himself into this world as Sriman Nama to deliver the fallen Jivas and impart to them the highest gift of Divine Love in this Kali Yuga. The unhappy Jivas imprisoned in various types of bodies, subject to the merciless and ceaseless rotation of the cyclic wheel, compelled by their actions, are not having free access to this Merciful Manifestation of the Lord, owing to the innumerable inabilities they are beset with. They prevent the Jivas from having a sight of this bright sun. Extreme ignorance, hankering after transitory pleasures, tendency to earn name and fame, etc., form clouds above the unfortunate aspirant and obstruct his vision. Just as clouds, fog, etc., cannot do any harm to the shining sun, so too these inabilities of the aspirant fail to obscure the Manifestation of the Divine Name. It shines with Its full splendour, but the aspirant who is unfortunately a prey to these defects is deprived of Its sight. His vision is obscured.

Similarly before the Name actually manifests Itself on one's tongue he becomes illumined by Its dim reflection through any of the sense-organs or senses. Unintentional or indirect utterance or hearing of the Name, without faith or even with contempt, or uttering or hearing It without being cognisant that It is the Name of the Lord, can be aptly defined as Namabhas or dim reflection of the Name. The meaning can be clarified further by quoting examples. For instance a Muslim does not take the name of the wild boar and calls it 'Haram' contemptuously. Here, when he utters Haram even in contempt, he obtains Moksha, as he utters the Name 'Rama' adjunctively or concomitantly, even though it forms a part of

240.1 sadā droha-paro yas tu sajjanānām mahī-tale
jāyate pāvano dhanyo harer nāmānukīrtanāt
(laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.340)

adhunā niṣprāyaścitto bhagavadakṣamyō bhogaikanāśyō mahānāparādho
'pi nāmamāhātmyato 'payātītyāha-sadeti | nāmno 'nu nirantaram kīrtanāt
dhanyaḥ pāvanaḥ paramaśuddha ityārthaḥ ; yadvā na kevalam svayameva tataḥ
pavitro bhavediti kintu parānapi pāvayati premalakṣaṇabhagavad
bhaktidhanayogyaśca bhavatīti | yadyapi nāmāparādhastotrādau 'satām nindā
nāmnaḥ paramamāparādham vitanute' ityādinā nindāpi nāmāparādha uktaḥ
kimuta sadā drohāparateti | *** tathāpi tatraiva 'nāmāparādhayuktānām
nāmānyeva harantyaḥ' ityādyukternāmāparāṇām na ko 'pi doṣo ghaṭate
pratyuta bhaktiviśeṣa evodetīti | ataḥ myagevoktam - 'jāyate pāvano dhanya' iti |

the contemptuous name of an object which is actually abhorred, let alone the unintentional utterance of the name of god of another faith. Similarly when a tiny toddler utters either 'Krishna' or 'Rama', it cannot have any idea of Godhead or His Name, the question of its faith in Him or It being quite out of question. Similarly when one, who is deeply engrossed in his own work, casually happens to hear, in spite of himself, the Name or Names of the Lord forming part or parts of other words like Krishnamriga, Krishnasarpa, or Ramanagar, or when a born dumb, deaf, and blind person, who is mentally deficient and quite incapable of learning anything, happens to touch or pass his hand over the written words like 'Krishna', 'Rama', etc., or if the words or Names like 'Krishna', 'Rama', etc., are tattooed on any part of his body, it amounts to his having Namabhas or the dim reflection of the Divine Name. Namabhas also includes utterance or hearing of the Divine Name in an unconscious or delirious state, or uttering or hearing It on one's deathbed, even unintentionally as was the case with Ajamil. When the Divine Name reflects on the human mind as in a flash, or when the human being happens to perceive the Divine Name in any way, at any time or under any circumstances, by any of his sense organs or senses, it unequivocally amounts to his having Namabhas and the result unfailingly will be his emancipation from worldly bondage.

“Sanatkumar says to Narada, "O Narada! He who somehow happens to utter the Lord's Name during his speech, or when he somehow happens to remember or hear It clearly or otherwise, or with or without impediments between the utterance of the different syllables of the Name, truly crosses this ocean of worldliness; but if It is employed selfishly in the acquisition of wealth, or the acquirement of means of livelihood or as a means in winning name and fame or in acquiring the object of one's greed or amongst the infidels, the realisation of the highest goal which is the primary result of taking the Name, is certainly not immediately accomplished. If one happens to utter the Name under some pretext other than the intentional utterance (of the Name of the Lord), similarly if It somehow flashes on the mind, or It somehow, i.e., even a part of the Name enters the ears whether distinctly or indistinctly or if the utterance or hearing is uninterrupted and undisturbed, i.e., without any interference by words or sounds while uttering the Name in full, i.e., without uttering in parts, interrupted by other words, or in words like 'Halam riktam', the syllables 'Ha-ri' are there or in the words 'Raja mahishi', the syllables 'Ra-ma' exist; in this way other Names may exist in combination of words, so utterance or hearing without such interruption, or with such interruption, i.e., after one utters a part of the Name, he composes or applies his mind to the unuttered part of the Name, i.e., frequently interrupted by other words between the utterance of the individual syllables of the Name; or when only a part of the Name is uttered and the other part is not uttered at all, i.e., incomplete utterance of the Name; even then the Name or part of the Name does help the utterer to cross this ocean of worldliness; It certainly liberates him from the evil consequences of all his sins and offences. But the primary fruit resulting from the service of the Name is not immediately achieved. Similarly if the service of the Name is utilised for earning one's bread and butter, the achievement of the main goal, i.e.,

Sri Krishna Prem, does not readily succeed. Will not the Name achieve Its effects, if It is employed as a means of earning one's livelihood? Yes, certainly It will. But in this world It will not immediately yield the result, i.e., the result will be accomplished only after a good deal of delay."²⁴¹

"When the Yavan (the Muslim) as was being torn to pieces by the wild boar, with its tusk-like teeth, uttered 'Haram', 'Haram'. he got liberation. How astounding would the result be if the Name is uttered with implicit faith?" "When Ajamil on his deathbed, taking the Name 'Narayana' intended to call his son, went to Sri Vishnu's Abode, what would be the result if one takes It with implicit faith?" To prove that those who experience even Namabhas or the dim reflection of the Name - which forms the initial stage of the other devotional modes like Sravana, Kirtan, etc., are not under the control of Yama - the god of death, Sri Vyasadev concludes the chapter by quoting the example of Ajamil. He gives the clear meaning of the Glory of the Name in a single sentence. Ajamil uttered the Name 'Narayana' while on his deathbed without faith; **how amazing would the result be if It is taken with faith?** He took the Name while dying or on his deathbed; **how much more beneficial would the result be if one takes It during his whole lifetime?** He uttered the Name to call his son; **how much more beneficial would the result be if he utters It to call the Lord Himself?** Besides Ajamil, who was a great sinner, achieved the abode of Sri Vishnu; **how grand would the result be if an extremely guiltless or pure person takes the Name?** The Glory of 'Sri Hari Nama' has been expounded by the use of the argument 'a fortiori',²⁴² or "Kaimutik Nyayah", which means a maxim of 'how much more', or 'how much less'. The following Slokas will clarify its

241 nāmaikaṃ yasya vāci smaraṇa patha-gataṃ śrotra-mūlaṃ gataṃ vā
śuddhaṃ vāśuddha-varṇaṃ vyavahita-rahitaṃ tārayaty eva satyam
tac ced deha draviṇa-janatā-lobha-pāṣaṇḍa-madhye
nikṣiptaṃ syān na phala-janakaṃ śīghraṃ evātra vipra
(padma purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.527)

vāci gataṃ prasaṅgād vān-madhye pravṛttam api smaraṇa-patha-gataṃ
kathañcin manaḥ-sprṣtam api śrotra-mūlaṃ gataṃ kiñcit śrutam api śuddha-
varṇaṃ vā aśuddha-varṇaṃ api vā vyavahitaṃ śabdāntareṇa yad-vyavadhānaṃ
vakṣyamāṇa-nārāyaṇa-śabdasya kiñcid uccāraṇānantaram prasaṅgād āpatitaṃ
śabdāntaram tena rahitaṃ sat; yadvā yadyapi 'halaṃ riktam' ity ādy-uktau
hakāra-rikārayor vṛttyā harīti-nāmāsty eva, tathā 'rāja-mahiṣī' ity atra rāma-
nāmāpi, evam anyad apy ūhyam; tathāpi tat-tan-nāma-madhye vyavadhāyakam
akṣarāntaram astīty etādṛśa-vyavadhāna-rahitam ity arthaḥ | yadvā vyavahitaṃ
ca tad-rahitaṃ cāpi vā tatra vyavahitaṃ nāmnaḥ kiñcid uccāraṇānantaram
kathañcid āpatitaṃ śabdāntaram samādhāya paścān nāmavaśiṣṭākṣara-
grahaṇam ity evaṃ rūpaṃ madhye śabdāntareṇāntaritam ity arthaḥ rahitaṃ
paścād avaśiṣṭākṣara-grahaṇa-varjitaṃ kenacid amśena hīnam ity arthaḥ |
tathāpi tārayaty eva sarvebhyaḥ pāpebhyo 'parādhebhyaś ca saṃsārād apy
uddhārayaty eveti satyam eva | kintu nāma-sevanasya mukhyaṃ yat phalaṃ tan
na sadyaḥ sampadyate | tathā deha-bharaṇādy-artham api nāma-sevanena
mukhyaṃ phalaṃ āśu na sidhyatīty āha tac ced iti | tan nāma ced yadi dehādi-
madhye nikṣiptaṃ deha-bharaṇādy-artham eva vinyastam tadāpi phala-janakaṃ
na bhavati kim? api tu bhavaty eva kintu atra iha loke śīghraṃ na bhavati kintu
vilambenaiva bhavatīty arthaḥ ||

significance. "Does it need a special mention that the Kaustubh gem which is more brilliant than a hundred crores of suns, is more effulgent than an ordinary lamp?" "Is it not ridiculous to say that a certain darkness which is thoroughly dispelled even by a small lamp, fails to disappear in the presence of the Kaustubh gem, more resplendent than even a hundred crores of suns?"^{242.1}

Namabhas according to Srimad Bhagavata are of four types. "(1) Sanketya - unintentional and indirect utterance of the Holy Name as in the case of Ajamil, (2) Parihasya - taking the Name while indifferently cutting jokes with others, (3) Stobh - taking the Name while singing songs, and (4) Hela - inattentive or negligent uttering of the Name. The above four types of the dim reflection of the Holy Name are competent enough to save the soul from the bondage of Maya."²⁴³ Vidur says to Dhritarashtra, "Avoiding all insincerity, with real faith, and steadfast devotion, worship Sri Krishna, Who is the Repository of all virtues, of excellent fame, Who is the Purifier of all that is sacred, Whose sun-like Name even by Its dim reflection when It illumines the minutest chamber of one's heart, destroys forthwith all the gloom of the worst forms of sins."²⁴⁴ "O the Sun of Bhagavan Nama! Is there any fortunate soul in the infinite number of universes who is competent enough to esteem fully Your Glories? Even Your dim reflection

242 damṣṭri-damṣṭrāhato mlecco harāmeti punaḥ punaḥ
uktvāpi muktim āpnoti kiṃ punaḥ śraddhayā grṇan
(nṛsimha purāṇa)
mriyamāṇo harernāma grṇan putropacāritam
ajāmilo 'py agād dhāma kim uta śraddhayā grṇan
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.2.49)

prakaraṇamupasaṃhṛtyāpi punaḥ sarvathā pratīyarthamekenaiva
vākyena nāmamāhātmyasiddhāntamāha | mriyamāṇa iti | mriyamāṇatvādeva
aśraddhayapi grṇan kiṃ punaḥ śraddhayeti mriyamāṇo 'pi kiṃ punarjīvanṇiti
putropacāritamapi kiṃ punaḥ sākṣādeva ajāmilo mahāpātakyapi kiṃ
punarṇiṣpāpa ityavadhāraṇacatuṣṭayam ||
(sārārtha-darśinī)

242.1 nyūne'dhike ca kaimutyam tatra nyūne bhaved yathā
kaustubhas tu mahā-tejāḥ sūrya-koṭi-śatād api
ayam kim uta vaktavyam pradīpād dīptimān iti
athādhike yathā dhvāntaiḥ śakyo dīpo 'pi nārditum
sa tu mārtanḍa-koṭībhiḥ samaḥ kim uta kaustubhaḥ
(laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta 3.185-186)
yauvanam dhana-sampattiḥ prabhutvam avivekitā
ekaikam apy anarthāya kim uta yatra catuṣṭayam
(hitopadeśa 11)

243 sānketyam pārihāsyam vā stobham helanam eva vā
vaikuṇṭha-nāma-grahaṇam aśeṣāgha-haram viduḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.2.14)

244 tam nirvyājam bhaja guṇa-nidhe pāvanam pāvanānām
śraddhā-rajyan-matir atitarām uttamaḥ-śloka-maulim
prodyann antaḥ-karaṇa-kuhare hanta yan-nāma-bhānor
ābhāso'pi kṣapayati mahā-pātaka-dhvānta-rāśim
(śrī-bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.1.103)

in the hearts of mankind enveloped in the darkness of power, dispels all darkness from their minds, and imparts enlightenment on loving devotion even to the utterly ignorant of the Absolute Truth."²⁴⁵ "These Vaikunth Parshadas, with the intention of protecting those devotees who happen to utter, or hear, or happen to have even a dim reflection of the Lord's Name, even at the time of their death, from the fear of all impediments to devotion, and spreading the pure cult of Bhakti, move about everywhere according to their own desire, as they are the protectors of Bhakti."²⁴⁶ "One gets liberation, even by the dim reflection of the Lord's Name, or when It is just uttered, or even when It enters his ears. To elucidate the Glory of the devotional cult, emancipation of the Lord's devotees is very easily achieved, by the service of the Lord's Names, or even by the faintest reflection of any one of the Names, howsoever uttered, i.e., uttered jokingly, or even slightly, etc., or if the Name just throbs on the tip of the tongue, or even if the sound of the Name somehow enters the ears. Ajamil, by calling his son Narayana by name, went to Vaikunth. Varaha Purana says, "A Brahmin was sitting in water engrossed in meditation. A tiger which came there to eat him, was shot by a hunter. Before it breathed its last, because it heard the Lord's Name uttered by the Brahmin, it obtained liberation."²⁴⁷

Love is its own reward

We have now understood beyond doubt that the primary result of chanting the Divine Name is the attainment of Divine Love for the Lord. Love, being the most sublime attainment and the rarest of rare virtues, is achieved by the uttering the Name lovingly. 'Love is its own reward'. One who practises the chanting of the Holy Name with a longing heart for this

245 yad-ābhāso 'py udyan kavalita-bhava-dhvānta-vibhavo
dṛśam tattvāndhānām api diśati bhakti-praṇayinīm
janas tasyodāttam jagati bhagavan-nāma-taraṇe
kṛtī te nirvaktum ka iha mahimānam prabhavati
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka 3; stava-mālā)

246 ete hi mṛtyu-kāle'pi jihvāgre śrotra-vartma vā
kathañcit sakṛd-āptena nāmābhāsena ca prabhoḥ
bhaktān kṛtsna-bhayāt pāntas tānvanto bhaktim ujjvalām
sarvatra vicaranty ātme- cchayā bhakty-eka-vallabhāḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.90-91)

nanu śrīvaikṛṣṇapārśadānām tatra tatra kimartha gamanam tatrāha eta iti
dvābhyām | śrīvaikuṅṭhapārśadā hi ātmecchayaiva natu
kenāpyanyapāratantryeṇa sarvatra carantīti dvābhyāmanvayaḥ | kim kurvantaḥ ?
apyarthe cakāraḥ | prabhoḥ śrīvaikuṅṭhanāthasya nāmābhāsenāpi tasyaiva
bhaktān kṛtsnebhya bhayebhya bhaktivighnādirūpebhyaḥ pāntaḥ rakṣantaḥ |
kīdṛśena ? mṛtyukāle 'pi kathañcit parihāsāvahelanādiprakāreṇāpi sakṛdapi
jihvāyā agramapi śrotrasya vartmanikaṭamapi vā āptena labdhena | ataeva
ujjvalām viśuddhām bhaktim tanvantaḥ sarvatra pravartayantaḥ | yataḥ
bhaktirevaikā vallabhā yeṣām te |

247 kathañcid bhagavan-nāmā- bhāsasyāpi sa sidhyati
sakṛd-uccāra-mātreṇa kim vā karṇa-praveśitaḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.173)

Sublime Goal-Prem must necessarily and invariably pray for that and that alone from the Lord. "Millions of tongues chant His Name and sing His praises and millions of souls are flooded with Love, because they looking on His Face utter His Name, Which is as Potent as His Love. For His Name contains Himself, and those, who utter His Name have Him in their hearts and lo! The world to them is complete!" Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in His fourth Sloka of Sikshashtak teaches us how we should pray while taking the Name: -

"O Lord! May I approach Your Lotus Feet with a humble prayer? Is this unworthy wretch eligible to approach Your ever pure Lotus Feet? I am not uttering Your Names with any expectation from You; no, not in the least. My Lord! I do not ask from you any relief for the various physical ailments I am often subject to; You are not like a mere physician to me; nor Your Name even. I do not covet material learning, popularity, or reputation. From the worldly point of view, I may not be in affluent circumstances. It matters very little to me. I do not hanker after paradise where greater - yes, far greater luxuries for comparatively many more number of year are offered, a paradise where every inhabitant is free from hunger, thirst, or similar physical necessities, where 'ambrosia' itself forms the food of every individual and where none even dreams of death or decrepitude. Never, do I long to be born in a place, where every tree is a wish-yielding one. By Your Mercy I covet not for any of these achievements. I neither crave for the five types of liberations which You are ready to give to those who approach You nor for supernatural attainments offered to Yogis. Crores of births in any form I am willing to accept provided You are merciful to grant one favour to this insignificant servant of Yours. Bless me that I may sing Your Names and Glories in all my births! My Lord! You are the very Embodiment of Mercy, an ever-flowing Ocean of Kindness. This is the only prayer I have to ask of You in my life. Let me be blessed with unflinching and selfless devotion to Your Lotus Feet. Let me be saturated incessantly with such loving devotion to You. Let my determination to serve You materialise in all its fullness, and let there be no end to it. Alas! What amount of attachment I am having to the transitory objects of the material world? Lord! Have Mercy on me; transform this present attachment of mine into one to Your Lotus Feet. O Lord! I pray for no separation between You and me! A day without Your remembrances, without singing Your Names and Glories, is worse than death itself - the most unthinkable disaster in my life! Lord! Let me not fall

tathāpi kiṁ tat sādhanamityapekṣāyām bhaktimāhātmyanirvacanāyaiva
bhagavad bhaktānāmanāyāsenaiva mokṣaḥ siddhyatītyāhuḥ | kathañciditi | astu
tāvad bhagavannāmnām sevayā | bhagavannāmnō ya ābhāsaḥ
prātibimbavadanukārakaśabdastasyāpi kathañcit kenāpi
parihāsāvahelanādiprakāreṇāpi sakṛt vāramekamapi uccāraṇamātreṇa jihvāgre
karaṇena | kimveti pakṣāntare | tasyaiva kathañcit karṇayoḥ praveśāt sa mokṣaḥ
siddhyati taduktam ṣaṣṭhaskandhe | " vikruśya putramaghavān yadajāmilo 'pi
nārāyaṇeti mriyamāṇa iyāya muktim " iti | tathā śrīvārāhapurāṇe | satyatapa
upākhyānārambhe kañcijjale magram japaparam brāhmaṇam
bhakṣayitumāgatasya vyāghrasya tenaiva vyādhena hatasyākasmādud
gatabhagavannāmaśravaṇenaiva muktirjātetī dik ||

a prey to this calamity. Let not these circumstances, happy or unhappy, stand in my way of rendering services to You. Let my devotion towards You grow in proportion to Your munificence. My Lord! It matters not if I take birth in any form, anywhere in the infinite number of universes; only I must be blessed with selfless loving devotion to Your Lotus Feet. Be merciful to grant my humble prayer."²⁴⁸

"The Prem Bhakta wants nothing from his Lord, no boon, no blessing, material or celestial, not even salvation or Mukti, nothing, nothing save - the blessings of being filled with Love for Him. He prays to his Lord. "O Krishna! It matters not what betides my body, my life, or my earthly circumstances, or in what form of life I am reborn, even if it be that of a worm, let my faith and love be fixed in Thee, my Beloved. Whatever is there in all existence compared with the luxury of loving Thee? Thou art the Sum Total of the realisation of all the desires, of all happiness, Thou, the Secret and Object of all our longing!" A Sloka with similar meaning is seen in Sri Mukundamala Stotra too. "I have no special belief in the performance of pious activities, nor in worldly riches, nor in the gratification of my sensuous pleasures. May all those things come to pass as they are ordained to, O Lord! according to the nature of my previous actions. But this alone is what I regard as worthy of being prayed for, and what I cherish very much. May I retain unswerving devotion that is inspired by the Divine Lotus Feet, in all my successive births!"²⁴⁹

Unalloyed devotion or Uttama Bhakti

What is the true conception of this unflinching devotion which every sincere aspirant for the Holy Name should aspire after? Religion in its broader sense is nothing but Love for Godhead. No other achievement of humanity is higher than that of this Love. Bhakti or devotion to Lord is the alpha and omega of Life in India. It is the very essence of India and in fact, our sacred India breathes through this noble quality. From days of hoary antiquity till today, India has come across and been blessed with the thrilling lives and experiences of a vast galaxy of Bhaktas. Their ideal lives and teachings have maintained this perennial flow of devotion even today uninterrupted in our land which is itself named 'Bharata' after the name of a great Bhakta and King who once ruled over our sacred land. Bhakti! Ah! What a marvellous power-house it is! Immense are its potentialities. Who in India has not ever heard the unparalleled and innumerable efficacies

248 na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye
mama janmani janmani svare
bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi
(śikṣāṣṭaka 4)

249 nāsthā dharme na vasu-nicaye naiva kāmopabhoge
yad bhāvyaṁ tad bhavatu bhagavan pūrva-karmānurūpaṁ
etat prārthyam mama bahu mataṁ janma-janmāntare 'pi
tvat-pādāmbhoruha-yuga-gatā niścalā bhaktir astu
(śrī-mukunda-mālā-stotra 5)

and influences of Bhakti or devotion? Who is there in our land who is not moved by the soul-stirring experiences of a regular stream of devotees? Bhakti is not a matter of occasional emotions, but a life of positive living and continuous experiences that can independently claim the highest of achievements which no other course of religious practice can ever dream of.

Bhakti is defined in various ways by its different exponents. The derivation of the word 'Bhakti' is from the verbal root 'Bhaj' which means complete service or Seva. This service is the special feature of Bhakti. It is this that distinguishes Bhakti from the other cults. This method of service consists in complete submission of one's body, mind, and words in pleasing the Supreme Lord. The word 'service' should not be confused with the various kinds of activities such as the service of the nation, country, society, the poor, etc., with which it is usually being identified. Here, the word, 'service' means the service of the Lord. Activities of a religious nature, very often guided by fear, hatred, etc., or the feeling of identity with the Attributeless Brahman are not styled as Bhakti since the quality of submission is always lacking in such course. Those activities that are current in this world at present and passing under the names of duty, service of country, etc., as the equivalents of religious activities deserving of our highest esteem, are but of the nature of efforts for the procurement of sensuous enjoyment, each for himself, by the members of atheistic societies. There is absolutely no question of the service of Godhead in any of those functions. On the contrary, there is to be found in them only the desire for exploiting Sri Krishna and His devotees for the gratification of one's senses. The society of atheists who are devoid of any intention of serving the Transcendental Lord are deceiving themselves and others by their mental speculations. Those functions or ideas are located far away from the truth, and will continue to remain so even if the entire population of the world agree to accept them as true. The selfless, uninterrupted, and unalloyed service of the Supreme Lord is the only universal religion of all conditioned souls. In that religion there are no elements of deception in the forms of fruitive activity, empiric knowledge, etc.

"Service of the Lord of the senses (Hrishikes) through all the senses is called 'Bhakti' or devotion, which is free from all obstacles and pure by reason of its being exclusively devoted to Sri Krishna."²⁵⁰ It is the predominance of knowledge born of our limited material senses and aversion to the service of Godhead that have acted as two sheaths covering us, leaving us in this present state of bondage. The sage Sandilya explains Bhakti as "the highest kind of attachment to the Lord with unflinching love."²⁵¹ Srimad Bhagavata, the crest-jewel of all the Sastras declares it as the most sublime religion **"the uninterrupted flow of**

250 sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate
(nārada-pañcarātra; śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.12)

251 sa parā nurakti īśvare
(śāṅḍilya-bhakti-sūtram 1.1.2)

mind towards Bhagavan."²⁵² The great Narada in his Bhakti Sutras mentions it as "**intense unalloyed love for Bhagavan.**"²⁵³ Sri Rupa Gosvami defines it thus: - "**The harmonious pursuit of Sri Krishna by being favourably disposed towards Him and free from all other desires and unconditioned by Jnan, Karma, etc., is known as 'Uttama Bhakti'**"²⁵⁴. Sri Jiva Gosvami while commenting on the above Sloka mentions that the word '**harmonious**' (**Anukulyen**) **means that the pursuit must be favourable or agreeable to minister to the pleasures of Sri Krishna directly.** He is the Sole Enjoyer of all services rendered by His devotees. Those who are engaged busily day in and day out, in rendering services that are most pleasing to Him by words, deeds, or thoughts, are known as true devotees. Various prayers that human beings offer to Him are not of this nature. They do not directly please Him. The repeated entreaties of conditioned souls, fallen in the whirlpool of endless sufferings, have no capacity in them to order delight to the Senses of the Lord. They may attract His attention or even redeem them from their difficulties; but they do not render any special gratification to Him or to His Senses. Those who offer such prayers, may get some benefits and thereby satisfaction for themselves, but the Lord Who is the Object of the prayer does not get any. Just as a person in this world, who is luxurious by nature, and esteemed by position, is pleased by his praises and by the supply of objects that would assist or enhance his enjoying facilities, even so, the Supreme Lord, Who is the Sole Enjoyer of all the created objects, feels extremely pleased with our services that would provide enjoyment to Him. Supplying the necessities, that would cater to His taste or doing similar actions that would directly please Him, are to be understood as the loyal pursuit towards Sri Krishna. Persons given to demoniacal tendencies and always of an inimical disposition towards Bhagavan also rendered some satisfaction to Him. By picking up quarrels with Him and by engaging Him in regular battle, they too have brought out His heroic propensities. This is only an indirect or unfavourable (Pratikul) approach to Him. These demons only opposed Him in every way and at all times. The very thought of Bhagavan enraged and provoked them to challenge His very Authority. **Whereas, for a devotee, a reflection of His recollections makes him float on the rolling waves of an unsurpassable ocean of eternal joy, converts the entire structure of his into a magnificent power-house of spiritual inspirations enriched with thrilling experiences.** The illustrious and exemplary lives of a host of great devotees, like Nanda Maharaj, Yasoda, the milk-maids of Vraja headed by Sri Radhika, etc., are to be strictly followed in this respect.

The meaning of the word 'Anusilanam' can be roughly expressed as

-
- 252 mano-gatir anvicchinnā...
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.29.11)
- 253 sā tva smin parama prema rūpā
(nārada bhakti sūtra 2)
- 254 anyābhilāṣitā śūnyaṁ jñāna karmādy anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā
(śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11)

'submissive pursuit'. This pursuit is twofold: - (1) Activities guided by the impulse of body, mind, and words (Kriyarupa), and (2) actuated by spontaneous feelings (Bhavarupa). Bhakti is awakened by the causeless Mercy of Bhagavan's bliss yielding potency. It is not attained by human efforts alone. Without the Mercy of Bhagavan or Bhaktas, the attainment of Bhakti is not only difficult, but simply impossible. When by the blessings of a Bhakta, a particular individual is favoured and permitted to the course, his life and activities are infused with devotional tendencies. Each and every sense-organ of his gets the fitness to perform the functions pertaining to Bhakti.

Kriyarupa Bhakti consists in the practice of the sixty-four principles (footnote 159) guided by the nature of action. The other one, viz., Bhavarupa or actuated by spontaneous feelings, is the mental culture of devotional principles, such as attachment to the Lord, Love for Him, etc. It is essential that an aspirant must possess both these qualifications and activities in him. The loyal practice of favourable activities towards the pleasure of Sri Krishna is of two types: (1) Functions that are of direct relationship with Sri Krishna,²⁵⁵ and (2) activities that are done for the sake of Sri Krishna.²⁵⁶ Both the observances are performed for the pleasure of Sri Krishna. The first one is of immediate and direct relationship with Sri Krishna. They are actions like that of feeding Him, playing with Him, looking to such other Personal comforts, and necessities. The other one is not in the form of a Personal service, but it accelerates the functions aimed to secure the pleasure of Sri Krishna, e.g., the various religious rites, charities, etc., observed on the occasion of the Advent of Sri Krishna by Nanda Maharaj, Vasudev, etc. These practices when observed with a purely devotional motive, glorify the occasion, and hence form one way of rendering loving devotion of Sri Krishna.

The above twofold ways of devotional activities, are not to be confused, with the pious acts of various charitably-disposed persons, with the object of earning religious merits or name and fame. It is love for one's own sensuous gratification, lurking in the heart, that manifests itself in a variety of forms in the shape of patriotism, feeding the poor, distribution of clothings, starting of charitable hospitals and dispensaries, digging of well and tanks, and various other activities of such nature. The performers of such deeds attain enjoyments of greater degree, fit for the gods as the fruit of their actions. These enjoyments in Svarga have got their own duration. "When one's merits are completely exhausted, the enjoyer of heavenly bliss would revert once again to the earthly condition."²⁵⁷ The devotees of the Lord are not after such insignificant and transitory results. Hence, they perform these acts with the object of pleasing Bhagavan, contrary to those of the other people of the world, who do the same for self-aggrandisement.

255 śrī kṛṣṇa sambandhyanu śīlanam

256 śrī kṛṣṇārthamanu śīlanam

257 kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṃ viśanti
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 9.21)

By the usage of the word 'Anyabhilashita', all desires other than that of the direct service to Sri Krishna, such as a desire for the enjoyment of the transitory pleasures of the material world (Bhog Vasana), and a desire for liberation (Moksha Vasana) are prohibited, as they are harmful to the growth of Bhakti, and hence they are unacceptable. Jnan means the knowledge of the identity of the Attributeless Brahman and Jiva (Nirbheda Brahmanusandhan) which is the worst impediment in the path of Bhakti. If this unfortunate idea creeps into the heart of an aspirant, his efforts in the cult of Bhakti are doomed to failure and disappointment. The word 'Karma' refers to the daily, compulsory, and occasional religious duties mentioned in the orthodox Smritis. The word 'Karma' does not indicate the various devotional activities performed by the devotees to the pleasure of Sri Krishna (Bhajaniya Paricharyadi), so also the usage of Jnan. A sincere quest for the Truth in a submissive spirit, and the study of the knowledge about Godhead, congenial to the progress of devotees, are not in any way discouraged. Karma, Jnan, Vairagya, and other virtues, such as self-control (Yama), purity (suchi), etc., are not the proper means for the attainment of Bhakti. These qualifications by themselves are neither Bhakti, nor are they capable of awakening Bhakti in a person. When any person is fortunate enough to attain Bhakti, all these virtues automatically lend grace to him.

In the above Sloka, Sri Rupa Gosvami describes the negative and positive features of pure devotion. Devotion proper and a show of the same, guided by ulterior motives, though they appear apparently similar, are entirely different with reference to results. Unless there is proper enlightenment, we are apt to be confused while making a choice. To save the humans from such grave dangers is one of the purposes of these divine personages, when they make their appearance in this world. From the negative aspect, unalloyed devotion is absolutely free from hankerings that are averse to or do not contribute to the pleasures of the Supreme Lord. These undesirable hankerings are to be totally avoided by those who yearn for loving devotion to Bhagavan.

Sriman Mahaprabhu, while expounding unalloyed devotion to Sri Rupa Gosvami at Allahabad, makes a mention of these obnoxious and unhealthy temptations as the worst impediments to the growth of devotion of Godhead. The negative nature of Bhakti, strictly eschews all the unfavourable tendencies in the development of devotion. It avoids all activities where religion, mainly devotion to the Lord, is at a discount. An excessive desire for enjoying the transitory pleasures of this world or paradise is an awful impediment to the attainment of Bhakti. A longing to retire even from the service of the Lord and lose oneself completely in the Formless Attributeless Brahman, is a greater evil in the realisation of Bhakti. The positive aspect of Bhakti consists in observing devotional practices in a most loyal way, to the entire satisfaction of Sri Krishna. It wants to please the Lord in the manner that is most agreeable to Him.

"By merely hearing the discourses or talks regarding My Transcendental Glories from a Bhakta, he experiences a continuous flow of the mind towards Me, the Indwelling Monitor in all the hearts of beings,

like that of the stream of the Ganges towards the ocean. This is the distinguishing characteristic of devotion, free from all mundane qualities in it. This devotion to Me, Who am the Supreme Being, is selfless and uninterrupted."²⁵⁸ "My devotees never accept from Me any reward in exchange for their services, such as residence in My own realm Vaikunth, having powers similar to Mine, proximity to My presence, a form resembling My Ownself, or complete absorption in Me, though offered by Myself. This is because they are not enamoured of any other gifts except My Transcendental Service."²⁵⁹ "He, who has completely surrendered himself to Me, never covets for the attainment of high positions like that of Brahma, Indra, sovereignty over all including the nether worlds, supernatural attainments obtainable by Yogic practices, or even the achievement of liberation, except My eternal service."²⁶⁰ "It is such devotion as described above that is perfect. By means of such devotion, all Jivas transcend the limits of the triple material qualities and attain the unalloyed love for Me."²⁶¹ This devotion or Bhakti is not merely a temporary means of attaining liberation as many misrepresent it. **Bhakti is both the means as well as the end in itself.** Srimad Bhagavata has explained it as the highest religion of all souls. "That function by means of which Bhakti in Adhokshaj (Transcendental Godhead) is aroused, is the highest Dharma of man. Such devotion possesses two distinguishing features in it, viz., (1) it is Ahaituki - Selfless, i.e., not guided by any selfish motive except the selfless desire of pleasing the Supreme Lord, and (2) Apratihata - uninterrupted; since it is spontaneous, nothing can arrest its course. It is beyond the pleasure or pain of the mundane sphere. It is only by such spontaneous devotion, the soul is fully satisfied."²⁶²

The word 'Adhokshaj' used in the above passage means 'He Who transcends all knowledge born of senses', 'He, Who exists beyond the scope of human intelligence'. He is no other than Sri Krishna himself. The Love towards the Transcendental Reality, that is produced by the practice of the highest Dharma is known as Bhakti or Seva. This is not based on any adventitious cause. Therefore, it continues ever uninterrupted.

258 mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa mayi sarva-guhāśaye
mano-gatir avicchinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau
lakṣaṇam bhakti-yogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam
ahaituky avyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.29.11-12)

259 See footnote 28

260 na pārameṣṭhyam na mahendra-dhiṣṇyam
na sārva-bhaumam na rasādhipatyam
na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavam vā
mayy arpitātmeccchati mad vinānyat
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.14.14)

261 sa eva bhakti-yogākhyā ātyantika udāhṛtaḥ
yenātivrajya tri-guṇam mad-bhāvāyopapadyate
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.29.14)

262 sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihata yayātmā suprasīdati
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.2.6)

Worship that is ordinarily found based on desires for the acquisition of religious merit (Dharma), worldly prosperity (Artha), sensuous gratification (Kama), and emancipation (Moksha) is not pure devotion (Suddha Bhakti); and the temporary outbursts of emotions too, subjected by the influence of time, space, and other circumstances are also not genuine expressions of real Bhakti or devotion. **Pure devotion is selfless; it is based on the desire for the exclusive Love of the Transcendental Lord. It is also the natural function of all the Jivas.** This is the summum bonum of human existence, and hence surpasses all other conceptions of Dharmas, which are called Apar. The uninterrupted happiness which is coveted by all souls is attained only by this method of unalloyed devotion. The world 'soul' that is used in the Sloka does not mean the perishable body made up of the five elements (Pancha Bhutas), and the ten organs of senses; nor does it mean the mind, the eleventh sense the present ruler of the sense-organs. All efforts of the body or the mind of the Jiva, result only in gratifying his material senses, and hence is not the Love of the Lord. The service of the Transcendental Lord is not certainly for the satisfaction of any of our senses.

Bhakti, by reason of its being Para Dharma is superior to all other forms of worship. Since it is the natural function of the Jiva, it is entirely selfless, whereas, all other methods, such as Jnan, Yoga, Karma, etc., have got their own interests. **True devotion, as we have already dealt with, aims merely at the Supreme pleasures of Bhagavan as its final goal.** Jnan or knowledge, with its renunciation, aims at the realisation of the Attributeless Brahman and complete absorption in the same for freeing the Jiva from the thralldom of nescience. Yoga with its eightfold practices wants to lose itself in Paramatma. Karma consisting of obedience to scriptural rules and regulations and by dedication of all its fruits to Bhagavan, can only secure a proneness towards the Supreme Lord. All these methods are inferior to exclusive devotion or Kevala Bhakti, which aims at all costs, only the supreme pleasures of the Lord. To a real Bhakta, true Moksha or liberation lies neither in the attainment of the Attributeless Brahman, including complete merging in the same advocated by the Jnanis, nor in the realisation of Paramatma of the Yogis. **To him, Moksha means direct vision of the Lord and His realisation in His highest Manifestation as Svayam Bhagavan. This sublime realisation is only possible by undiluted Bhakti alone.**

Hence, it needs no mention that to those fortunate enough to have Bhakti, Jnan will come by itself. By having the realisation of Bhagavan, one automatically gets into all the secrets of the other imperfect and partial Manifestations of the Lord. Therefore, it is not essential that a person aspiring after Bhakti is to follow the paths of Jnan or Yoga. "Hence, for those Yogis who have intense devotion to Me, and whose minds are ever devoted to Me, the efforts for the practice of Jnan or dispassion are not at

all beneficial for the attainment of their real good."²⁶³ "O Lord! The efforts of those, who abandoning the path of pure devotion - the fount of all well-being, aspire after the abstract knowledge or dry wisdom, end in fruitless toil and trouble like the exertions of those who thrash empty husks of corn."²⁶⁴

During the conversation of Sri Vallabhacharya, the founder of Pushtimarga with Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu at Allahabad, the latter gave out His view on Bhakti, in the most unambiguous and illuminating words thus" - "A Chandala of righteous character who is purified from the evil effects of being born in a low caste, by the blazing fire of his devotional fervour, is indeed an object of esteem, even to eminent scholars; but likewise an atheist, even if he be an erudite scholar, in all the Vedas, is not honoured. All the high compliments, such as lineage, vast erudition in all the Sastras, muttering of the Mantras countless times, and severe austerities, in a person devoid of any spirit of devotion to the Supreme Lord, are merely lifeless exhibitions only, leading to the satisfaction of the worldly-minded. They are like the decorating of a corpse with costly articles, such as attractive costumes, fascinating perfumes, and ornaments studded with precious gems."²⁶⁵ There are many Slokas of the same spirit that speak emphatically, unambiguously and in a comparative way, the unique position of Bhakti over all other modes of religious practices.

Even emancipated souls are not fully satisfied with their attainment of Moksha, and therefore, engage themselves in the devotional services of Bhagavan. The paths of Jnan and Yoga lead their respective votaries to the realisation of Brahman and Paramatma, who are only the incomplete and partial aspects of Bhagavan. The path of Karma, with dedication to Bhagavan is only a gateway to all such practices. It is not a necessary means to the attaining of Bhakti. All these different paths help humanity to wipe out their averseness or Vaimukhya to the Lord, the root cause of all their sufferings they are having at present, and replace it with Sammukhya or proneness to the Lord instead. Since human beings are ceaselessly struggling under varying degrees of eligibilities, one single course, however sublime it may be, does not prove effective to suit their individual capacities. Hence, the All-Merciful Lord, through the Sastras, has

263 tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya yogino vai mad-ātmanah
na jñānam na ca vairāgyam prāyah śreyo bhaved iha
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.20.31)

264 śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhave
teṣāṁ asau kleśala eva śiṣyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.4)

265 bhagavad-bhakti-hīnasya jātiḥ śāstram japas tapaḥ
aprāṇasyeva dehasya maṇḍanam loka-rañjanam
śuciḥ sad-bhakti-dīptāgni-dagdha-durjāti-kalmaṣaḥ
śva-pāko 'pi budhaiḥ ślāghyo na veda-jño 'pi nāstikaḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-sudhodaya 3.11-12)

prescribed different methods to satisfy the eligibilities of different persons. But, when Bhakti is attained, all other paths appear inferior to Bhakti which is always independent. It grows by itself spontaneously. It does not require the support of either Karma, Jnan, or Yoga. Whereas, in the case of all other methods, such as Karma, Jnan, Yoga, Vairagya, etc., they are to depend chiefly upon the mercy of Bhakti. None of them independently can lead their respective followers to the ultimate goal of realising Transcendental Bliss. Hence, Bhakti, free from all these courses occupies the supreme position over all other religious practices mentioned in the Sastras. "O Uddhav! A well-developed and unalloyed devotion to Me wins My Heart, and other practices, such as Yoga, Sankhya, the observance of socio-religious duties, study of Vedas, severe austerities, and renunciation are unable to do so."²⁶⁶

Bhakti - Appeals to all

Of all the spiritual practices mentioned for realising Bhagavan, nothing is more popular and appealing like Bhakti to the masses as well as classes in India. **Bhakti is so catholic that it is accessible to one and all irrespective of caste, creed, sex or age.** Both the literate and the illiterate are equally placed with regard to it. It is free from rigid restrictions as seen in other practices. **It is intended for all times and can be observed under all conditions, in all places and by all beings. No other mode of worship is so pleasing to Bhagavan as Bhakti itself.** "What were the religious practices that Dharma-Vyadha observed? How old was Dhruv? Did the great Gajendra possess any learning? Was, Kubja - the servant-maid and the hunchbacked woman ever beautiful enough to attract the Lord? Was the devoted Brahmin Sudama ever wealthy? What was the social status of Vidur? What prowess had Ugrasen, the King of Yadavas? Did not these devotees captivate the Lord? Certainly, they did. By what qualities? **By pure Bhakti and Bhakti alone. The Lord is delighted by Bhakti and Bhakti alone and not by the acquirement of any other virtues.**"²⁶⁷

Bhagavan was extremely pleased with Gajendra on the merits of Bhakti alone. The incomparable glory of Bhakti being such, all the Sastras, the saints, and the Lord insist on all to practise devotion. It is desirable and preferable for one and all irrespective of his eligibility or status to follow the path of Bhakti in all sincerity. "A wise person guided by innumerable desires in him, whether he is ever intent upon attaining Bhakti alone, or seeking liberation, should worship the Supreme Lord with

266 na sādhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharmā uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo yathā bhaktir mamorjitā
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.14.20)

267 vyādhasyācaraṇam dhruvasya ca vayo vidyā gajendrasya kā
kubjāyāḥ kim u nāma rūpam adhikam kim tat sudāmno dhanam
vaṁśaḥ ko vidurasya yādavapater ugrasya kim pauraṣam
bhaktyā tuṣyati kevalam na ca guṇair bhakti-priyo mādhaveḥ
(padyāvalī 8)

intense devotion."²⁶⁸ Bhakti is a very vast subject. Its characteristics are innumerable. A few of the important features, as expounded by the eternal devotees, are elucidated below in order to correct many of the erroneous notions.

Bhakti - Its special characteristics

"Uttama Bhakti is the destroyer of misery, giver of good, inspirer of contempt for Moksha (emancipation from worldly bondage), extremely difficult to obtain, the essence of the most highly concentrated bliss, and capable of attracting Sri Krishna Himself."²⁶⁹ 1. Klesaghnatva - capacity for removing miseries. Various miseries that are mercilessly torturing humanity irrespective of any position are mainly due to (1) sins (Papa), (2) the seed of sin (Papabij), and (3) nescience (Avidya). Sins that we have committed are twofold: (1) Prarabdha, and (2) Aprarabdha. When the fruits of sins have matured they are called Prarabdha; when they are yet to mature they are known as Aprarabdha. A person who is fortunate enough to obtain Bhakti, is always freed from sinful activities. Even when he attains strong faith which is the qualification for gaining Bhakti, he abstains from the sinful actions. Sinful impulses, 'the seed of sin' also find no place in the heart of those who are sanctified by pure devotion. Error regarding the knowledge of one's own self - the Jivatma, is nescience. While making progress towards unalloyed devotion, a Jiva is enabled to understand his true nature. It experiences that it is not an entity of the material world nor has it any permanent relationship with its physical and mental cases in which it is a prisoner at present. Its false ego or misidentification of its own self with the gross or subtle organism, leaves it for ever. It comes to know for certain that it is an eternal servant of the Supreme Lord. The cause of all our suffering is due to the misidentification, resulting from our averseness to Godhead. When the light of unalloyed devotion illuminates the dark chambers of our heart, the root- cause of all such sufferings is completely eradicated leaving no room for any further miseries.

"Just as a blazing fire reduces every piece of fuel to ashes, even so, unflinching devotion to Me, strikes at the root of all sins."²⁷⁰ "The performance of expiatory acts, such as penance, liberal gifts, observance of religious vows, etc., no doubt delivers a sinner from the various sins he has committed. But these actions are incapable of removing the impurities caused by the practice of irreligious activities guided by the impulse of sin.

268 akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣaṁ param
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 2.3.10)

269 kleśaghnī śubhadā mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt sudurlabhā
sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākaraṣiṇī ca sā
(śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.17)

270 yathāgniḥ su-samṛddhārciḥ karoty edhāṁsi bhasmasāt
tathā mad-viṣayā bhaktir uddhavaināṁsi kṛtsnaśaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.14.19)

It is only by the service of the Lord that this impulse of sin can be totally destroyed."²⁷¹ "Bhaktas, by meditating with love upon the ever-effulgent Toes of the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord gradually destroy the evil knots of Karma easily; but those Yogis, who have experienced even Nirvikalpa Samadhi, though dispassionate, having control over their flowing senses, could not succeed in their efforts to cut asunder the knots of Karma. Hence, avoiding all those futile attempts for controlling the senses, serve Bhagavan Sri Vasudev with loving devotion."²⁷²

2. Subhadatva - capacity for bestowing good of all types. By the astounding efficacy of this characteristic, a devotee is loved by one and all in the world. He becomes a living embodiment of various appreciable virtues. He experiences incessant happiness both external and internal, spiritual and material. "All the gods with their excellent qualities reside in him, who is endowed with unflinching devotion to Sri Hari. But, where is the possibility of those great qualities in one who is void of devotion to Sri Hari? He remains engrossed in the worldly activities and attachments guided by the evil dictations of his wavering mind."²⁷³ There is nothing in the infinite number of worlds which an intense devotion to Bhagavan would not offer. A true Bhakta never casts a glance at anything other than his coveted goal, i.e., the attainment of love towards the object of his worship. As such, the highest benefit of realising the transcendental bliss is a certainty to him.

3. Moksha-laghuta-karitva - capacity to create contempt for Moksha or liberation. Bhakti, when it awakens in a fortunate person, creates in him a contempt for Moksha which is always opposed to its progress. Bhakta never covets any attainment, however great it may be, which stands in the way of his eternal relationship with the Lord. The bliss arising out of genuine devotion to Bhagavan has no comparison to the aggregate happiness that all the worlds and the attainment of various other methods can jointly offer. "O my Lord! If my love to You is quite firm, and if by good fortune, Your Divine Adolescent Figure is obtained by me, then Mukti (liberation) itself will entreat me with folded hands to accept her in my service, and Dharma (practice of routine religious rites), Artha (earthly wealth), and Kama (the desired objects) will wait for their turn for me. **When I have Your Love, these four purusharthas, i.e., the four**

271 tais tāny aghāni pūyante tapo-dāna-vratādibhiḥ
nādharmajam tad-dhṛdayam tad apīśāṅghri-sevayā
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.2.17)

272 yat-pāda-pankaja-palāśa-vilāsa-bhaktyā
karmāśayam grathitam udgrathayanti santah
tadvan na rikta-matayo yatayo 'pi ruddha-
sroto-gaṇās tam araṇam bhaja vāsudevam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 4.22.39)

273 yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 5.18.12)

ends of human life, are not at all worth anything to me."²⁷⁴ "O Nanda's Son! Of what use is the salt-water of Nirvana, i.e., total emancipation to us, who are deeply absorbed in the great ocean of Nectarine Pastimes of Your Adolescence? **Those fortunate few, who joyously dally in the floods of Your Nectarine Accounts, treat the four aims of human life quite as insignificant as a blade of straw.**"²⁷⁵ "I bow down to that Hanuman, who desired nothing except the service of Sri Vishnu - the Son of Dasaratha, even when he got Moksha, i.e., liberation, inexplicably by some stroke of luck alone."²⁷⁶ "I covet not for that liberation which frees one, from the cycle of births and deaths, by attaining which, the present relation between You as my Lord and I as Your humble servant, will cease to exist."²⁷⁷

4. Sudurlabhatva - extremely difficult to attain. Bhakti is not a cheap achievement that one can have by a mere wish. Even by encountering endless difficulties, in most cases Bhakti remains far from our reach; since no amount of human efforts independently can succeed in their sublime realisation. "By pursuing the path of Jnan, salvation in the form of realising Undifferentiated Brahman can surely be attained; heavenly enjoyments are easily gained by pious deeds, such as Yajna, etc., but despite thousands of such efforts unalloyed devotion to the Lord is unattainable."²⁷⁸ "Those householders who are the slaves of their passions, and hence extremely addicted to their bodies, and their surroundings, fail to attain devotion to Sri Krishna, either by their individual efforts, by the help of others, or by their combined co-operative attempts. Such householders only go on chewing the chewed and left behind as utterly useless by their predecessors."²⁷⁹ The goddess of devotion never imparts her blessings so easily as we mistake. She is prepared to offer us any other reward, such as Moksha, etc., for all our hardships, except Bhakti. On a minute scrutiny of the sincerity of the longing of one who struggles for Bhakti, she imparts it to him. "O King! Lord Mukunda was a Protector,

-
- 274 bhaktis tvayi sthitararā bhagavan yadi syād
daivena naḥ phalati divya-kiśora-mūrtiḥ
muktiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjaliḥ sevate'smān
dharmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ samaya-pratīkṣāḥ
(śrī kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta 107)
- 275 nanda-nandana-kaiśora-līlāmṛta-mahāmbudhau
nimagnānām kim asmākaṁ nirvāṇa-lavaṇāmbhasā
tvat-kathāmṛta-pāthodhau viharanto mahā-mudaḥ
kurvanti kṛtinaḥ kecic catur-vargaṁ tṛṇopamam
(padyāvalī 42-43)
- 276 yadṛcchayā labdham api viṣṇor daśarathes tu yaḥ
naicchan mokṣaṁ vinā dāsyam tasmai hanumate namaḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 1.4.52)
- 277 bhava-bandha-cchide tasyai sprhayāmi na muktaye
bhavān prabhur ahaṁ dāsa iti yatra vilupyate
(padyāvalī 111, bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 1.4.68)
- 278 jñānataḥ sulabhā muktir bhuktir yajñādi-puṇyataḥ
seyaṁ sādhanā-sāhasrair hari-bhaktiḥ sudurlabhā
(śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.36)

Spiritual Guide, Object of worship, and the family Guardian for all of you and the Yadav race. Not only this much, but He even acted on certain occasions as your Mediator, Charioteer, etc., too. Over and above all these, He even bestows salvation or Mukti upon those who worship Him; but He never endows Bhakti so readily upon one."²⁸⁰

5. Sandrananda-Viseshatmata - unalloyed devotion is the very essence of the most highly concentrated bliss. "The words 'Krishna', 'Krishna' are more than enough to destroy the sins of people, as that would amount to the application of drastic remedy for a minor ailment. **A sinner is never able to perpetrate as many sins as the single utterance of the Name 'Hari' is able to destroy.** But if ardent devotion to the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna springs thereby, the whole affluence of the empire of liberation will come abegging to his feet, looking askance at him. Hence, to use the Name 'Krishna' for dispelling one's sins would be a serious insult to the 'Name', and hence a great offence by the aspirant."²⁸¹ The bliss that a devotee can enjoy by rendering loving services to the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna has no comparison elsewhere. It is this achievement that prompts the devotees to reject any other offer from the Lord, however tempting it may be to others who are the votaries of other paths. The type of bliss that accrues from devotional services, enables the devotee to enjoy a particular mood of compact happiness, infinitely higher than the one that flows from the attainment of the Abstract Brahman. Even if all other types of happiness - material or spiritual, are totalled together and multiplied a billionfold, it does not attain even eligibility to compare with this kind of Transcendental Bliss. Those who are fortunate enough to experience it are alone capable of speaking a few words on it. Invariably it is better realized than expressed. "When the great Sanak, Sanandan, etc., saw the Lotus-Eyed Lord Narayana approaching them, they had the experience of a breeze laden with the sweet perfume of Tulasi leaves coupled with Kesar. This fragrance entering into the deepest chambers of the hearts of those sages who were absorbed in the happiness of the Undifferentiated Brahman, not only created a thrill of joy in their bodies, but caused a flash of great delight in

279 matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā
mitho 'bhipadyeta gṛha-vratānām
adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisraṁ
punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 7.5.30)

280 rājan patir gurur alam bhavatām yadūnām
daivam priyaḥ kula-patiḥ kva ca kiṅkaro vaḥ
astv evam aṅga bhagavān bhajatām mukundo
muktim dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 5.6.18)

281 alam alam iyam eva prāṇinām pātakānām
nirasana-viśaye yā kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti vāṇī
yadi bhavati mukunde bhaktir ānanda-sāndrā
viluṭhati caraṇābje mokṣa-sāmrājya-lakṣmīḥ
(padyāvalī 12)

their minds as well."²⁸²

6. Sri Krishnakarshanatva - unalloyed devotion possesses a special characteristic in it to attract Bhagavan Sri Krishna Himself. Nothing excels this in its power to attract unalloyed devotion to the Lord, who becomes subservient to the devotees. Uttama Bhakti distinguishes itself from all other practices in this respect. Followers of the various other cults, even if successful in realising the Lord, never can claim such a sublime achievement. They may see Him, they may receive boons from Him, they may be saved from calamities, they may even be benefited in many other ways, but none except His ardent devotees can bind the Lord with ties of love and affection. Even for the many devotees offering devotional services, guided by feelings of reverence, this experience is very limited. Many of them are denied this special privilege which is reserved for a few of His most loving devotees. Our scriptures give a good many incident to illustrate the above subject. Most of these events are so common and soul-stirring that they are day to day topics even amongst the ignorant masses. People forget themselves while discussing these captivating events. They wonder, how the most powerful, Almighty Lord, the Protector, the Creator, and the Destroyer of the infinite number of universes - the Transcendental Autocrat becomes subdued by the genuine loving services of His beloved devotees.²⁸³ "Indeed, you are the most fortunate in the whole world, because those great sages - the purifiers of all the worlds, often visit your house, where lives the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, Himself unrecognised in Human Form."²⁸⁴

The above six characteristics of unalloyed devotion are distributed amongst Sadhan Bhakti, Bhav Bhakti, and Prem Bhakti; the three different stages in unalloyed devotion. While in the stage of Sadhan Bhakti, it claims the first two, and when it develops into Bhav Bhakti, it gains two more, making the total four, and in the last stage, Prem Bhakti claims the remaining two, as its speciality in addition to the other four, making altogether the six characteristics. "So long as the desire for enjoyment of transitory pleasures and liberation - the two evil spirits, haunts our hearts, how can we expect the joy of devotion to grow there."²⁸⁵ Both enjoyment and liberation are not the goals of human existence. Liberation is only the

282 tasyāravinda-nayanasya padāravinda-
kiñjalka-miśra-tulasī-makaranda-vāyuḥ
antar-gataḥ sva-vivareṇa cakāra teṣāṃ
sañkṣobham akṣara-juṣāṃ api citta-tanvoḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.15.43)

283 see footnote 266

284 yūyaṃ nṛ-loke bata bhūri-bhāgā
lokaṃ punānā munayo 'bhiyanti
yeṣāṃ grhān āvasatīti sāksād
gūḍhaṃ paraṃ brahma manuṣya-liṅgam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 7.10.48)

285 bhukti-mukti-sprhā yāvat piśācī hr̥di vartate
tāvad bhakti-sukhasyātra katham abhyudayo bhavet
(śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.22)

other side of enjoyment. Both of them can be compared with ugly devils. They cause the Jivas to fall away from their positive goal. These two are the worst impediments in the path of devotion. Hence, those who are wise and earnest in the realisation of Bhakti never throw themselves on the tender mercy of these loathsome devils, viz., enjoyment, and liberation.

Bhakti - Vaidhi and Raganuga

Bhakti as practised by the aspirants, are of two kinds - (1) Vaidhi - regulated by the rules and regulations of the scriptures, and (2) Raganuga - spontaneous longing for the loving services of Sri Krishna. In both the cases there are the stages of Sadhan or practice. Regarding the details in the practices of Vaidhi Bhakti, we have already dealt with in 10th Chapter, footnote 159. There are sixty-four principles of devotional practices including the ninefold ways of devotion. All these sixty-four devotional activities are summarised in the ninefold ways of devotion. Each one, in these nine modes of devotion is competent enough to bring us the highest realisation. Some of the devotees practised one single mode, whereas some practised all the nine modes. "The great King Parikshit is noted for hearing (Sravana) alone, Sri Sukadev for narrating the Transcendental Excellence of the Lord (Kirtan), Prahlada is noted for remembrance of the Lord (Smarana) amidst all the atrocities inflicted on him by his hostile father, and his group of equally demoniac admirers. Lakshmidivi is a typical example for tending the Feet of the Lord (Padasevan), Prithu Maharaj is an ideal in ritualistic worship (Archan), Akrur distinguishes himself in the practice of bowing down (Vandan), Hanuman is an inspiring example for servitude (Dasya), Arjun, Uddhav, etc., stand for friendship (Sakhya), and the great ruler Mahabali is often spoken of as a glorious ideal of complete self-surrender (Atma Nivedan)."²⁸⁶ These devotees are famous in their observance of one form of devotion (Ekanga) alone, while the ancient King Ambarish stands reputed in the practice of more than one (Anekanga) Bhakti."²⁸⁷

Amongst the devotees of the Lord, the inhabitants of Vraja occupy the highest position. The kind of devotion they practised is known by the name 'Ragatmika'. The mode of loyally following in the footsteps of these Ragatmik Bhaktas, is styled as 'Raganuga Bhakti'. Raga is the spontaneous, deep and inseparable absorption in one's desired object of love (Ishtadev). In Vaidhi Bhakti, its followers lack a spontaneous inclination in them to the service of the Lord. They are to be regulated and inspired by the injunction of the Sastras. A feeling of reverence and loyalty to the scriptural rules forms a characteristic of their devotional practices. Raganug Bhaktas are guided by a natural craving to follow in the ways of

286 śrī-viṣṇoḥ śravaṇe parīkṣid abhavad vaiyāsakiḥ kīrtane
 prahlādaḥ smarāṇe tad-aṅghri-bhajane lakṣmīḥ pṛthuḥ pūjane
 akrūras tv abhivandane kapi-patir dāsye'tha sakhye'rjunaḥ
 sarvasvātma-nivedane balir abhūt kṛṣṇāptir eṣāṃ parā
 (padyāvalī 53; śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.265)

287 see footnotes 199, 200, 201

devotional observances of the Vrajavasis. This is effected on hearing the Transcendental Glories of Sri Krishna, His enchanting Pastimes in the company of those favourite devotees of Vraja. The onrush of this sentiment is so great, that it seldom cares for the injunctions of the Sastras. But, they are not disloyal to the Sastras, nor cultivate any hostile attitude in them towards the scriptures. This mode of devotion is of two kinds. (1) external and (2) internal. As for their external practice, they engage themselves in hearing and chanting the Glories of the Lord through the medium of their organic bodies. In their internal observances, they accepting their real selves as the eternal servants of a Gopi, render services to Sri Krishna day in and day out, under her guidance, in His most favourite Abode of Vrindavan. They lose themselves in total absorption while meditating on the charming Pastimes of Sri Krishna in Vraja. A devotee of this order renders service to Sri Krishna in any of the four Rasas permanently existing in the Transcendental Realm, such as servanthood (Dasya), friendship (Sakhya), parenthood (Vatsalya), and consortherhood (Madhurya). They engage themselves in this eternal service under the expert guidance of their spiritual preceptor, who is a most intimate associate of the Lord, and an adept in any of these Rasas, or, sometimes in all.

Bhav Bhakti

This stage of Sadhan or practice in this loving devotion, develops into spontaneous loving feeling (Bhav Bhakti). The characteristics of a Bhakta, who has attained this stage of Bhav Bhakti²⁸⁸ is thus explained by Sri Rupa Gosvami in Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu: - (1) Kshanti means extreme forbearance. A devotee of this stage never falls a prey to the innumerable ups and downs in the social world. Even under great provocative circumstances he never loses his patience. Remaining undisturbed by any serious incident, he ever remains calm and steady in his contemplation of the Lord or any other devotional practice he pursues. (2) Avyarthakalatvam is special care in the utility of time. By his various experiences, he has understood the precious nature of time. He never wastes even a fraction of a minute, in any activity which has no direct relation with Sri Krishna and His services. (3) Virakti means non-attachment. He is dispassionate to the various tempting offers of the world, the enjoyment of the transitory pleasures. The worth of all these sensuous objects is well-known to him, as such these fleeting pleasures have ceased to arouse any charm in him. He is not after any material success. He becomes completely detached from the influence of these mundane objects and their allurements. (4) Manasunyata is lack of pride. This is an important characteristic of a true devotee. He is never influenced by the least ego. He may be an embodiment of all rare and

288 kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvaṁ viraktir māna-śūnyatā
 āśā-bandhaḥ samutkaṅṭhā nāma-gāṇe sadā ruciḥ
 āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāṇe prītis tad-vasati-sthale
 ity ādayo'nubhāvāḥ syur jāta-bhāvāṅkure jane
 (śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.3.25-26)

excellent virtues, still, he considers himself the lowest of all. (5) Asabanda is deep bond of hope. A devotee is fully confident of his success towards the attainment of his final goal, and is convinced beyond any doubt on this issue. At every moment he is hopeful, since he knows that the Lord is an Embodiment of Mercy. (6) Samutkantha means excessive eagerness. His impatience for seeing the Lord reaches its highest pinnacle. (7) Namaganesaraschi is a real taste in singing the Name of the Lord constantly. (8) Asaktistadgunakhyane means an uncontrollable attachment in narrating and listening to the Glories of the Lord. And (9) Pritistadvasatisthale is a fondness for residing in the places which are graced by the residence of the Lord, such as Mathura, Vraja, etc.

This stage matures into Prem Bhakti which again, in stages of succession, results into still deeper and sweeter feelings of Sneha, Mana, Pranaya, Raga, Anurag, Bhava, and Mahabhava. The attainment of Prem to the Lord, and carnal appetites are poles asunder. "The desire for the gratification of one's senses is called 'Kama' or 'lust'; the desire for the gratification of the Senses of Sri Krishna bears the name of 'Prem' or 'Transcendental Love'."²⁸⁹ "Goodness or purity is obtained by devotion to Sri Krishna alone, as that itself is the highest means of attaining purity. **By practising devotion to Sri Krishna, one does attain His Lotus Feet - the highest fruit of Sri Krishna Bhakti.** Is perfect purity attained by the practice of one's own Asram Dharmas or by following the Jnan Marga? Not in the least. **By devotion to Sri Krishna alone, one achieves the highest Sadhutva,** otherwise it will be of the secondary type. Sri Krishna has said in the Ambarish Upakhyana to Durvasa Muni, "O Brahmin! I am subservient to My devotees. I am indeed, a Dependent, etc." At the end he says "**My devotees are as dear to Me as My Heart, and I am as dear to them as their heart. They do not know anything except Me, i.e., I am their all in all, and I too care not a whit for others except My devotees.**" In these sentences, He has referred to the good of His Bhaktas only. **Because Bhakti alone is the best means to lead them to His Lotus Feet.** The paths of fruitive actions, knowledge, and renunciation, etc., are treated as a part of secondary importance to Bhakti,

289 prema iva gopa-rāmānām kāma ity agamat prathām
ity uddhavādayo 'py etaṁ vāñchanti bhagavat-priyāḥ
(gautamīya-tantra)

kāma, prema, — doṅhākāra vibhinna lakṣaṇa
lauha āra hema yaiche svarūpe vilakṣaṇa
ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā — tāre bali 'kāma'
kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare 'prema' nāma
kāmera tātparya — nija-sambhoga kevala
kṛṣṇa-sukha-tātparya-mātra prema ta' prabala
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 4.164-166)
ataeva kāma-preme bahuta antara
kāma — andha-tamaḥ, prema — nirmala bhāskara
ataeva gopī-gaṇera nāhi kāma-gandha
kṛṣṇa-sukha lāgi mātra, kṛṣṇa se sambandha
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 4.171-172)

before it actually dawns. **Hence, the best fruits of devotion which is the highest means to reach His Lotus Feet, are His Lotus Feet only.**"²⁹⁰ "The highest fruit of Bhakti is Krishna Prem, the true sign of which is want of satisfaction or insatiability; so self-contentedness of the Atmaramas (those who seek satisfaction in their self) goes counter to the attainment of Krishna Prem. Hence, this self-satisfaction is the most despised one even amongst extraneous or secondary fruits, and must be greatly avoided in the opinion of the ardent devotees."²⁹¹

"May Sri Krishna - the Para Brahman, Whose form is eternal, Who is ever present with Divine Faculties, like Affluence, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Omniscience, Who ever exults in His evernew Beauty, Splendour, Luscious Sweetness, Attributes, Pastimes, etc., because of His everlasting Excellences, Who is ever-marked with the insignia of Sri on His Chest, Who is ever served by His servants and devotees (as is signified by His statement, "O son of Kunti! Know for certain that in the case of My ardent devotees, everything results in their ultimate good," which shows that by His lasting Grace, the devotees should not at any time entertain the least doubt of ruin; by this the perpetuity of His Parshadas and other devotees is also assured), Who is eternally served by Bhakti, (this ever-fulfilment of His devotion, refutes the notion that devotional practices, like Sravana, Kirtan, etc., are the functions of the human sense-organs, and proves that their manifestation in them is solely through His Eternal Fund of Kindness; this point is further elucidated at a later stage; and

290 kṛṣṇa-bhaktyaiva sādhutvaṁ sādhanam paramam hi sa
tayā sādhyam tad-aṅghry-abja- yugalam paramam phalam
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.202)

nanu svadharmacaraṇajñānasādhanādiparā api sādharma ucyante netyāhuḥ
kṛṣṇeti | kṛṣṇasya bhaktayaiva paramam sādhutvaṁ anyathā ca
gauṇamityarthaḥ | yadvā sādhutvaṁ nāma yat tat kṛṣṇabhaktyaiva na
tvanyatheti tathā ca navamaskandhe śrīmadambarīṣopākhyāne durvāsasam prati
"aham bhaktaparādhiṇo hyasvatantra iva dvija | " ityādikamārambhe
upasaṁhāre ca | sādharma hṛdayam mahyam sādhanam hṛdayantvahamityādi
vadatā śrībhagavatā svabhaktānāmeva sādhutvamabhipretamiti dik | hi yataḥ sā
bhaktistaccaraṇāravindaprāptau paramam sādhanam ca |
karmajñānavairāgyādīnām bhaktakārambhe tadāṅgatvena gauṇatāpekṣayā
tasyāḥ paramatvamūhyam | yadvā paramamiti svarupamātranirdeśaḥ | atastayā
paramasādhanarupayā bhaktiyā sādhyam tasya śrīkṛṣṇasyamdhyaḥyugalam
caraṇāravindaddayameva paramam phalam | atrāpi paramamiti brahmāpekṣayā
svarupamātranirdeśenaiva vā ||

291 bhakteḥ phalam paramam prema tṛpty-abhāva-sva-bhāvakam
avāntara-phaleṣv etad ati-heyam satam matam
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.210)

param kevalam śreṣṭha vā bhakteḥ phalam premaiva | tasya
lakṣaṇamāhuḥ | tṛpteḥ paripūrṇatāyā bhāva eva svabhāvo yasya tat | ataḥ
ātmārāmatayā tṛptyutpatteḥ premasampattau virodhi eva syāditi siddham | ato
avāntaraphaleṣu madhye etadātmārāmatvam atiheyam paramapariharaṇīyamiti
satam bhaktirasikānām matam ||

Whose Abode too is ever present, protect you from impediments, like liberation, etc., to the attainment of devotion to His Lotus Feet."²⁹² Aiming on the highest goal, avoiding all other desires when the Holy Name is uttered, the chanter is fortunate to realise this special gift. This is the highest desired result of the chanting of the Name. Longing for all other types of attainments deprives us from this unique and incomparable attainment.

Sincere prayers aimed simply for the love of the Lord alone, effectively melt His Heart. Prayers guided by motives of getting something in exchange, either of this world or of the next including salvation itself, never touch or move His Heart. Fully equipped with the four essential qualifications (footnote 202), and with a sincere heart, longing ardently for the unflinching love of the Lord, if we proceed with the chanting of the Name, we are offered the true benefits of the course. The results thus achieved are described in the first Sloka of 'Sri Sikshashtak' composed by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Sevenfold blessings of Nama-Sankirtan

"Let the chanting of the Name of Sri Krishna be glorified, which in successive stages offers sevenfold blessings to the chanters. It cleans the mirror of the heart which is covered with layers of accumulated dirt gathered in ever so many births. It extinguishes thoroughly the wild conflagration of repeated cycle of births and deaths. It is like the shedding of moonlight for the blooming of the lily of eternal good. It is the very life of transcendental learning. It swells in the hearts of the chanters a surging ocean of everlasting bliss. It enables the devotee to experience by every utterance of the Holy Name perfect happiness and finally, It is an all round

292 nityaiśvāryo nitya-nānā-viśeṣo
nitya-śrīko nitya-bhṛtya-prasaṅgaḥ
nityopāstir nitya-loko'vatu tvām
nityādvaita-brahma-rūpo 'pi kṛṣṇaḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.221)

nityam sadaiva | advaitam yad brahma tadeva rūpam śrīmūrtiryasya |
rupavatvādeva ghanatā siddhā | atah parabrahmamayavigraha ityarthah | api
yadyapi sadā idṛgeva tathāpi nityamaiśvāryam yasya saḥ | sadā
'pracyutaiśvāryatvāt | tathā nityo nānā bahuprakāraḥ
saundaryakāntimādhuryaguṇalīlādibhedena viśeṣo yasya saḥ |
sadā'pracyutabhagavatvāt | etena guṇalīlādīnāmapi nityatvamuktam | tathā
nityā śrīmahālakṣmīmahīṣīrūpā yasya saḥ | sadā lakṣmīlakṣitavakṣaḥ sthalatvāt
| tathā nityo bhṛtyaiḥ saha prakṛṣṭaḥ saṅgo yasya saḥ | nityaiśvāryavatvāt
evamagre 'pyūhyam | etena śrīvaikuṅṭhapārśadānāmanyēṣāñca sādhakānām
"pratijānīhi kaunteya na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati" iti
śrībhagavadvacanaprāmāṇyena nityatat kṛpānuvṛtyā kadācidapi
nāśaśamkārahityena nityatvam pratipāditam | nityā upāstirbhaktiryasya saḥ |
evam sadā siddhatvena śravaṇakīrtanādibhakterindriyavyāpārarupatvam
nirākṛtam | kevalam bhagavat prasādatattadindriyavṛttau sphūrtirevābhipreteti
jñeyam | etaccāgre vistareṇa vyaktambhāvi | nityo lokaḥ śrīvaikuṅṭhākhyo yasya
saḥ | kṛṣṇastvāmavatu mumukṣādibhaktivighnebhyo rakṣatu ||

bath of the body, mind, and soul in the surging ocean of Transcendental Bliss."²⁹³ This process of Nama-Sankirtan is the most liberal course ever introduced by the Lord for the benefit of humanity. All the rigid rules, innumerable restrictions, and never-ending hardships are totally absent in this practice. The Merciful Lord has lifted all bans from this procedure. In the second Sloka of 'Sri Sikshashtak' this is impressively illustrated.

"O Supreme Lord! You are an unfathomable Ocean of Mercy. How many ways You have devised to help Your fallen children! You have manifested ever so many Names, Each identical and equipotent with You in all respects. You have relaxed all the hard rules and made it a very simple one, easily accessible to the entire humanity. How can a petty human being estimate the depth of Your Mercy? You have done the maximum favour to humanity. But, what to speak of my utter ill luck! In spite of all Your unimaginable munificence to any human being, my adamant heart remains unchanged. It never shows the slightest inclination towards the chanting of Your Glorious and ever Sweet Name."²⁹⁴ "Conditioned souls have sunk to the deplorable depths of various evil propensities. They are struggling against heavy odds, being surrounded on all sides by innumerable mundane distractions that are commonly known as 'Anarthas'.²⁹⁵ These are fourfolds - (1) weakness of the heart, (2) offences, (3) evil desires and (4) error relating to the true knowledge of the eternal truth." "Though, we at first lack in a real enthusiasm for chanting the Holy Name, yet with utmost care we must proceed with the chanting. A patient affected by bile, never relishes sugar candy. Taking sugar candy is a necessity to arrest the growth of the disease. Hence, the patient, though he finds it bitter in taste, should imperatively take to its use. Even so, one who has not developed a genuine taste for the Holy Name, should ardently and sincerely utter It, which will gradually shower Its Mercy upon him."²⁹⁶ "While at meals, or while taking rest, or while awake, go on incessantly chanting the Holy Name 'Krishna' meditating

293 cetodarpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitarāṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 1)

294 nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgah
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 2)

295 māmāyugdhasya jīvasya jñeyo 'narthas' catur vidhaḥ
hṛddaurbalyam cāparādho 'sat-tṛṣṇā tattva-vibhramaḥ
(bhajana-rahasya 2.7)

296 syāt kṛṣṇa-nāma-caritādi-sitāpy avidyā-
pittopātāpta-rasanasya na rocikā nu
kintv ādarād anudinaṁ khalu saiva juṣṭā
svādvī kramād bhavati tad-gada-mūla-hantrī
(upadeśāmṛta 7)

upon Him."²⁹⁷ The constant chanting of the Name, enables the chanter to realise the true nature of his self, with respect to the Lord.

"O Son of Nanda! I - Your humble servant, am helplessly going down every moment in this terrible ocean of worldliness. Be Merciful to regard me as a particle of dust of Your Lotus Feet and save me."²⁹⁸ Chanting the Holy Name realising one's true self, as the eternal servant of the Lord, awakens feelings of love to Him. The internal feelings react externally as well. He experiences a thrill of ecstasy accompanied by different changes on his body, such as shedding tears, hair standing on end, choking of the voice due to emotional upheavals, etc. The sixth Sloka of Sri Sikshashtak throws proper light in this respect. "O Lord! When will the chanting of Your Name send thrills over my body, making the hair stand on end? When will I experience uncontrollable flow of tears from my eyes and my voice get choked with feelings while uttering Your Name?"²⁹⁹ His steady progress in devotion leads him to still greater realisations. He experiences unbearable and inexpressible pangs of separation from his Beloved Lord. This stage is explained in the seventh Sloka. "The fearful experiences born of the pangs of separation from my Beloved Govinda break my heart immediately. A single moment without Him appears to me an age; my eyes pour forth tears like the downpours on a rainy day, and the whole world has lost its interest and appears dull to me."³⁰⁰

The final and the most sublime stage of unalloyed devotion is the next experience. It has no comparison elsewhere with the achievement of any other votary of devotion. He who is fortunate to reach this state of supreme devotion stands unrivalled in his views since he identifies all his pleasures, comforts, and conveniences fully with those of his Beloved Lord. This is the highest stage - that is reached by the devotees of loving devotion, a stage experienced in extreme rarity by an exceptionally few. The last Sloka of Sri Sikshashtak by Srīman Mahāprabhu is an exposition of this unique experience. "It matters very little even if He reduces me - His beloved, devoted to His Lotus Feet, to pulp by His close embrace or crushes my vitals by the pangs of poignant separation from Him. He is free

297 ki śayane ki bhojane kivā jāgaraṇe
aharniśa cinta kṛṣṇa balaha vadane
(śrī caitanya-bhāgavata, m. 28.28)

298 ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
patitam māṁ viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūlī-sadṛśam vicintaya
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 5)

299 nayanam galad-aśru-dhārayā
vadanam gadgada-ruddhayā girā
pulkair nicitam vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 6)

300 yugāyitam nimeṣeṇa cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitam
śūnyāyitam jagat sarvaṁ govinda-virahaṇa me
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 7)

to do as He pleases, as He is the Self-Willed Dissolute. Yet He alone is my Sole Overlord and no one else."³⁰¹ "He may be quite ugly or the most charming; He may or may not be endowed with virtues or merits; He may hate me or be an Ocean of Kindness to me; anyway, that Sri Krishna alone is today my Sole Resort."^{301.1}

301 āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampāṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 8)

301.1 asundaraḥ sundara śekhara vā
guṇair vihīno guṇinām varo vā
dveṣī mayi ṣyāt karuṇāmbudhir vā
kṛṣṇaḥ sa evādyā gatiḥ mamāyam

SRI NAMA-SANKIRTAN - THE HIGHEST GOAL

IN this dialogue between Sri Vishnu Parshadas and Sri Gopakumar in 'Sri Brihad Bhagavatamrita'* by Sri Sanatan Gosvami - one of the six Gosvamis of Vrindavan deputed by Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, to prepare a code for the Vaishnav way of living, all the niceties of the different aspects of the ninefold devotion (Navavidha Bhakti) have been very delicately elucidated, particularly the comparison between Smarana, Dhyana, and Sankirtan, the exertions involved in the first two and the ease with which the last named practice, viz., Sankirtan, can be accomplished. **It is conclusively proved without a shadow of doubt that Sankirtan is the best form of devotion and that it includes Sravana, Kirtan, Smarana, Dhyana, and that it should best be practised with a feeling of love-sickness, caused by the separation from the Beloved.**

Navavidha Bhakti - Achieves eternal weal

"O Umapati's beloved! O Gopanandan! We take you to be one of the devotees of the Lord, because of your practice of His best Mantra."³⁰²
"Your Guru is that famous Mathur Brahmin, 'Jayanta' by Name, on the banks of the Ganges - Who is the fullest Manifestation of Sri Krishna Himself. (From the expression of Sri Sanatan Gosvami, it is inferred that 'Jayanta' is no other than Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself)."³⁰³
"Know for certain that we have specially come for your sake alone. If you desire Vaikunth, then giving up everything, including the practice of the Mantra, lovingly practise any one of the ninefold (Navavidha) Bhakti, for therein lies your eternal weal."³⁰⁴

* Readers with an appreciative bent of mind are requested to refer to the original work obtainable from Sri Tadas Mandir, Vrindavan (Mathura) U.P. at a nominal cost.

302 asmād-īśvara-san-mantro- pāsakomā-pati-priya
gopa-nandana bhakteṣu bhavantaṁ gaṇayema hi
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.121)

303 gauḍe gaṅgā-tate jāto mathurā-brāhmaṇottamaḥ
jayanta-nāma kṛṣṇasyāvatāras te mahān guruḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.122)

304 satyaṁ pratīhi vayam atra bhavān nimittam
evāgataḥ śṛṇu hitaṁ nija-kṛtyam etat
vaikuṅṭham icchasi yadi parihāya sarvaṁ
sa-prema-bhaktim anutiṣṭha nava-prakāram
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.123)

"Follow the Sastras like Srimad Bhagavata, and daily taste the accounts therein of the Lord's Pastimes, which greatly enchant the mind. No sooner you hear them with love and attachment, than you will attain His (Sri Krishna's) Lotus Feet. One should hear the accounts of His Pastimes, as they very much entice the mind away from the worldly activities and lead him to his real good." For it is said (Bh. 12.4.40 Sansarsindhupati): "If one who is afflicted by the conflagration of varied agonies, both physical and mental, is anxious to cross the ocean of the worldly life, which is most difficult to cross over, then there is no other surer boat for him than enjoying the sweetness of the accounts of the Pastimes of Sri Purushottam." (Bh. 2.2.37 Pibanti ye): "Tasting the Nectarine Accounts of the Lord, living in the hearts of the virtuous people, and filling their ears with them, purify their hearts, however much corrupted by worldly enjoyments, and lead them to His Lotus Feet."³⁰⁵ "Of the nine forms of devotion, if you practise any one of them, which is far superior to all such other paths, like Jnan Marga, Karma Marga, etc., you will easily attain Vaikunth Loka - the best amongst enjoyable objects, emancipation, etc. Greater results ensue from greater efforts. It is said in Brahma Purana, **"If by the mere initiation of 'Krishna', one attains His Lotus Feet, how much more beneficial would the result be, if he always worships Him with unalloyed devotion!" "He Who bestows liberation, is Himself Moksha, i.e., Krishna. People who even daily remember Janardan (Krishna) craftily, attain His healthful Abode, after discarding this body."**³⁰⁶

"Bhaktas, who are capable of relishing the niceties of the devotional code, and endowed with the faculty of discerning the best fruits, and the labours involved therein, from others, though known as equally great, treat Vaikunth Loka as the best and everything else as insignificant before

305 taj-jñāpakam ca bhaja bhagavatādi-śāstram
līlā-kathā bhagavataḥ śṛṇu tatra nityam
ta eva karṇa-vivaram praṇayāt praviṣṭāḥ
sadyaḥ padam bhagavataḥ prabhavanti dātum
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.124)

306 teṣāṃ nava-prakāraṇām ekenaiva susidhyati
sarva-sādhana-varyeṇa vaikunṭhaḥ sādhyā-sattamaḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.125)

nanu tarhi kiṃ navaprakāraṇāmanuṣṭhānena tatrāhuḥ teṣābhiti tribhiḥ |
vaikunṭho lokaḥ susidhyati sukkena tat prāptirbhavatīyārthaḥ | tatra hetuḥ |
sarveṣu jñānakarmādiṣu sādhanēṣu madhye varyeṇa śreṣṭhena | ataḥ sādhyeṣu
bhuktimuktyādiṣu sattamaḥ śreṣṭhatamaḥ suṣṭhu sidhyatyevetyārthaḥ | mahatā
sāadhanena mahataḥ phalasya prāptyupapatteḥ | tathā ca brahmapurāṇe | "
dīkṣāmātreṇa kṛṣṇasya narā mokṣam labhanti cai | kiṃ punarye sadā bhaktyā
pūjayantyacyutam narāḥ " | mokṣayatīti mokṣaḥ kṛṣṇastam | " śāṭhyenāpi narā
nityam ye smaranti janārdanam | te 'pi yānti tanum tyaktvā
viṣṇulokamanāmayam " iti ||

it."³⁰⁷ "But the Rasajnas (experts who appreciate the excellence of the charming sweetness) instantly adopt Navavidha Bhakti alone, because thereby they enjoy a variety of sweetness in this ninefold devotion, like Sravana, Kirtan, etc., and prefer it as a whole to any one form of it, like Sravana, Kirtan, etc., which by itself, is capable of achieving Vaikunth."³⁰⁸ "Out of these nine kinds, by adopting any one of them with unswerving faith, Love for the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna, manifests in him of its own accord."³⁰⁹ "Even then, he should practise devotion with a loving heart, because thereby, the diseases of the heart, like evil desires, which are definite impediments on the way to Vaikunth, are destroyed. **When Love begins to sprout, the evil desires for the transient enjoyments of this world, or the next, totally disappear, resulting in his ultimate good, without the least tinge of selfishness in it.**"³¹⁰ "If that loving devotion which is full of all sweetness arising from this highest form of bliss of all kinds and which even excels Brahmasukh, can be achieved here alone, where then would the necessity of Vaikunth arise? Truly, in Vaikunth Loka, there is some other speciality not obtainable here. Wherever such selfless loving devotion is practised, certainly that place itself becomes Vaikunth, and verily the Lord is present there, because He is the Lord of Vaikunth. Yet, it is said by the Lord Himself, **"O Narada! I neither stay in Vaikunth nor in the hearts of Yogis; but wherever My devotees chant, there I am.**"³¹¹ "Even then, Vaikunth is certainly desired by the devotees, because the Lord is not ever present elsewhere, in all His Glory of Beauty, Attributes, and the enchanting sweetness of His Pastimes. These can only be experienced in person in Vaikunth alone. Because, Vaikunth is not under the control of the Time Factor (Kala), this kind of the Lord's Pastimes can be enjoyed to one's heart's content, in the company of innumerable other Bhaktas, who too with their transcendental bodies, are engrossed in relishing the Divine sweetness of the Lord's

307 mahattamatayā śrūya- mānā api pare'khilāḥ
phala-vrata-vicāreṇa tucchā mahad-anāḍṛtāḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.126)

308 tathāpi tad-rasajñaiḥ sā bhaktir nava-vidhāñjasā
sampadyate vicitraitad- rasa-mādhurya-labdhye
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.127)

309 teṣāṃ kasmimś cid ekasmin śraddhayānuṣṭhite sati
svayam āvirbhavet premā śrīmat-kṛṣṇa-padābjayoḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.128)

310 tathāpi kāryā premṇaiva parihārāya hṛd-rujaḥ
phalāntareṣu kāmasya vaikunṭhāpti-virodinaḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.129)

311 yadyapy etādṛśī bhaktir yatra yatropapadyate
tat-tat-sthānaṃ hi vaikunṭhas tatra tatraiva sa prabhuḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.130)

Name, Attributes, and the sweetness of His Pastimes that is not obtainable elsewhere."³¹²

"Do not treat this devotion as being of this transitory world, as a subject perceptible to the human sense-organs and the mind, and obtainable through human efforts. It is Transcendental in Nature, Non-perishable, Ever-true, and the Embodiment of Bliss Itself, and above human ken."³¹³ "But by the sheer Grace of Sri Krishna, Bhakti manifests in the pure Jivatmas, composed of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, in the form of Sravana (hearing), Kirtan (uttering), Smarana (recollection), etc., of the Divine Name, Attributes, Pastimes, etc., primarily for the appeasement of its votaries in various ways."³¹⁴ "When the Jivatma is thus refined, through its power of discernment, and knows its innate and true relation and function with respect to Sri Hari, i.e., when man rises above his transient functions of this mortal frame, and realises that his real function is the service of his Maker, then alone he becomes fit to enjoy the Transcendental Vaikunth Loka, and Bhakti, with all its retinue, will down on him."³¹⁵ "Otherwise they, i.e., the nine aspects of devotion, appear as the function of these transient sense-organs. When the soul realises its true nature, then alone it can understand that, unlike the other transitory functions of the sense-organs, the adoption by man of the various modes

312 tathāpi sarvadā sāksād anyatra bhagavāms tathā
na drśyete vaikuṅṭho'vaśyaṁ bhaktair apekṣyate
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.131)

sarva-prakārikā bhaktis tādrśī ca sadānyataḥ
na sampadyeta nirvighnā tan-niṣṭhair bahubhiḥ saha
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.132)

313 nijendriya-manah-kāya- ceṣṭa-rūpaṁ na vidhi tam
nitya-satya-ghanānanda- rūpa sa hi guṇātigā
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.133)

314 nirguṇe sac-cid-ānandāt- mani kṛṣṇa-prasādataḥ
sphuranti vilasaty ātma- bhaktānāṁ bahudhā mude
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.134)

nanu tarhi katham kutra tat prāptiḥ syāttatrāhuḥ nirguṇa iti |
kṛṣṇaprasādāt guṇātīte saccidānandarūpe ātmāni śṛddhajīvatatve sphuranti
prakāśamānā bahudhā śravaṇakīrtanādirupeṇa vilasati kṛḍati
saccidānandadhanatvenaika rūpāyā api bahudhā sphuraṇe hetuḥ
ātmabhaktānāṁ svasevakānāṁ mude vaicitryenaivānandaviśeṣaḥ sampadyata
iti prāgutkamevāgre 'pi vakṣyate ||

315 viśuddhe tu vivekena satyātmani hareḥ padam
gate'py aprakṛtiṁ bhakti- vidhayo vilasanti hi
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.135)

evam sāmānyenoktamaprākṛtatvaṁ viśeṣato
hetubhiranvayavyatirekābhyāmupapādayanti viśuddha iti | vivekena "
indriyāṇindriyārtheṣu vartanta iti dhārayan " nityevaṁ prakārakavicāreṇa ātmani
jīvatatve viśuddhadehendriyādisambandhato vivikte sati | tathā aprākṛtaṁ
prakṛtisambandharahitaṁ hareḥ padam śrīvaikuṅṭhalokaṁ gate 'pyātmani hi
yato bhaktervidhyaḥ sarve 'pi prakārā vilasanti ||

of devotion is above the perception of his sense-organs and cannot be associated with them."³¹⁶

"If the soul is divorced from the devotional practices to God, how can it attain Vaikunth Loka? If it does so, it deserves emancipation on account of its refinement through detachment, and not Vaikunth Loka, for which the Jiva must perform its true function of devotion."³¹⁷ "Devotional practices should not be considered to stand in the same category as the other worldly actions; on a few occasions Bhakti may be said only apparently to be of the type of Karma (action) of this mundane world; but when its true nature is considered, it is clearly found to be a function of the transcendental plane, in the same way as the bodies of the Vaikunthavasi devotees. Bhakti is the function of the spiritual body, though outwardly it appeals as the function of this mortal frame, and is transcendental in nature, as the transcendental bodies of the inhabitants of Vaikunth Loka."³¹⁸ "The bodies of the devotees of the Lord, either in Vaikunth or elsewhere assume Sachidanandarup by themselves, befitting the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss form of Bhakti or through the Grace of the Lord. When devotion takes hold of this mortal body, even this body, with all its limbs, sense-organs (Jnanendriyas and Karmendriyas), etc., transforms itself into a transcendental or spiritual one."³¹⁹ "We, the

316 anyathetara-karmāṇī- vaite'pi syūr na saṅgatāḥ
kāyendriyātma-ceṣṭāto jñānenātmani śodhite
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.136)

317 anyebhya iva karmebhyo bhagavad-bhakti-karmataḥ
viviktaḥ san katham yātu vaikuṅṭham muktim arhati
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.137)

318 na hy anya-karma-vad bhaktir api karmeti manyatām
bahir-dṛṣṭyaiva jalpyeta bhakta-dehādi-vat kvacit
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.138)

svadharmācaraṇādīnyapi karmāṇi bhaktirapi karmetyevaṃ karmatvena
sāmyāpatteḥ karmabhya iva tasyā api sakāśādviviktatāyuktairityabhiprāyeṇa
paramatamevāśritya bhaktikarmata ityatra karmaśabdaḥ prayukta idānīm
prākṛtendriyādivyāpārarupatvābhāvena bhakteḥ karmatvaṃ vārayanti nahīti
dvābhyām | nanu cittaśodhakānām sarvasat karmaṇām madhye bhagavad
bhaktiḥ śreṣṭheti mīmāṃsāparaiḥ sadbhirucyate | taduktaṃ tatrāhuḥ bahiriti |
kvacit kadācit prasaṅgasaṅgatyā bhaktirapi karmeti jalpyeta tacca bahirdṛṣṭyaiva
na tu tatvattvavicāreṇa tatra dṛṣṭāntaḥ bhaktānām vaikuṅṭhavāsinām dehavaditi
| yathā ekenaiva dehaśabdena teṣām saccidānandavigrahāṇāmanyēṣāṅca
prākṛtapāṅca bhautikaśarīrāṅām deha ucyate | ' ādi ' śabdena maṅyādi yathā
caikenaiva maṅiśadena cintāmaṅiḥ kācamaṅiśca yathā caikenaiva satvaśabdena
trayāṅām prakṛtiguṇānāmekatamo guṇastathā parabrahma ca
sarvasatvattvādhanatvena sarvasādhutvaghanatvena ca " satvaṃna
ceddhātaridaṃ nijam bhaved " ityādāvucyate | tathā ekenaiva karmaśabdena
svadharmācaraṇādikaṃ bhaktibahirdṛṣṭyaiva karmetyucyate iti ||

319 bhaktānām sac-cid-ānanda- rūpeṣv aṅgendriyātmasu
ghaṭate svānurūpeṣu vaikuṅṭhe'nyatra ca svataḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.139)

dwellers of Vaikunth, untouched by anything of the transient world, and incessantly practising and spreading the cult of devotion, like Sravana, Kirtan, etc., are ourselves the proof of this."³²⁰

Nama-Sankirtan is Bhakti's purest form

"For the appeasement and the continuous advance of a devotee who has newly taken to this cult, devotion to God, behaves as if it is a function of the sense-organs mainly for his advancement in it; because when the aspirant feels that he meditates, utters, hears God's Epithets, etc., he becomes inspired and elated and acquires greater and sounder faith in Them. Otherwise there is a chance of his despairing that all his efforts are not sustaining in their results."³²¹ "Those great personages having implicit faith in devotion know for certain that it springs through the sheer Grace of the Lord, and never think that it is either a function of their sense-organs or subjective to them."³²² "If you have a vehement yearning to see Vaikunth Loka very early, then go to the famous blissful Vraja - which will most munificently, very quickly, and perfectly fulfil all your desires."³²³ **"Then with your heart and soul, intent on the Lotus Feet of the Lord, practise mostly 'Nama-Sankirtan'- the purest form of devotion (unadulterated with the least tinge of Jnan or Karma)."**³²⁴ **"By this Nama-Sankirtan a wealth of devotional love will be generated in you, by which you will easily have a full vision of Sri Krishna in Vaikunth."**³²⁵

320 vayam atra pramāṇam smo'niśam vaikuṅṭha-pāṛśadāḥ
tānvanto bahudhā bhaktim asprṣṭāḥ prakṛtair guṇaiḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.140)

321 navīna-sevakānām tu prītyā samyāk-pravṛttaye
nijendriyādi-vyāpāra- tayaiva pratibhāti sā
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.141)

nanu itaravārtādivannijavāgindrayādivṛttirupameva bhagavat
kīrtanādikamapi sākṣādetadanubhūyamānamasti kathamanubhavāpalāpaḥ
kriyate tatrāhuḥ navīneti dvābhyām | sā bhaktirnijendriyādivyāpāratayaiva
navīnasevakānām bhaktau prathamapravartamānānām pratibhāti | kimartham
prītyā samyak pravṛttaye aho mama karṇajihvādīnīmāni bhagavannāmāni grṇanti
santīti harṣeṇa tatra niṣṭhāsampattaye anyathā svaprayāsasādhyatvābhāvena
tatra tatraudāsīnyāpatteḥ ||

322 mahadbhir bhakti-niṣṭhaiś ca na svādhīneti manyate
mahā-prasāda-rūpeyaṁ prabhor ity anubhūyate
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.142)

323 tvarā ced vidyate śrīmad- vaikuṅṭhālokane tava
sarvābhīṣṭa-prada-śreṣṭham taṁ śrī-vraja-bhuvam vraja
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.143)

324 param śrīmat-padāmbhoja- sadā-saṅgaty-apekṣayā
nāma-saṅkīrtana-prāyaṁ viśuddhām bhaktim ācara
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.144)

Smarana -vs- Kirtan

"Some think that recollection and not chanting aloud (Smarana and not Kirtan) is the most beloved and the best means to attain Divine Love; because Kirtan manifests itself quickly and without much effort on the sense organ - tongue, devoid of the faculty of thinking or intelligence. Consequently, the results too, will be in proportion to the efforts involved."³²⁶ "Mind - the most important and fickle of all the senses, is conquered by being brought under control only with great difficulty, and that too when it is purified. Then only, the excellent form of devotion known as 'recollection or remembrance', can be achieved. Hence, this is the best mode of devotion, because of the great exertions involved therein."³²⁷

Kirtan superior to Smarana

"We, however, think that Kirtan is far superior to recollection, which flashes only in the mind that is too fickle; but

325 tayāśu tādrśī prema- sampad utpādayiṣyate
yayā sukhaṁ te bhavitā vaikuṅṭhe kṛṣṇa-darśanam
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.145)

326 premṇo'ntaraṅgaṁ kila sādhanottamaṁ
manyeta kaiścit smaraṇaṁ na kīrtanam
ekendriye vāci vicetane sukhaṁ
bhaktiḥ sphuraty āśu hi kīrtanātmikā
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.146)

nanu sarveṣvapi bhaktiprakāreṣu smaraṇameva mukhyatamamiti
tapolokavāsibhiryogīndrairuktaṁ satyamiti premṇa iti smaraṇameva premṇo
'ntaraṅgaṁsādhanottamaṁ kaiścit pippalāyanādibhirmanyeta na kīrtanaṁ tatra
hetuḥ eketi sārddhena | hi yasmāt kīrtanātmikā kīrtanarupā
bhaktirekasminnevendriye vāci vāgarupe ato vicetane jñānahīne
karmendriyatvāt | sukhamanāyāsena tatra cāśu śīghrameva sphurati
evamalpāyāsādisiddhatvenālpataiva paryavasyatīti bhāvaḥ ||

327 bhaktiḥ prakṛṣṭā smaraṇātmikāsmīn
sarvendriyānām adhipe vilole
ghore baliṣṭhe manasi prayāsair
nīte vaśaṁ bhāti viśodhite yā
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.147)

tattamāttasyāḥ sakāśāditi vā | prakṛṣṭatve hetuḥ yā smaraṇātmikā
bhaktirasmin durvaśatvena savaimrevānubhūyamāne manasi prayāsairvaśaṁ
nīte viśodhite eva bhāti sphurati | kīdrśe sarvendriyānāmadhipe atah
kīrtanādikamapi tadvr̥ttāvevāntarbhavatīti bhāvaḥ | kiñca vilole paramacañcale
tatra ca ghore bhayānake sadya evānartaśatāt pādanāt tatrāpi baliṣṭhe
paramadurva śatvāt | ataeva bhikṣuṇā gītamekādaśaskandhe | " mano vaśe 'nye
hyabhavan sma devā manaśca nānyasya vaśaṁ sameti | bhīṣmo hi devaḥ
sahasāḥ sahiyān yuñjyādvaśe taṁ sa hi devadeva " iti | tathā " dānaṁ
svadharmo niyamo yamaśca śrutañca karmāṇi ca sadvratāni | sarve
manonigrahalakṣaṇāntāḥ paro hi yoge manasaḥ samādhir " iti ca | evametādr̥sya
vaśīkaraṇena yadvastu siddhaṁ syattadeva śreṣṭhāmiti bhāvaḥ ||

Kirtan when it manifests on the tongue - the sense-organ of speech, simultaneously illumines the mind, because unless it first flashes on the mind it will not throb either on the tongue, or as a matter of fact on other sense organs. The sound of the Kirtan not only benefits the performer's own ears by entering them, but also those of others too, who have the good fortune of hearing it. This is not accomplished by 'Recollection'. Recollection too cannot be aptly done, because absolute control of the mind can be only successful when its fickleness is removed or destroyed. This is the whole secret of it. It is also not the general rule that the results in any undertaking are always in proportion to the efforts put in. It is already said by Sri Parasara, "One who is devoted to Sri Achyuta, does not go to hell; if He is reflected upon, he goes to heaven; if he concentrates his mind on Him, even the Brahma Loka obtainable with great difficulty, appears as worse than insignificant; that Immutable Sri Krishna, by staying in the hearts of pure souls, gives Himself up to them (see footnote 306). What wonder is there if all the sins of the person who utters the Name of Sri Achyuta (Sri Krishna) are completely destroyed? That a sinner like Ajamil by taking the Name 'Narayana' attained emancipation is no wonder at all. **Thus by this exposition, the superiority of Kirtan over remembrance is described by the argument 'a fortiori', i.e., how much more superior would the Kirtan be over remembrance?** Besides, what is obtained by meditation in Krita Yuga, by the performance of sacrifices in Treta Yuga, and worship in Dvapara Yuga, **is all attained by Sri Hari-Kirtan, indicating thereby that all the benefits accruing from the practice of the first three Yuga Dharmas, are included in Sri Hari-Kirtan and can be easily accomplished too. And what is declared, does come true.**"³²⁸

"Illustrating and accepting the opinion of meditationists of the Lord, who take Kirtan as the result of recollection only, their arguments are refuted by the skill of discernment in these two Slokas thus: The external organs, like the eyes, ears, etc., and the internal ones, like the mind, etc., i.e., all the sense-organs and senses, are moved to action by the tongue, because it is in their very nature to get excited by the action of the tongue, i.e., by its speech. By observing silence or **chanting the Name of the Lord aloud, the tongue can be brought under control;** then alone the mind becomes steady and can be employed in 'Smriti'. In that case, Smriti arises from Kirtan. So it is proved that Smriti is the result of

328 manyāmahe kīrtanam eva sattamaṁ
 lolātmakaika-sva-hṛdi smarati smṛteḥ
 vāci sva-yukte manasi śrutau tathā
 divyāt parān apy apakurvāt ātmīya-vat
 (bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.148)

Kirtan. Hence, the statement made above and emphasised in Sastras (see footnote 328) that the fruit of meditation is included in Sankirtan in Kali Yuga, should be taken as due to the requirements of the age. **If it is said that the most atrocious sin of Kali Yuga is destroyed by the great prowess of Kirtan alone, and by nothing else like meditation, etc., then it must be admitted on all grounds the superiority of Kirtan over Dhyān (meditation). So the potency of Nama-Sankirtan over meditation in destroying even the vilest sins of Kali Yuga is not at all denied; the expedient that the sins of Kali Yuga will not be destroyed by meditation alone is not also there, by which it could be the practice or commandment (Vidhi) of Kali Yuga.** If the meditationists of the Lord persist in their opinion that only through recourse to remembrance of the Lord, howsoever accomplished, the destruction, etc., of all the sins always succeeds, and that hundreds of statements throwing light on this view are to be found, and hence meditation alone is the best, then their view needs further elucidation. Dhyān (meditation) is the Lord's manifestation, in toto, from top to bottom, culminating in the maturing experience of the Lord's Personal Attributes, like Beauty, Sweetness, etc., by the mind, as if in person before Him; whereas, Smṛiti (remembrance) is the mental recollection of the aspirant's relation to the Lord as His servant, as in a flash."³²⁹ "We think that meditation will be superior to Sankirtan only when it includes in its aspect,

evam paramatamanūdyā svamatam nirdiśanti manyāmaha iti | lolātmake cañcalasvabhāve ekasminneva antare smaraṇāt ḥṛdi manasyeva sphurantyāḥ smṛteḥ smaraṇāt sakāśāt sattamaṁ śreṣṭhataram kīrtanameva vyaṁ manyāmahe | tatra hetuḥ vāci vāgindriye dīvyat parisphurat | tathā manāsi ca dīvyat | katham svayukte svayameva vāgindriyeṇa saha sayukte sūkṣmarupeṇa sarvendriyaviṣayakasahajamānasasamīyogavṛtteḥ | anyathā viṣayāgrahaṇāsambhavāt | tatā śrutau śravaṇendriye ca dīvyat kīrtanadhvaneḥ svata eva karṇayoḥ praveśāt | tathā ātmavat nijasevakamiva parān śrotṛrpyupakurvāt | na tu smaraṇādevam sidhyati | atha ca manasaścañcalasvabhāvāpanayanena vaśīkaraṇānupapatteḥ smaraṇamapi na samyak sidhyatīti gūḍho'bhiprāyaḥ | prayāsāprayāsasādhyatvenādhikyanyūnate ca vastusvabhāvavicārato nāpekṣyete eveti dik | evameva parāśareṇokte " yasminnayastamatirna yāti narakam svargo'pi yaccintane | vighno yatra niveśitātmamanaso brāhmo'pi loko'lpakaḥ | muktīm cetasi yaḥ sthito'maladhiyām pumsām dadātyavyayaḥ | kim citram tadaghaḥ prayāti vilayam tatrācyute kīrtite || " ityatra aghaḥ ajāmilādityaḥ pāpātmā vilayam muktīm prāpnotīti kim citramityevam vyākhyayā kaimutikanyāyenoktaḥ smaraṇādadhikaḥ kīrtanasya mahimā saṅgaccheta | kiñca dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñaistretāyām dvāpare'rcayan yadāpnoti tadāpnoti kalau saṅkīrtya keśavamityādivacanairdhyānayāgapūjāphalam sarva kīrtanaphale'ntarbhavatīti yadabhihitam tacca ghaṭeta ||

329 bahyāntarāśeṣa-hṛṣīka-cālakam
vāg-indriyam syād yadi samyatam sadā
cittam sthiram sad-bhagavat-smṛtau
tadā samyak pravarteta tataḥ smṛtiḥ phalam
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.149)

the functions of other sense organs, viz., those of utterance, touch, seeing, hearing, etc., by the power of meditation alone."³³⁰

The wise are of the opinion, that he who can appreciate the excellence of any one of the ninefold devotion, should accept it with earnestness, according to his liking, in which he takes pleasure to practise; that mode alone will be the most important one to him. He must practise it with his heart and soul, as that will quickly achieve for him his desired object."³³¹ **"But we think that Sankirtan enhances the beauty of meditation; and meditation increases the bliss and beauty of Sankirtan and that they mutually aid each other's enhancement (Poshak), like fire and fuel (oil) and that both are of equal**

evam prabhor dhyāna-ratair mataṁ ced
buddhyedṛśaṁ tatra vivecanīyam
dhyānaṁ parisphurṭi-viśeṣa-niṣṭhā
sambandha-mātraṁ manasā smṛtir hi
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.150)

ye kecid bhagavadadhyānarakāḥ kīrtanasyapi phalaṁ dhyānameva manyante teṣa | matamevānūdyā vivekacāturyeṇām gīkṛtya pariharanti vāhyeti dvābhyām | vāhyāni śravaṇādīti āntarāṇi ca mana ādīni aśeṣāṇi hr̥ṣīkāṇi indriyāṇi cālayati kṣobhayatīti tathā tad vācām sarvendriyakṣobhakaśvabhāvāt | maunena bhagavat kīrtanena vā sadā yadi saṁyataṁ syāttadā cittaṁ stharaṁ sat sadā bhagavataḥ smṛtau pravarteta tatastasmāt kīrtanena smṛteḥ sādhyatvāt smṛtireva kīrtanasya phalaṁ syāt tataśca yad dhyānaphalaṁ kalau saṅkīrtane'ntarbhava tītyuktaṁ tacca kālāpekṣayaiveti mantavyaṁ yadi ca tatra vaktavyamidam anyasādhāraṇaḥ kalidoṣo mahāprabhāvakīrtanenaiva nirākṛtaḥ syāna cānyena dhyānādinā kenāpītyevaṁ dhyānāt kīrtanamahimā vaktavya iti | tathāpi kalimahāpātakādidoṣanirasaṇaṁ nāma saṅkīrtanasya kinnāmamahatvamastu yena dhyānānamahimānaṁ tallabhatām | kiñca dhyānamātreṇa kalidoṣa na naśyanti iti yuktirapi nāsti yayā kalau tasyā vidhiḥ syāt | atha ca yathākathañcid bhagavat smaraṇamātreṇāśeṣapāpakṣayādikaṁ sadā sidhyatīti vacanaśataṁ pramaṇaṁ vidyotate tasmād dhyānameva śreṣṭhamityevaṁ prabhorbhagavatodhyānaratairanuraktairamataṁ cet tatra tasminmane bṛddhyā idṛśaṁ vivecanīyaṁ kīdṛśaṁ tadityāhuḥ hi yataḥ prabhoḥ paritaḥ sarvatobhāven sphṛrtiviśeṣaḥ ākeśapādāntatallāvaṇyamādhuryādiparisphuraṇapūrvikā citte yā sāksādivābhivyaktistasyā niṣṭhā parīpāko dhyānaṁ smṛtiśca manasā sambandhamātraṁ īśvaro'stīti bhagavato dāso'smītyādi prakāreṇa bhagavataḥ samparkamātrama ||

330 ced dhyāna-vegāt khalu citta-vṛtṭyāv
antar-bhavantīndriya-vṛttayas tāḥ
saṅkīrtana-sparśana-darśanādyā
dhyānaṁ tadā kīrtanato'stu varyam
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.151)

331 prītir yato yasya sukhaṁ ca yena
samyag bhavet tad-rasikasya tasya
tat-sādhanam śreṣṭhatamam susevyaṁ
sadbhir mataṁ praty uta sādhyā-rūpam
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.152)

merits."³³² "Meditation, like Sankirtan, brings happiness, because those who, bent on obtaining any object which they like most, call to their mind, that object and experience it in their mind to their heart's content, get mental peace (satisfaction), like people suffering from fever, by mentally drinking nectar-like cold water, lessen their trouble, arising from thirst and enjoy relief."³³³ By conveying one's troubles to an intimate friend, he does experience relief from the load of worries weighing heavily on his mind. Similarly by uttering aloud the Name of his heart's coveted object, he feels peace of mind, provided he can clothe his inner-most feelings with suitable words. But sometimes he cannot give expression to all his mental feelings; or even if he can, he will feel ashamed even to utter them as he likes, even in solitude, because he wants to maintain the utmost secrecy."³³⁴

Nama-Sankirtan -vs- Dhyān

"Indeed, meditation succeeds only when practised by oneself and that too in a lonely place and not otherwise. So there are so many impediments to its perfect practice and completion. **But Sankirtan can be performed alone in solitude or in public in the company of even multitudes. Hence, what constitute impediments to meditation, are no impediments to Sankirtan at all; on the contrary, they contribute towards its success. Performance of Sankirtan involves no obstacles.**"³³⁵ "Amongst the different forms of Sri Krishna's Kirtan, such as uttering His Names, speaking about His Beauty, Attributes, Pastimes, etc., **His Nama-Sankirtan alone is the most important one, because It awakens of Its own accord, in Its performer a wealth of Divine Love (Krishna Prem). Hence, it is our confirmed opinion and**

332 saṅkīrtanād dhyāna-sukhaṁ vivardhate
dhyānāc ca saṅkīrtana-mādhurī-sukham
anyonya-saṁvardhakatānubhūyate
'smābhis tayos tad dvayam ekam eva tat
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.153)

333 dhyānaṁ ca saṅkīrtanavat sukha-pradaṁ
yad vastuno'bhiṣṭatarasya kasyacit
citte'nubhūtyāpi yatheccham udbhavec
chāntis tad ekāpti-viṣakta-cetasām
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.154)
yathā jvāra-ruj-ārtānām śītalāmṛta-pāṭhasaḥ
manaḥ pānād api truṭyēt tṛd-vailakṣyaṁ sukhaṁ bhavet
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.155)

334 tat-tat-saṅkīrtanenāpi tathā syād yadi śakyate
satām atha vivikte'pi lajjā syāt svair akīrtane
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.156)

335 ekākītvēna tu dhyānaṁ vivikte khalu sidhyati
saṅkīrtanaṁ vivikte'pi bahūnām saṅgato'pi ca
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.157)

the opinion of wise men that His Nama-Sankirtan is far superior to meditation."³³⁶ **"Who, indeed, will be able to describe the incomparable blessedness of the person, who longingly, lovingly, and with a relish, ever tastes, with his tongue, of the nectarine sweetness of the Divine Sri Krishna Nama - near and dear to his own heart?"**³³⁷

Nama-Sankirtan floods all senses with Madhurya

"Even if the greatness of all the Divine Names be equally balanced, still one can easily and in no time accomplish his heart's much coveted object, by resorting to the Name (Sri Krishna's Epithet), which he likes best like the philosopher's stone (Chintamani) yielding to its possessor all his desires."³³⁸ "People having different tastes, develop a fondness for all the Names. In course of time, they will certainly hold all the Lord's Names dear

336 kṛṣṇasya nānā-vidha-kīrtaneṣu
tan-nāma-saṅkīrtanam eva mukhyam
tat-prema-sampaj-janane svayaṁ drāk
śaktam tataḥ śreṣṭhatamam mataṁ tat
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.158)

tatra ca śrībhagavannāmasaṅkīrtanameva sevyamityāśayenāhuḥ
kṛṣṇasyeti | nānāvidheṣu vedapurāṇādipāṭhakathāgītastutyādibhedena
bahuprakārakeṣu kīrtaneṣu madhye tasya kṛṣṇasya nāmasaṅkīrtanameva
mukhyam kutaḥ drāk avilambenaiva tasmin kṛṣṇe premasampado janane
āvīrbhāvaṁne svayamanyanairapekṣeṇaiva śaktam samartha
tatastasmāddhetordhyānāditi vā | tat śrīkṛṣṇanāmasaṅkīrtanameva
śreṣṭhatamam mataṁ sad bhirasmābhirvā ||

337 śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāmṛtam ātma-hṛdyaṁ
premṇā samāsvādana-bhaṅgi-pūrvam
yat sevyate jihvikayāvirāmaṁ
tasyātulaṁ jalpatu ko mahattvam
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.159)

evam sāmānyenoktvā viśeṣeṇāhuḥ śrīkṛṣṇeti ātmahṛdyaṁ svapriyaṁ
samāsvādanam rasagrahaṇam tasya bhagivaicitrī mudrā vā tatapūrvakam
jihvikayā rasanayā yadavirāmaṁ sevyate tasya tādrśasaṅkīrtanasyetyarthaḥ |
atulaṁ nirupamaṁ mahatvam ko jalpatu api tu na ko'pi vaktum śaknotītyarthaḥ
||

338 sarveṣāṁ bhagavan-nāmnām samāno mahimāpi cet
tathāpi sva-priyeṇāśu svārtha-siddhiḥ sukham bhavet
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.160)

nanu bhagavannāmnām mahimani tāratamyam na kenāpi manyeta
sarveṣāmapi pratyekamaparicchinnamāhātmyokteḥ | satyam tathāpi manoratyā
śīghramanāyāsenārthasādhakatvāt | kalpyetetyāhuḥ sarveṣāmiti api cedyadyapi
samānastulya eva mahimā ekenaiva cintāmaṇinā'śeṣārthāsiddheḥ
bihubhīstairalabhitivadekasya bhagavannāmnāḥ
sahatratulyatokyā'nantatāparyavāsānāt | tathāpi svasya sevakasya priyeṇa
manorameṇa bhagavannāmnā ataeva rāmanāmapriyairuktam "
sahasranāmabhistulyam rāmanāma varānana " ityādi ||

to them."³³⁹ "When once the Nectarean Name becomes manifest in any one of the sense-organs, It inundates all the other sense-organs too, with Its Luscious Sweetness (Madhurya Rasas), i.e., It allures other sense-organs too, and impels them in Its Divine Service."³⁴⁰ "Its important manifestation on the sense-organ of speech, i.e., tongue, causes ecstasy not only to the utterer, but to others (hearers) also, because the Word bursts into Its all-alluring sound Form. Hence, **Nama-Sankirtan is far superior to meditation on Him.**"³⁴¹

Krishna-Sankirtan yields Krishna Prem

Sri Krishna-Nama-Sankirtan is the most potent, important, and the highest means of attaining Krishna Prem like a Mantra, imbued with the power of attraction, attracting desired object, obtainable with great difficulty, even from a great distance. Thus other statements supporting this, should be seen. **"Hearing the auspicious Accounts and Deeds of Sri Krishna and His Descents, an aspirant, unabashed, should move about in this world, alone, singing His Songs, and Names suggestive of His Pastimes."** When Krishna Prem manifests in him, his condition invariably becomes thus - **"That ardent devotee, who thus moves about unabashed, singing aloud His Songs and Names dear to him, gaining intense attachment therein, with his heart melted with Krishna Prem, and being oblivious of the society, laughs loudly, a moment later weeps, then shouts, and dances like one possessed with rapturous joy."** In this Sloka too the word 'Svapriyanamakirtya' occurs to emphasize its importance."³⁴²

339 vicitra-ruci-lokānām kramāt sarveṣu nāmasu
priyatā-sambhavāt tāni sarvāṇi syuḥ priyāṇi hi
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.161)

340 ekasminn indriye prādur- bhūtaṁ nāmāmṛtaṁ rasaiḥ
āplāvayati sarvāṇīn- driyāṇi madhurair nijaiḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.162)

341 mukhyo vāg-indriye tasyo- dayaḥ sva-para-harṣadaḥ
tat prabhor dhyānato'pi syān nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ varam
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.163)

tathāpi tasya saṅkīrtanameva śraddhayā kāryamityāhuḥ mukhya ityāhuḥ |
tasya nāmna udayasphūrttirvāgindriya eva mukhyaḥ varṇamayatvāt evameva
sveṣām svasevakānām pareṣāñca śrotṛṇaṁ harṣa dadātīti tathā saḥ |
tattasmāduktanyāyāt pabhordhyānato'pi nāmasaṅkīrtanaṁ varam śraṣṭham ||

342 nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ proktaṁ kṛṣṇasya prema-sampadi
baliṣṭhaṁ sādhanam śreṣṭham paramākarṣa-mantra-vat
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.164)

Nama-Sankirtan - Both a Means and an End in Itself

"Adepts in relishing the beauties and sweetness of Nama-Sankirtan, treat it not only as the best Means of primary importance, but also as the best End in Itself; because when its votary is whole-heartedly engrossed in it, it always, unfailingly and necessarily results in Krishna Prem. Verily even if this Prem is taken as the only fruit of all devotional codes of religious performances, when one practises Nama-Sankirtan, since this Prem arises as its necessary and invariable corollary, Nama-Sankirtan is taken as the best and highest accomplishment in itself."³⁴³ "It is indeed proclaimed by those who appreciate the excellences of Krishna Prem, that the performance of Krishna-Sankirtan, dear to one's heart, is in itself the best distinctive mark of the inundating influx of Krishna-Prem, and incessant loud manifestation of Sri Krishna-Sankirtan is solely due to the intense and uncontrollable Krishna Prem, showing thereby that they, both, are interdependent on each other for their exuberance and luxuriant growth."³⁴⁴

sarvot karṣacaramakāṣṭhāprāptaḥ valaviśeṣaḥ saṅkīrtanādeva
sidhyatīyuktameva tacchraiṣṭe hetuṁ punaratiharsēṇābhivyañjayanti nāmeti |
paramākarṣako mantrō tathā durlabhataramarthaṁ dūrādākṛṣya ghaṭayati
tatheti | evameṣa ukta-poṣo draṣṭavyaḥ | ata eva " sṛṇvan subhadraṇi
rathāṅgapāṇer janmāni karmāni ca yāni loke | gītāni nāmāni tad-arthakāni
gāyan vilajjo vicared-asaṅga || " ityuktvāpi premasampadāvīrbhāve'ntaragatvena
| " evaṁ-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiyā jātānurāgo druta-citta ucchaiḥ | hasaty
atho roditi rauti gayatī " tyatra punaḥ svapriyanāmakīrtiyā ityuktamiti dik ||

343 tad eva manyate bhakteḥ phalaṁ tad rasikair janaiḥ
bhagavat-prema-sampattau sadaivāvyabhicārataḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.165)

aho ! kim vaktavyaṁ śreṣṭhaṁ sādhanamiti sādhyamapi tadeva
kaiścinmanyata ityāhuḥ tadeveti | nāmasaṅkīrtanameva | tatra
rasikairnāmasaṅkīrtanalampaṭaiḥ | nanu sarveṣāmapī sādhanabhaktiprakārāṇāṁ
premaiva kalamityabhipretam satyam nāmasaṅkīrtane sati
preṁṇo'vaśyambhāvitvādupacāreṇa tadeva phalaṁ manyata ityāhuḥ
bhagavaditi bhagavati preṁṇaḥ sampattau sampannatāyāṁ sadaiva
nāmasaṅkīrtanasyāvyabhicārataḥ āvaśyakahetutvādityarthaḥ ||

344 sal-lakṣaṇaṁ prema-bharasya kṛṣṇe
kaiścid rasajñair uta kathyate tat
preṁṇo bhareṇaiva nijeṣṭa-nāma-
saṅkīrtanaṁ hi sphurati sphuṭartyā
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.166)

eke tu nāmasaṅkīrtanameva preṁṇaḥ svarupaṁ manyanta ityāhuḥ saditi |
tat nāmasaṅkīrtanameva kṛṣṇe premapharasya sadut kṛṣṭam laṅgaṇaṁ kathyate
ucyate hi yataḥ sphuṭayā abhivyaktayā ārtiyā yannijeṣṭasya nāmasaṅkīrtanaṁ tat
preṁṇo bhareṇaiva sphurati āvirbhavati | evaṁ
nāmasaṅkīrtanapreṁṇo'nyonyaṁ kāryakāraṇatā siddhā tato'bhedo'pi siddha iti
dik ||

Nama-Sankirtan - Practised with a feeling of love-sickness

"Nama-Sankirtan should be performed with a deep feeling of intense anguish caused by separation, like the Chatak bird crying aloud in distress, in torrential rains, because of its separation from the clouds, or like the love-sick Chakravak bird shrieking, being separated from its beloved during night-time. **Nama-Sankirtan ought to be performed with an intense feeling of love-sickness arising from separation from the Eternal Beloved - Sri Krishna - the Embodiment of Divine Love.** The experiences of the realised souls should be the guiding stars to the aspirant in achieving his goal."³⁴⁵

Nama-Sankirtan - An emblem of Lord's Mercy

"If you think that many obstacles, like public censure, inability, bodily weakness, etc., may arise in the loud performances of Nama-Sankirtan, and that meditation can be easily accomplished unobserved by any one, and hence quite free from hindrances, **we boldly assure you that the variegated sweetness of Nama-Sankirtan is caused by the boundless and inexplicable Grace of the Lord, Who is an unfathomable Ocean of lovely Lilas, beyond human comprehension and the whole success of Nama-Sankirtan is due to His Mercy alone and can never be attributed to the aspirant's exertions, for there cannot be any impediment in the way of the free flow of God's Mercy.** It should be understood that what holds good in the case of Nama-Sankirtan, is also applicable to other forms of Bhakti."³⁴⁶

345 nāmnām tu saṅkīrtanam arti-bhārān
megham vinā prāvṛṣi cātakānām
rātrau viyogāt sva-pate rathāṅgi-
vargasya cākrośaṇa-vat pratīhi
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.167)

kīntu premaviśeṣeṇaiva nāmasaṅkīrtanam syāditi drṣṭāntenopapādayanti
nāmnāmiti | ārterbhārād gauravāddhetoreva nāmnām saṅkīrtana bhavātīti pratīhi
| kamivi prāvṛṣi varṣāsu megham vinā cātakānāmākrośanam arnasvareṇa priya-
priyetyāhvānamiva tathā rātrau svapativirahāt kurarīvargasya cakravākīvargasya
cākrośanavat | evam virahajapremṇaiva prāyo nāmasaṅkīrtanam svādityuktam
virahaddārābhīrbhavataḥ premṇasca paramavaiśiṣṭyam pūrvopākhyānānte
prāyeṇoktamevāgre 'pi vakṣyate | evam paramārtyā
vicitramadhuragāpravandhena bhagavannāmasaṅkīrtanam kāryamiti tātparya "
siddhasya lakṣaṇam yat syāt sādhanam sādhasya tad " iti nyāyāt ||

346 vicitra-līlā-rasa-sāgarasya
prabhor vicitrāt sphuritāt prasādāt
vicitra-saṅkīrtana-mādhurī sā
na tu sva-yatnād iti sādhu sidhyet
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.168)

"How is it then that those who have taken solely to Nama-Sankirtan, endowed with such great powers, are usually seen to suffer grief? The answer is this: The accumulated sins of the aspirant, who has taken resort to Nama-Sankirtan, are destroyed by Sankirtan only, sorrow being the result of sin. But the meritorious deeds remain to his credit - because of their effect being always auspicious; but such deeds are subject to his sweet will and pleasure. **He who is engrossed in relishing the Transcendental Sweetness of Srīman Nama is unaffected by the elevating effect of the latter, as the sole purpose of his life is ever to taste the incessant flow of Nectarine Bliss oozing out from Nama-Sankirtan.** "Know for certain that the cycle of acts, i.e., undergoing the consequences of acts of previous lives, which is not inviolable even to gods and demons, is already transgressed by the mortals greatly devoted to Me." Excepting these, others have to bear the consequences of their acts in past lives, because for them, these are not destroyed unless endured by them. **Hence, let them at sometime and somehow take to Nama-Sankirtan, because they will then be free from the consequences of their acts in this life.**"³⁴⁷

Lives of Devotees guide our conduct

"But those magnanimous servants of Sri Hari Nama, under the semblance of undergoing the reactions of their own evil actions, like the

nanu tathā sphuṭakīrtane vighnaśaṁkālokapujādidoṣo'śaktirāpi
 śarīradaurbalyādinā kadācit sambhavati na tu
 kenāpyalakṣamāṇe'nāyāsenāntaścintane tatrāhuḥ vicitreti | sā uktaparakārā
 vicitrā vividhā bhagavannāmasaṅkīrtanasya mādhurī prabhorbhagavato
 vicitryāta prasādāhdetoḥ sphurati āvirbhūtā | na tu svayatnat nijapauruṣeṇa |
 vicitratve hetuḥ | vicitrāṇām līlārasānām sāgarasya ityato hetoḥ sādhu samyak
 vidhyet | bhagavat prasādaprāpte'rthe vighnadoṣādyasambhavāt | etacca
 navasvāpi bhaktiprakāreṣu samavetamityūhyamevetyūhyay ||

347 icchā-vaśāt pāpam upāsakānām
 kṣīyeta bhogonmukham apy amusmāt
 prārabdha-mātraṁ bhavatītareṣām
 karmāvaśiṣṭaṁ tad-avaśya-bhogyam
 (bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.169)

nanu iddaśamahāprabhāvakaṁ nāmasaṅkīrtanaṁ kurvatāmāpi kathāṁ
 duḥkhādikaṁ duśyate tatrāhuḥ icchati | upāsakānām sadā
 bhagavannāmasevāparāṇām bhogonmukham prārabdhabhogamāpi pāpam
 muṣmānnāmasaṅkīrtanādeva kṣīyate duḥ khaphalatvat ataḥ śrbhaphalatvāt
 puṇyam tiṣṭhedeveyarthāḥ | kutāḥ icchāvaśāt teṣāmevaicchādhiṅatvāt
 upāsakānāmicchayaiva karma tiṣṭhennaśyedapīyarthāḥ | yathokathāṁ
 harībhaktisudhodaye | "karmacakrantu yat proktamavilāmdhyaṁ surāsuraiḥ |
 mad bhaktiprasālairmartyerviddhi laṁghitameva tad" iti | itareṣām
 upāsakavyatiriktānām kadācit kathamāpi nāma saṅkīrtayatāmīyarthāḥ |
 prārabdhamātraṁ na tu kūṭādikarma avaśiṣṭaṁ bhavati yatastat
 prārabdhamāvaśyabhogyam bhogenaiva tasya kṣayāt ||

unusual attachment of Bharata, etc., to the young of a deer, for which he had to be reborn as a deer, show us the grief caused by their own faults, **in their anxiety to conceal the Love of the highest form of wish-yielding devotion which is to be cherished and protected from the public.**"³⁴⁸ "Through Nama-Sankirtan alone, all become rid of their griefs and faults, and become devotees of Sri Hari. Yet a few devotees, overcome by kindness like their Lord, teach the people about virtuous conduct, such as the avoidance of evil company, etc., because continued advance in devotion cannot be achieved, unless one avoids evil company, thoughts, and the commission of evil deeds, and practises virtuous conduct in thought, words, and deeds."³⁴⁹ "The evil consequences of evil actions has been taught to us by Bharata, the evil effects of the vice of gambling by devotees like Yudhishtir, etc., similarly pure souls like Nrig, Saubhari, etc., have, by their conduct, shown us the way to nearness and dearness of God."³⁵⁰ "You will certainly overcome the greatest and even the worst of obstacles by recollecting the glory or miraculous power

348 mahāśayā ye hari-nāma-sevakāḥ
sugopya-tad-bhakti-mahā-nidheḥ svayam
prakāśa-bhītyā vyavahāra-bhaṅgibhiḥ
sva-doṣa-duḥkhāny anudarśayanti te
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.170)

nanūpāsakānāmapi bharatādīnām bhogonmukhakarmākṣayo daśyate
tatrāhuḥ maheti | ye mahāśayāḥ paramagambhīrabhāvāste vyavahārāṅgāṃ
hariṇabālopoṣaṇādirupāṅgāṃ ceṣṭitānām bhagibhirvecitrībhiḥ kṛtvā svasya doṣān
duṣṭa saṃgādīn duḥkhāni ca kuyoniprāptyādīni svayamevānudarśayanti
anṛkurvanti yadvā lokeṣu darśayanti | kimartha sugopyā tasya harerbhaktireva
mahānidhiḥ sarvārthasādhakatvāt tasya prakāśādyā bhītistayā hetunā
paramarahasyarupāṃ bhagavad bhaktimācchādayitumityarthaḥ ||

349 tan-nāma-saṅkīrtana-mātrato'khilā
bhaktā hareḥ syūr hata-duḥkha-duṣānāḥ
kecit tathāpi prabhuvat kṛpākulā
lokān sad-ācāram imāṃ praśāsati
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.171)

nanu sarvelākanistāraṅārtha tat prakāśanamevocitaṃ tatrāhuḥ tannāmeti
| akhilāḥ sarve'pi janāḥ harerbhaktāḥ santaḥ hatāni duḥkhāni dūṣāṅāni ca yeṣāṃ
tādṛśā yadyapi syuḥ tathāpi kecit kṛpākulāḥ prabhuvat bhagavāniva imāṃ
vakṣyamāṅgāṃ duḥsaṃgadoṣaparihārādirupāṃ sadācāram lokān praśāsati
śikṣayanti sadācāram vinā pāpena citta maline sati bhaktau pravṛttirapi na
syāditi bhāvaḥ ||

350 duḥsaṅga-doṣaṃ bharatādayo yathā
durdūta-doṣaṃ ca yudhiṣṭhirādayāḥ
brahma-sva-bhītim ca nṛgādayo'malāḥ
pradarśayan sva-vyavahārato janān
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.172)

tadeva prayañcayanti duḥsaṃgeti | duṣṭasaṃge doṣaṃ bharatādayaḥ
svasya vyavahārataḥ hariṇapotapoṣaṇāsaktyā kuyoniprāptirupeṇeti tena kṛtvā
janān prakarṣeṇa sāksāttayā'darśayan | ādīśabdena saubharyādayaḥ amalāḥ te
ca sarve tatvatatattanmalarahitā eva ||

of devotion stated above. And gladly we will come to your succour everywhere."³⁵¹ "We have observed that you have been copiously blessed by Sri Krishna's Mercy, which is firm in you, because your yearning to see Sri Krishna in person is still strong, in spite of your being told by the Tapolokvasis, like Pippalayan, to see Him with your mind's eye by meditation."³⁵²

Lord's Mercy - The greatest need for all

"It is indeed true that His Form, composed of intense Existence-Knowledge-Bliss combination, and hence spiritual in nature, is perceptible as such by the sense-organs when they attain the fitness to do so. **Yet His Svarup does become perceivable by the ordinary eyes, through their natural function, by reason of His unfathomable Grace. He is seen by those before Whom He manifests Himself, for which also His Mercy is essential.** Because perception of the unlimited and undistinguished Form manifesting Itself at Its Own Will, by a limited inanimate, though impossible, becomes possible through His Mercy alone."³⁵³ **"Even in those who perceive Him through the acquisition of appropriate knowledge alone, a feeling that "I am seeing Him with my own eyes (composed of flesh and blood) is born", demonstrative of the Exalted Glory of Sri Krishna's Kindness,**

351 bhakti-prabhāvena vicāra-jātaiḥ
sañjāyamānena sadedṛśais tvam
vighnāti-vighnān kila jeṣyasiha
sarvatra te hanta vyaṁ sahāyāḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.173)

nanu bahuvighnākulasya me īdrśī nāmasaṅkīrtananiṣṭhā kutaḥ
syāttatrāhuḥ bhaktīti | sadā aviratamīdrśairuktasadrśairvicārajātaiḥ
sañjāyamānena bhakteḥ prabhāveṇa prābalyena vighnātivighnān kila niścitam
tvam jeṣyasi | nanu mahutām kṛpayā vinā na kimapi syāttatrāhuḥ | iha asmin
vighnajaye vicārāvirbhāve vā anyatra sarvatrāpi vayameva tava mahāyāḥ hanta
harṣe ||

352 śrī-krṣṇacandrasya mahānukampā-
smābhiḥ sthirā tvayy avadhāritāsti
līnā na sākṣād-bhagavad-didrṅkṣā
tvattas tapo-loka-nivāsi-vākyaiḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.174)

tvantu svata eva kṛtārtha iti vadantastapoloke pippalāyanenoktam
sākṣāddarśanasyāpi citte darśanasya samyak tvamanūdyā pariharanti
śrīkrṣṇetyaṣṭabhiḥ | tvayi sthirā acañcalā mahatī anumkāpā avadhāritāsti | kutaḥ
sākṣād bhagavati didṅkṣā tapolokanivāsinām vākyairapi tvatto nalīnā nācchannā
||

353 rūpam satyam khalu bhagavataḥ sac-cid-ānanda-sāndram
yogyair grāhyam bhavati karaṇaiḥ sac-cid-ānanda-rūpam
māmsākṣibhyām tad api ghaṭate tasya kāruṇya-śaktyā
sadyo labdhyā tad-ucita-gater darśanam svehayā vā
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.175)

which in turn aids in the exuberance of exultations, even though He is beyond the perception of all human senses."³⁵⁴

"If one says that Bhagavan can be seen everywhere incessantly and without any impediments with the mind's eye, and that there will not be any fear of separation from Him, and if one sees Him with his natural eyes, with limited power of seeing, there is every likelihood of separation being caused between him and Bhagavan. That is true. **But even through the Glory of the floods of Sri Krishna's Mercy or through the greatness of Bhakti, He can indeed be seen even with these very eyes, with their limited power, incessantly and without the least impediments, as with the mind and the whole charm of Person can be ever tasted without experiencing any obstacles.**"³⁵⁵ "If one says that He cannot be the subject of the limited eyesight, either through His Grace or through the greatness of Bhakti, **then He too cannot be the subject of the mind's eye, as He manifests Himself wherever He wants to; and He, because of His overlordship and Self-Willed Nature, is the Controller of all, including the perceiving power of the human mind, which can have no control over Him.** If one says that by seeing in the unlimited mind, the joy of seeing Him will also be unlimited, and hence when He becomes a subject of the eyes with limited

tatrādaupippalāyanoktamevānuvadanti rupamiti ddābhyām | yogyaistad
grahaṇocitairēva karaṇairindriyai argrāhyam bhavatīti satyameva | tadapi tathāpi
māmsākṣibhyām kṛtvā tasya darśanam ghaṭate | katham tasyaiva kāruṇyaśaktyā
yā taducitāyāstaddarśanayogyāyāḥ gateḥ svarupasya jñānaśaktervā sadyo
labdhistayā | vā śabdaḥ pakṣāntare | kāruṇyaśaktisamkocāparitoṣāt
svasyākṣṇorevehayā vyāpāreṇa | evamaparcchinnyasya svaprakāśasya
paricchinna jaḍena grahaṇamaghaṭamānamapi tadīyamahākāruṇyaśaktyā
sambhavedevetyadoṣaḥ ||

354 tad-darśane jñāna-dṛśaiva jāya-
māne'pi paśyāmy aham eṣa dṛgbhyām
mano bhavet kṛṣṇa-kṛpā-prabhāva-
vijñāpako harṣa-viśeṣa-vṛddhyai
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.176)

evam satyapi durvitarkyānantakāruṇyasāmarthyamahimātarkaṇād
bhagavad rupasya māmsākṣidarśanena svaprakāśatādihānimāsamkya ye
jñānacakṣuṣaiva taddarśanam manyante teṣām mate'pi
māmsacakṣurdarśanamanenaiva sukhaviśeṣaḥ syānnānyathetyāhuḥ | yadvā
svecchayā taddarśanamatyantāsambhavam matvā tat prakārameva nirdīśanti
taditi | dṛgbhyāmevāhameva paśyāmi bhagavantamiti māno'bhimāno bhavet |
kīdṛśaśa kṛṣṇasya yaḥ kṛpāyāḥ prabhāvaḥ śaktiviśeṣastasya viśeṣeṇa jñāpakāḥ |
ahoparamadurdarśo'pi mayā ayam sāksād dṛśyamāno'stītyevam bodhakaḥ |
kimartha harṣaviśeṣasya bṛddhyai sarvendriyavṛtyagocarasyāpi
svamāmsacakṣuṣā darśanābhimānena tadīyakāruṇyaviśeṣāvagamāt ||

355 prabhoḥ kṛpā-pūra-balena bhakteḥ
prabhāvato vā khalu darśanam syāt
ataḥ paricchinna-dṛśāpi siddhyen
nirantaram tan manaseva samyāk
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.177)

power of vision, the resulting joy of seeing Him will be consequently limited too in its scope. **He, being formed of ecstasy in very concentrated form, will give intense joy or ecstasy to him, who will somehow serve Him with any of the sense-organs, like the eyes, tongue, ears, or the mind, etc.**"³⁵⁶

Sakshat Darsan -vs- Darsan in Dhyān

"Seeing Him in person is much better than seeing Him in one's imagination and has a special significance over the latter. It is experienced everywhere, that he enjoys His Grace in full measure, everywhere, as enjoyed by Kardam, Dhruv, etc. The Mercy that Pippalayan in Tapo Loka obtained in his Samadhi, i.e., profound meditation and concentration of the mind on the Dhyeya - the desired object, in order to see the Lord, and described by Brahma as the Lord's Mercy, may have been a special favour to him alone, and may not be a common one, obtainable and enjoyable by all. **But intense ecstasy, which is far superior to all other kinds of excessive joys, can be experienced only through direct vision of Him with one's eyes for which His Grace is quite essential and one is enabled to see Him in person, through the devotional practices, like Sravana, Kirtan, Dhyān, etc.** Hence, the goal of meditational practice - a function of the mind, would also be to see the Lord in Person."³⁵⁷ **"Hence, the best fruit of all the devotional practices, is His Manifestation in Person before one's**

nanu cakṣurbhyā darśanapakṣe sahasasuparicchinnavṛttinā
cakṣurindriyeṇa bhagavadarśane kadācittirodhānavyavadhānādinā vicchedo'pi
ghaṭeta manasā ca vyāpakena paramasūksmavṛttinā sarvatraiva
nirvighnasandarśanasukhaṁ sampadyetetyāśamkyānuktaṁ
pippalāyanamatamevopasāmhṛtya pariharanti prabhoriti | evaṁ prabhoḥ kṛpāyāḥ
pūrasya samūhasya balena śaktyā khalu prabhordaśanam syādityupasāmhāraḥ |
veti pakṣāntaram | prastuta prakatāśeśaśaktiyuktabhagavad
bhaktimahimadarśanārtham ato'smāduktanyāyāt | tat prabhudarśanam
paricchinnena dṛṣā cakṣurindriyeṇāpi manaseva nirantaram nirvighnam samyak
sarvāṅgalāvanyādigrahaṇapūrvakam sidhyet |

356 na cet kathañcin na manasy api syāt
svayam-prabhasyekṣaṇam īśvarasya
ghanam sukham sañjanayet kathañcid
upāsitaḥ sāndra-sukhātmako'sau
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.178)

cedyadi kāruṇyaciśeśaśaktyā bhaktiprabhāveṇa vā darśanam syāditi na
bhavet tadā kathañcidapi manasyapi īkṣaṇam tasya darśanam na syāt na
sambhavedityarthaḥ | kutaḥ svayam prabhāvasya svaprakāśasya
manovṛttināmapyaviśayatvāt | kiñca īśvarasva paramasvatantṛasya
sarvaniyantutvāt | nanvaparicchinne manasi darśanena sukhamaparicchinnam
paricchinnābhyām locanābhyāñcalpakam syāttatrāhuḥ ghanamiti kathañcit
kenāpi manodhyānasākṣāddarśanādinā prakāreṇa upāsitaḥ sevitaḥ san asau
bhagavān sukham ghanameva datte yataḥ svayameva sāndrasukhasvarupaḥ ||

eyes, by Which alone, everything that the delusion (Maya) comprises including the worst state of forgetting Him, totally disappears." When one sees the Lord in oneself or when one sees one's Lord, or the Lord Who is dearest to the self, his heart's knot of egoism or ignorance disappears; all the doubts are cleared; and his worldly acts come to an end." **Then alone the sentiment of Love to Him will grow luxuriantly, because he experiences in person the Beauty, Luscious Sweetness, etc., of His Svarup.**"³⁵⁸ "Prahlada, like other devotees of the Lord, though he was always seeing Him in his heart, was always yearning to see Him with his own eyes, the reason being that he used to experience a special kind of feeling of intense attachment, i.e., Transcendental Love for the Lord."³⁵⁹

Sanatkumars meditate in Sri Vishnu's presence

"Indeed those Sanatkumars, looking at the blue night-lotus-like Face of Sri Vishnu, beautiful with smiling Kunda-like red Lips, having their heart's desire fulfilled, again looked repeatedly at His Twin Feet decked

357 dṛgbhyām prabhor darśanato hi sarvatas
tat-tat-prasādāvali-labdhir iṅsyate
sarvādhikam sāndra-sukham ca jāyate
sādhyam tad eva śravaṇādi-bhaktiḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.179)

atha ca bhāvanāyā darśanāt sādādarśanasya phalaviśeṣo dṛśyata ityāhuḥ
dṛgbhyāmiti tribhiḥ | dṛg bhyām darśanādeva tāsām suprasiddhānām
kardamādighru vādiviśayakānām prasādāvalīnām labdhiḥ prāptiḥ sarvatra
iṅsyate sāṅśādanabhūyate | evaṅca tapoloke pippalāyanoktam yat
samādhiviśayakadarśane'pi śrībrahmaṇastādṛśaprasādaprāptyādhikam tacca tam
pratyeva kadācit na tu prāyikamityevam pariharaṇīyam | kiṅca sarvato'dhikam
sāndram sukham ca dagabhyām darśanādeva jāyate tad dṛg bhyām
darśanameva śravaṇādibhirbhaktiprakāraiḥ sādhyam | ādiśabdena
kīrtanasmaraṇādi | ato mānasikasya dhyānadhāraṇādirupabhaktiprakārasyāpi
sāṅśāddarśanameva phalamiti bhāvaḥ ||

358 sarveṣām sādhanānām tat- sāṅśāt-kāro hi sat-phalam
tadaivāmūlato māyā naśyet premāpi vardhate
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.180)

tatra hetumāhaḥ sarveṣāmiti | hi yasmāttasya prabhoḥ sāṅśāt kāra eva
sadut kṛṣṭam phalam tadeva sāṅśāt kāre satyeva āmulataḥ mūlam
bhagavaddiśayakadarśanāt paryantam māyā naśyet | taduktam prathamaskandhe |
"bhidyate hṛdayagranthiś chidyante sarvasamśayāḥ kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi dṛṣṭa
evātmanīśvare" iti atrātmanīti ātmani sthitāni karmāṇi samśayāgranthiśceti
yājyam | kim vā ātmani paramapriyatama ityarthāḥ | tadaiva premā
bhagavaddiśayakabhāvaviśeṣo'pi vaddate sāṅśāt
tatsaundaryamādhuryādyanubhavāt ||

359 kāyādhavāder hṛdi paśyato'pi
prabhum sadāṅśā kila tad-didṛkṣā
tatra pramāṇam hi tathāvalokād
anantaram bhava-viśeṣa-lābhāḥ
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.181)

with lustrous red pearl-like Nails, and being unable to relish the Beauty and charming Sweetness of His Person, went into deep meditation (Bh. 3.15.44). So we hear of the Sanatkumars meditating on Sri Vishnu, even in His very presence. **But that is not the case in Sri Krishna's Golok. When some people see Sri Krishna, the shutting of their eyes, the flow of tears therefrom, hair standing on end, etc., are not due to meditation, because of the acquisition of the Dhyeya, i.e., the Object of meditation, in one's very presence. The closing of the eyes, flow of plenteous tears, tremors of the body, perspiration, etc., are all due to the emotional perturbations, caused by excess of ecstasy because of the actual obtaining of Sri Krishna - the Transcendental Object contemplated upon.** This condition should not be taken as identical with meditation, though apparently, the external symptoms appear similar to those of meditation."³⁶⁰

Nama dearer to Lord than His Svarup

"Meditation could be aptly practised when the Lord is beyond one's range of sight and not when He is present in Person before one's very eyes. **But Sankirtan can be practised everywhere and at all times, both when He is within or beyond one's ken.** According to the rule that the conclusion should always be sweet, the overwhelming advantages

atra satām vyavahāramapi pramāṇayanti kāyeti |
 kayādhṛhiranyaśīporbhāryā tasyā apatyam
 śrīprahlādastadāderbhaktagaṇasya prabhumḥ ḥṛdi paśyato'pi akṣaṇā
 cakṣurindriyeṇa | yadvā jātyaikatvam akṣibhyāmityathaḥ | tasya
 prabhordidṛkśaiva | hi yasmāttatra sākṣādṛśanasya paramopādeyatvādu
 pramāṇam | kileti niścayena sadācārasya pramāṇyam dyotayati tatheti
 samṛccaye | avalokāt sākṣādṛśanādanantameva bhāvaviśeṣasya
 premabharasya lābhaśca tatra pramāṇam etacca samudratīre
 śrībhagavaddarśanādanu śrīprahlādasya premabharāvīrbhāvavṛttam
 haribhaktisudhodayādanusandheyam ||

360 kṛṣṇasya sākṣād api jāyate yat
 keṣāñcid akṣi-dvaya-mīlanādi
 dhyānam na tat kintu mudām bhareṇa
 kampādi-vat prema-vikāra eṣaḥ
 (bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.182)

nanu kathantarhi te vā amuṣya vadanāsitapadmakoṣamuddikṣya
 sundaratarādharakundahāsam | labdhaśiṣaḥ punaravekṣya
 tadīyamaṅghriddandūm nakhāruṇamaṅśrayaṇam nidadhyurityādu vaikuṅṭhe
 sākṣāddarśane'pi sanakādīnām dhyānam śrūyate tatrāhuḥ kṛṣṇasyeti |
 akṣiddayasya mīlanam mudraṇam ādīśabdena aṅgendriyaceṣṭādirāhityam tat
 dhyānam dhyānalakṣaṇam na bhavati | yadvā
 tattasmādakṣimīlanāderhetordhyānam na mantavyamityarthah | dhyeyasyaiva
 sākṣāt prāpteḥ | 'eṣaḥ' akṣinimīlanādirupaḥ preṇo vikāro vāhyalakṣaṇaprakārah
 kampa ādiryeṣām svadaromāñcāsrupātādīnām taddat | ato dhyānasādṛśyād
 dhyānamityucyate | na tu tatvatastad dhyānamiti bhāvaḥ | evam
 sākṣādṛśanasyaiva paramaphalatvam sādhitam ||

of the Lord's Sankirtan over His meditation, have been thoroughly weighed in the concluding paras. **"In the Rasa dance, the Gopis appeared most beautiful when they were singing Him (Sri Krishna) in all splendour, like lightning in a cluster of clouds."** It is also said by Parasar, **"While Sri Krishna described the autumnal moon, the moonlight, and the collection of night lotuses, Gopis uttered 'Krishna', 'Krishna' incessantly."** **"Sri Krishna sang the Rasa song in a loud tone, while the Gopis nodding their heads, uttered 'Krishna', 'Krishna' in a doubly raised pitch."** This clearly shows that even when the Rasa reached its ecstatic climax, the **Gopis never failed to utter 'Krishna', 'Krishna' loudly, showing verily thereby the incomprehensible grandeur of Sri Krishna-Sankirtan, even in His very presence.** Sankirtan of Gopis during Sri Krishna's separation from them is quite well-known in Gopi Gita.³⁶¹ **"The Gopis, with their heart and soul engrossed in Sri Krishna and anxious about His return, gathered together on the sands of the Yamuna and started uttering 'Krishna', 'Krishna'. Alas! Alas! He is made to run from place to place as we move after Him in our search. Should we thus cause Him bodily pain by making Him roam about? Besides He is not attainable without His Sweet Will. The Srutis also say, "He is obtainable by him whom He chooses. His Mercy is needed to see Him and to arouse His Grace, His Sankirtan must be resorted to. As if to prove the truth of this statement, they all went to that place where they had met Him first, and started uttering aloud 'Krishna', 'Krishna'."**^{361.1}

361 dhyānaṁ parokṣe yujyeta na tu sākṣān mahā-prabhoḥ
 aparokṣe parokṣe'pi yuktaṁ saṅkīrtanaṁ sadā
 (bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.183)

astu tāvat sākṣāt kārato dhyānasya nyūnatā kīrtanādapi sidhyediti
 prakṛtamupasaṁharantaḥ | pūrvoktamapi bhagannāmasaṅkīrtanamāhātmyaṁ
 "madhureṇa samāpaye" diti nyāyena sayuktikamāhuḥ dhyānamiti ddābhyām |
 mahāprabhoḍdhyānaṁ sākṣādaparokṣe na tu yujyeta sarvatra
 lokarītyanubhavaprāmāṇyāt saṅkīrtanaṁ tu sadaiva yuktaṁ | tathā ca
 daśamaskandhe rāsakīḍāyām "gāyantyastaṁ taḍita iva tā meghacakre virejur" iti
 | viṣṇupurāṇe ca | "kṛṣṇaḥ śaraccandramasaṁ kaumudīm kumudākaram | jagau
 gopījanastvekaṁ kṛṣṇanāma punaḥ punar" iti | tathā "rāsageyaṁ jagau kṛṣṇo
 yāvattārāyatadhvaniḥ | sādhu kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti tāvattā ddiguṇaṁ jagur" iti |
 aparokṣe ca kīrtanaṁ suprāsiddhameva daśamaskandhādu
 gopikāgītānugītoddhavayānādiṣu ||

361.1 punaḥ pulinam āgatya kalindyāḥ kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ
 samavetā jaguḥ kṛṣṇaṁ tad-āgamana-kāṅkṣitāḥ
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.30.44)

Mystic powers of Sriman Nama

"Srīman Nama of the Lord is dearer to Him than His very Svarup or Divine Form. Because it is imbued with excess of all the Excellences of Beauty, Power, Bliss, etc., and manifests Itself at all times, everywhere with all Its grandeur and splendour in all His Names. Hence, It is dearer to Him than his very person. There is nothing dearer to Him, than His Nama - especially 'Krishna' Nama - Which attracts animate and inanimate objects towards It. He told Uddhav thus: "You are dearer to Me than even Brahma, Siva, Baladev, Lakshmi, and than even My very Soul or Person, because you are My ardent devotee (Bh. 11.14.15)." In this statement He clearly proves that He holds His ardent devotees dearer to Him than His very Person. **But nowhere has He said so with reference to His Name, proving clearly thereby that His Name is dearer to Him than everything else, including His Person.** To explain Its Affluence or Excellence, Sri Sanatan Gosvami describes Its quality most dear to him thus: It benefits the whole world - one and all, to be perceived in any way by any of the sense-organs, at any time or all times, without any consideration of his or her fitness or qualification to do so. Its munificence, knows no limits. 'Jagaddhitam' is explained by Sri Jiva Gosvami in Sri Bhagavat Sandarbha as **'Attracting the mind and heart of everything towards Itself or Himself,** i.e., Sarvasyapi svatmanam prati chittakarshanam'. It can be practised with ease; by Its mere utterance, or Its entering into the ears, i.e., hearing, It blesses one and all. Its service is quite easy. When It just manifests Itself on the tip of the tongue, Its service is accomplished; because It is in the Form of a Sacred Sweet Sound-Word, It is easy to utter; It is excellent because It is the Source of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, and Divine in Nature; (1) It is also known as 'Saras' as It exists always in association with the five feelings and seven sentiments, like the sentiments of Love, etc., with the sentiments of devotion and attachments; (2) similarly 'Rasa' also means Love, i.e., the unalloyed and unflinching Love; It also exists in the states of separation and union; **(3) Rasa means Divine Attachment and Love; it is for this very reason that It achieves unfailingly Sri Krishna's Divine Love or Prem very quickly for Its votary;** (4) It also causes attachment in Its servitors or in all people; (5) Rasa also means the sentiments of heroism because of Its

hanta hanta yatra tad-anveṣaṇārtham yāmas tatas tataḥ sa palāyīṣyate |
tasmād vana-paryaṭana-kaṣṭam kim ? tasyotpādayīṣyāmas tad-icchām vinā sa na
labhyo—yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhya [ka.u. 1.2.23] iti śrutim pramāṇī-kurvatyā
iva tad-darśane tat-kāruṇyam eva hetus tat-kāruṇye ca tat-saṅkīrtanam eva
hetur iti siddhāntam prakāśayantya iva pūrvaṁ yatra tena saṅgatir āsīt tad eva
sthānam ājagmus tam eva jagur ity āha ||
(sārārtha darṣiṇī)

possessing the highest Power or (6) Rasa also means Its distinguishing Attribute, viz., that of rescuing all who are humble; (7) Rasa also means the specific bliss, being of the type of Divine Bliss, as It imparts Transcendental Bliss to the utterers; and (8) Rasa also means Its characteristic sweetness or Madhurya Rasa because It is imbued with Nectarine Sweetness, as is indicated in the first Sloka of this book. Hence, there is nothing that can be compared to It, i.e., It is second to none. It is simply incomparable.³⁶²

"When the love of the ardent devotee for the Name, develops into a passion, the two syllables 'Krishna' perform an uncontrollable, and wild dance on his tongue, when he experiences an intense yearning to have a series of tongues to utter 'Krishna'. No sooner they enter the cavities of his ears, than he feels the necessity for billion's of ears to hear Them; as soon as these syllables become the bosom companions of the arena of his mind and heart, They lord over all the other sense-organs and impel them in Their own different forms of service, like the eyes in seeing Their Form, the nose in inhaling Their enchanting fragrance, tongue to utter Them, etc. Words fail to describe in adequate terms the superb Transcendental Sweetness of the twin syllables 'Kri-shna'."³⁶³ "When Sri Krishna happens to hear the syllables 'Radha', incidentally uttered by others in the course of their talk, He forgets all the fine arts of amorous Pastimes in which He is engrossed with Sri Radha in Person; and when Sri

362 śrīman nāma prabhos tasya śrī-mūrter apy ati-priyam
jagad-dhitam sukhopāsyam sa-rasam tat-samam na hi
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.184)

ataḥ śrīmagavannāmasaṅkīrtanamevāsmābhirnitarām praśasyata ityāhuḥ
śrīmaditi | sarvaśobhāsampatyatiśayayuktaṁ sadā sarvatra sarveṣveva
nijamahimabhareṇa prakāśamānatvāt ataḥ śrīmūrternijavigrahādapi
sakāśāttasya prabhoḥ śrīvaikuṅtheśvarasya bhagavato'tvantapriyam "na tathā
me priyatama ātmayonirna śaṅkaraḥ na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīrnaivātmā ca yathā
bhavān | bhā. 11.14.15" ityādaḥ nijaśrīmūrteḥ sakāśādappanyeṣām
śreṣṭhatāpratipādanāt na tu kutrāpi nāmnaḥ sakāśāt śrīmatvameva
vivṛṇvanto'tipriyatve hetumāhurjagato hitam adhikāryanapekṣayā kathāñcit
kenāpīndriyeṇa sevanata eva sarvalokopakāritvāt yataḥ sukhena upāsyam
sevyam jihvāgramātreṇaiva sevanāt | yataḥ sarasam komalam
madhurākṣaramayatvāt saccidānandarasamayadvādā | yadvā rasairaśeṣaireva
saha vartamānam śrīngārādinavaraseṣu bhaktirase premarase ca tathā
virahasamgamayośca parisphuraṇāt | yadvā raso rāgastat sahitam
avyabhicāritvenāvaśyamevāśu śrībhagavat premasampādanāt | yadvā svastin
svasevakānām sarveṣām vā janānāmanurāgajanakatvāt | yadvā raso
vīryaviśeṣaḥ paramaśaktimatvāt | yadvā guṇaviśeṣo'khiladīnananistārakatvāt
| yadvā sukhaviśeṣaḥ ghanasukhamayatvāt | mādhyura'viśeṣo vā
paramamadhuratvāditi dik | yathoktam "madhuramadhure" tvādi | atastasya
nāmna eva samam tattulvamanyat kiñcinnāstīti nirupamamityarthaḥ ||

Radhika similarly hears the syllables 'Krishna' in an unbroken sequence, all Her limbs get paralysed and She falls into a deep stupor, caused by emotional perturbations.³⁶⁴ This indicates the extreme mutual influence of the Names 'Krishna' and 'Radha' on Them! When such is the marvellous and mystic Glory of the Divine Names 'Krishna', and 'Radha' - the Embodiment of His Hladini Sakti, that each allures the other, the author cannot but conclude this humble offering to the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna, with his hearty and endless prostrated obeisances to 'Namavatar Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu', Who practised Nama-Sankirtan and relished Its ever new Luscious Sweetness and thereby imparted It along with the Love for It in all Its fullness to all fallen Jivas, irrespective of their fitness or the want of it, out of His causeless Mercy alone.

**kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi su-medhasah
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.5.32)**

**kālān naṣṭam bhakti-yogam nijam yaḥ
prāduṣkartum kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmā
āvīrbhūtas tasya padāravinde
gāḍham gāḍham liyate citta-bhr̥ṅgaḥ
(śrī-caitanya-candrodayam)**

**hare-nāma-kṛṣṇa-nāma-gāna-dāna-kāriṇīm
śoka-moha-lobha-tāpa-sarva-vighna-nāśinīm
pāda-padmā-lubdha-bhakta-vṛnda-bhakti-dāyinīm**

363 tuṅḍe tāṅḍavini ratim vitanute tuṅḍāvali-labdhave
karṇa-kroda-kaḍambini ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyaḥ sprhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-sāṅgini vijayate sarvendriyānām kṛtim
no jāne janitā kiyabdhir amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayi
(śrī-vidagdha-mādhavaḥ 1.15)

364 kvāpy ānuṣāṅgikatayodita-rādhikākhyā-
vismāritākhila-vilāsa-kalā-kalāpam
kṛṣṇeti-varṇa-yugala-śravaṇānubandha-
prādurbhavaj-jaḍima-ḍambara-samvitāṅgim
(stava-mālā; utkalikā-vallarīḥ 14)

kvāpīti | kvāpi samaye ānuṣāṅgikatayoditayoccāritayā rādhikākhvayā
vismāritā ākhilānām vilāsānām kalāpāḥ samūhāḥ yasya tam | kṛṣṇetyetasya
varṇayugalasya yaḥ śravaṇānuvandhastena prādurbhavan yo jaḍimaḍamvaro
jāḍyavistārastena samvṛtāni vyāptānyaṅgāni yasyāstām | iti nāmamādhuryeṇa
mitho vaśyatāvvyajyate ||
(śrī baladeva vidyābhūṣaṇa)

**gaura-mūrtim-āśu-naumi-nāma-sūtra-dhāriṇīm
(sārvabhauma-śataka)**

**yaḥ śyāmo dadhad āsa varṇakam amuṁ śyāmaṁ yuge dvāpare
so'yaṁ gaura-vidhur vibhāti kalayan nāmāvatāraṁ kalau
nāmāvatāraḥ sutarām eka-kāla prabhāvataḥ
yathā śyāmo'viśat kṛṣṇaṁ bhagavantaṁ purā svayam
(gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā)**

**kalau yaṁ vidvāmsaḥ sphuṭam abhiyajante dyuti-bharād
akṛṣṇāṅgaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ makha-vidhibhir utkīrtanamayaiḥ
upāsyam ca prāhur yaṁ akhila-caturthāśrama-juṣāṁ
sa devaś caitanyākṛtir atitarāṁ naḥ kṛpayatu
(stava-mālā; śrī-caitanya-devasya dvitīyāṣṭakam 1)**

**kṛṣṇotkīrtana-gāna-nartana-kalā-pāthojani-bhrājitā
sad-bhaktāvali-haṁsa-cakra-madhupa-śreṇī-vihārāspadam
karṇānandi-kala-dhvanir vahatu me jihvā-maru-prāṅgaṇe
śrī-caitanya dayā-nidhe tava lasal-lilā-sudhā-svardhunī
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, ādi 2.2)**

POTENTIALITIES OF NAMA-SANKIRTAN

A FEW quotations from different Puranas, dealing with all the potentialities of Sri Nama-Sankirtan have been given below for the benefit of the kind readers with a view that they may feel impelled to relish their sweetness. The primary object of Sri Nama-Sankirtan is to have Its Asvadan or relishing Its sweetness and also having 'Sri Krishna Prem'. Though the destruction of all sins results as a secondary effect of even Namabhas, an aspirant should in all humility avoid the committing of sins and should not wilfully persist in committing them simply because by uttering the Name, all of them, including those sins of past births are destroyed. Though there are the best of medicines to counteract and prevent the infection of many of the worst diseases, no one, except a foolhardy person, would take the risk of catching the contagion just to test the remedy.

1. Sri Nama-Sankirtan destroys all sins³⁶⁵

"Splendid. Indeed, you are extremely pure because of your unshakable faith in the Name of the Lord. Inexpressible is the glory of having faith in Sri Hari-Kirtan. Just as the rising of the sun dispels all darkness, even so, by having faith in Sri Hari-Kirtan, all the dark sins are completely destroyed."³⁶⁶ "Henceforward none need fear the fire-like sins. The Holy Names of Sri Govinda are like a formation of rain-bearing clouds. Even a small drop from these clouds will surely destroy the worst conflagration of sins."³⁶⁷ "Even if a man utters the Name of the Lord quite helplessly, he is immediately and totally freed from all his sins even as the deer that has been frightened by a lion."³⁶⁸ "O Maitreya! By performing various religious functions, observing different rites, one may be free from the sins committed, but the instinct in repeating it is not eradicated. **By the performance of Kirtan of the Lord's Name even this instinct is**

365 akhila pāponmūlanatvam

366 aho su-nirmala yūyam rāgo hi hari-kīrtane
avidhūya tamaḥ kṛtsnam nṛṇām udeti sūryavat
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.315)

367 pāpānalasya dīptasya mā kurvantu bhayaṁ narāḥ
govinda-nāma-meghaughair naśyate nīra-bindubhiḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.316)

368 avaśenāpi yan-nāmni kīrtane sarva-pātakaiḥ
pumān vimucyate sadyaḥ simha-trastair mṛgair iva
(garuḍa purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.317)

destroyed, just as, when gold and other metals are melted by fire all the impurities therein, however subtle, are burnt out"³⁶⁹

"What wonder is there, if all our sins are dispelled by the mere Kirtan of the Immortal and Indestructible Lord! When even His remembrance arrests the way to hell, meditation of Him is so captivating that he who is blessed by its benefits, becomes extremely addicted to It, and hence considers the happiness of heaven as a stumbling block. Dedicating one's mind to His contemplation, even the attainment of the abode of Brahma appears insignificant. He grants these pure souls the eternal state of salvation by His kind manifestation of Himself in their hearts for ever."³⁷⁰ "By performing the Kirtan of the God of gods, both in the mornings and evenings regularly, one attains the abode of Heaven duly freed from all sins."³⁷¹ "The very Name 'Narayana' is a renowned thief in this world. Just as thieves steal away the wealth hoarded with great difficulty, the mere sound of this Name removes all the hoards of sins accumulated in innumerable births."³⁷² "Just as the blazing fire of the final cataclysm destroys the entire world, even so, the Name of Sri Govinda when chanted with or without devotion burns away all our sins."³⁷³

"The Name 'Govinda' destroys thousands of sins committed, even when It is uttered while calling a person bearing that Name."³⁷⁴ "Just as a tiny spark of fire even if inadvertently touched definitely burns, so also, by the mere appearance of the Name of Sri Hari on one's lips, all his sins are fully destroyed. Just as the burning property is the natural function of fire, even so, it is in the very nature of the syllables of the Name of the Lord to

369 yan-nāma-kīrtanaṁ bhaktyā vilāpanam anuttamam
maitreyāśeṣa-pāpānāṁ dhātūnām iva pāvakaḥ
(garuḍa purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.318)

370 yasmin nyasta-matir na yāti narakam svargo'pi yac-cintane
vighno yatra niveśitātma-manaso brāhmo'pi loko'lpakaḥ
muktim cetasi yaḥ sthito'mala-dhiyām puṁsām dadāty avyayaḥ
kiṁ citraṁ yad-aghāṁ prayāti vilayaṁ tatrācyute kīrtite
(garuḍa purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.319)

371 sāyam prātas tathā kṛtvā deva-devasya kīrtanam
sarva-pāpa-vinirmuktaḥ svarga-loke mahīyate
(garuḍa purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.320)

372 nārāyaṇo nāma naro narāṇām
prasiddha-cauraḥ kathitaḥ pṛthivyām
aneka-janmārjita-pāpa-sañcayam
haraty aśeṣam śruta-mātra eva
(vāmana-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.321)

373 govindeti tathā proktaṁ bhaktyā vā bhakti-varjitaiḥ
dahate sarva-pāpāni yugāntāgnir ivotthitaḥ
(skanda-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.322)

374 govinda-nāmnā yaḥ kaścin naro bhavati bhū-tale
kīrtanād eva tasyāpi pāpaṁ yāti sahasradhā
(skanda-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.323)

destroy all the sins."³⁷⁵ "For human beings, extremely blind by the influence of sense-objects, and possessing an egoistic mind of 'I' and 'mineness', the only way of deliverance from all their sins is the Holy Name of Sri Hari."³⁷⁶ "Even while on dacoity, if a mortal utters the Name 'Hari', once at least, the way to the womb of his mother is closed to him, i.e., he is saved from the shackles of births and deaths, and he is no more under the jurisdiction of Yama (god of death)."³⁷⁷

"One, who becomes a favourite of Sri Hari by chanting the Name 'Govinda', easily and forthwith is rid of all his grave sins, like committing thousands of murders of Brahmins, adultery with the wife of spiritual preceptor even crores of times and innumerable thefts."³⁷⁸ "Just as fire never fails to burn things, even if it is touched inadvertently, so also when the Name 'Govinda' is uttered under any pretext, It destroys all our sins."³⁷⁹ "Just as darkness is dispelled by the rising of the sun, so also by chanting the Name 'Krishna' of incomprehensible splendour, all our sins are totally destroyed."³⁸⁰ "O best of the Brahmins! Apart from the Kirtan of Sri Hari, I do not see any potential course for the atonement of all the sins of humanity."³⁸¹ "Ajamil, even by unwittingly uttering the Name of Sri Hari - the storehouse of auspiciousness, has indeed atoned for the sins of crores of births. The utterance of the Name 'Hari' is the only atonement for all the sins, such as theft of gold and other valuables, drinking of liquor

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- 375 pramādād api saṁspr̥ṣṭo yathānala-kaṇo dahet
tathauṣṭha-puta-saṁspr̥ṣṭam hari-nāma dahed agham
(kāśī-khaṇḍa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.324)
- 376 narāṇām viśayāndhānām mamatākula-cetasām
ekam eva harer nāma sarva-pāpa-vināśanam
(bṛhan-nāradya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.325)
- 377 hari hari sakṛd uccāritam
dasyu-cchalena yair manuṣyair
jananī-jaṭhara-mārga-luptā
na mama paṭa-lipim viśanti martyāḥ
(bṛhan-nāradya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.326)
- 378 hatyāyutam pāna-sahasram ugram
gurv-aṅganā-koṭi-niṣevanam ca
steyāny anekāni hari-priyeṇa
govinda-nāmnā nihatāni sadyaḥ
(vaiśākha-māhātmya; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.327)
- 379 anicchayāpi dahati spr̥ṣṭo huta-vaho yathā
tathā dahati govinda-nāma vyājād apīritam
(vaiśākha-māhātmya; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.328)
- 380 kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya viṣṇor amita-tejasaḥ
duritāni vilīyante tamāmsīva dinodaye
(vaiśākha-māhātmya; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.329)
- 381 nānyat paśyāmi jantūnām vihāya kari-kīrtanam
sarva-pāpa-praśamanam prāyaścittam dvijottama
(vaiśākha-māhātmya; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.330)

and like intoxicants, treachery to friends, murder of Brahmins, illicit behaviour with the wife of one's own preceptor, murder of women, slaughtering cows, patricide, regicide, and various other sins of a similar character, because the Lord Himself feels for those, who chant His Name even once, as His own, and hence shoulders the responsibility to protect them."³⁸²

"That perfect purification that sinners obtain by chanting the Name of Sri Hari, is not in the least, attained by the various expiatory rites, or vows recommended by the social codes of the great Manu, etc., or even by the knowers of Brahman. The chanting of the Names of the Lord never stops with merely destroying the sins alone, but it helps the sinners to experience the glorious Attributes of the Lord."³⁸³ "Taking the Name of Vaikunth even indirectly, under any pretext, while cutting jokes, while singing or even slightly, destroys all the sins committed. If a person even in distress, utters the syllables 'Hari' even helplessly, either while falling down from a high storied building or a tree, stumbling while walking on the road, with his bones fractured, bitten by a venomous serpent, burnt by fire, or hurt by weapons, he will not have to undergo any more tortures anywhere."³⁸⁴ "Just as a blazing fire bums down to ashes heaps of grass, even so, the utterance of Sri Hari-Nama, of excellent renown, consciously or unconsciously, destroys all the sins of those who utter His Name."³⁸⁵ "Sinners of all kinds including the slayer of Brahmin, slaughterer of his father, of the cow, of the mother, the killer of the preceptor, one living on the flesh of dogs, and even a Chandala, will certainly be purified by uttering

382 ayam hi kṛta-nirveśo janma-koṭy-amhasām api
yad vyājahāra vivaśo nāma svasty-ayanam hareḥ
stenaḥ surā-po mitra-dhruḡ brahma-hā guru-talpa-gaḥ
strī-rāja-pitṛ-go-hantā ye ca pātakino 'pare
sarveṣām apy aghavatām idam eva suniṣkṛtam
nāma-vyāharaṇam viṣṇor yatas tad-viṣayā matiḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.2.7,9,10; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.331-333)

383 na niṣkṛtair uditair brahma-vādibhis
tathā viśuddhyaty aghavān vratādibhiḥ
yathā harer nāma-padair udāhṛtais
tad uttamaśloka-guṇopalambhakam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.2.11; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.334)

384 sāṅketyam pārihāsyam vā stobham helanam eva vā
vaikuṅṭha-nāma-grahaṇam aśeṣāgha-haram viduḥ
patitaḥ skhalito bhagnaḥ sandaṣṭas tapta āhataḥ
harir ity avaśenāha pumān nārhati yātanāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.2.14-15; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.335-336)

385 ajñānād athavā jñānād uttamaśloka-nāma yat
saṅkīrtitam agham puṁso dahed edho yathānalaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.2.18; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.337)

the Name of Sri Hari."³⁸⁶ "All sins committed in past and present births and those that may occur in future as well, are soon destroyed by the effect of the fire-like 'Govinda Kirtan'."³⁸⁷

"Those who are always hostile to the Sadhus, and oppress them in manifold ways, are the worst of offenders. Even the All-merciful Lord too, never pardons them. There are no remedies mentioned in the Sastras that can save them from the consequences of their grave offences. But, the Glory of the Divine Name is so astounding and efficacious, that It destroys even such unpardonable offences. By constant recourse to the chanting of Sri Hari-Nama, mankind is not only completely freed from all kinds of offences, but also blessed."³⁸⁸ "Of all the crores of sanctifying processes existing in the world, none is comparable to the effects of the constant chanting of Sri Krishna-Nama."³⁸⁹ **"No sinner is capable of committing sins to the extent that a single utterance of the Name of the Lord could destroy. The capacity of the Name to destroy the sins is far greater than the sinner's capacity to commit them."**³⁹⁰

"The capacity of the Divine Name to destroy everything that is inauspicious, is so great, that even a most degraded fellow living upon the flesh of dogs, even by innumerable efforts, will not be able to commit sins."³⁹¹ "There are no sins in this terrible Kali Yuga, committed by human beings, either physical, oral, or mental that the chanting of the Name 'Govinda' cannot destroy."³⁹² "By pouring water, fire is extinguished, by the rising of the sun, darkness is dispelled, even so, in the age of Kali, the

386 brahma-hā piṭṛ-hā go-ghno māṭṛ-hācārya-hāghavān
śvādaḥ pulkasako vāpi śuddhyeran yasya kīrtanāt
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.13.8; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.338)

387 vartamānaṁ tu yat pāpaṁ yad bhūtaṁ yad bhaviṣyati
tat sarvaṁ nirdahaty āśu govindānala-kīrtanāt
(laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.339)

388 See footnote 240

sadā droha-paro yas tu sajjanānāṁ mahī-tale
jāyate pāvano dhanyo harer nāmānukīrtanāt
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.340)

389 vasanti yāni koṭis tu pāvanāni mahītale
na tāni tat-tulāṁ yānti kṛṣṇa-nāmānukīrtane
(kūrma purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.341)

390 nāmno'sya yāvatī śaktiḥ pāpa-nirharaṇe hareḥ
tāvat kartuṁ na śaknoti pātakam pātakī janaḥ
(bṛhad-viṣṇu-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.342)

391 svādo'pi na hi śaknoti kartuṁ pāpāni yatnataḥ
tāvanti yāvatī śaktir viṣṇor nāmno'subha-kṣaye
(itihāsa-samucchaya; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.343)

392 tan nāsti karmajaṁ loke vāg-jaṁ mānasam eva vā
yan na kṣapayate pāpaṁ kalau govinda-kīrtanam
(skanda purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.344)

singing of Sri Hari-Nama is the only atonement for all floods of sins."³⁹³
 "When by the efficacy of the chanting of Sri Hari-Nama, even the worst of sinners, daily engaged in committing sins, are completely freed from their evil effects, and offered deliverance from all the tortures of worldly life, what wonder is there that It would quickly destroy all the wicked influence of Kali?"³⁹⁴ **"The observance of the different kinds of the most drastic expiatory and purificatory rites, will not sanctify a person to that extent as the Sankirtan of the all-clever Sri Madhav, with the utterance of 'Govinda', does."**³⁹⁵

The above statement of the Puranas is fully illustrated by a particular incident in the career of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. During His time, Bengal was ruled by Syed Allaudin Hussain Shah. This Hussain Shah, in his early days was a minor employee under a prominent Hindu chieftain by name Subuddhi Roy. For some faults of his, one day Subuddhi Roy whipped him. Time reversed their status in life. By some providential accident, Hussain Shah, his erstwhile employee ascended the throne of Bengal. One day, the wife of Hussain Shah noticed the marks of beatings on her husband's body. Hussain Shah explained the reason for the marks in detail. His wife insisted on her husband to take away Subuddhi Roy's life for his cruelty. Hussain Shah flatly refused the request as it was an act of great injustice to one who was his protector once. Later on, after discussions, both of them came to a compromise. Hussain Shah agreed to deprive him of his caste by compelling him to drink polluted water, and he carried out the decision.

Subuddhi Roy then no longer desired to live in his society. He forthwith left for Benares. There, he met various scholars and asked them the means of atonement for this sin. They all desired him to drink hot ghee and thereby to put an end to his sinful life. By his luck, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu visited Kasi at this time. Subuddhi Roy was highly delighted to hear the news. He felt that he may entertain some hopes from Sriman Mahaprabhu to come out of this tantalising situation. Accordingly, one day

393 śamāyālaṁ jalam vahnes tamaso bhaskarodayaḥ
 śāntyai kaler aghaughasya nāma-saṅkīrtanam hareḥ
 (viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.345)

394 nāmnām hareḥ kīrtanataḥ prayāti
 saṁsāra-pāram duritaugha-muktaḥ
 naraḥ sa satyam kali-doṣa-janma
 pāpam nihaty āśu kim atra citram
 (viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.346)

395 varāka-cāndrāyaṇa-tapta-kṛcchrair
 na dehi-śuddhir bhavatīha tāḍṛk
 kalau sakṛṇ mādharma-kīrtanena
 govinda-nāmnā bhavatīha yāḍṛk
 (brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.347)

Subuddhi Roy explained the whole matter including the Pandits' suggestion for ending his life, to Srīman Mahāprabhu. On hearing Subuddhi Roy, Srīman Mahāprabhu replied, **"Go from here to Vrindavan and chant Sri Krishna-Nama constantly. All your sins will surely be washed out by a single dim reflection of the Name (Namabhas). A second chanting of the Name would enable you to attain to the Feet of Sri Krishna. A further utterance of the Name will establish you as an eternal servant of Sri Krishna in His Own Abode and this is the arrangement of expiation even to the worst of sins."**³⁹⁶

2. Sri Nama-Sankirtan purifies the chanter's family, associates, etc.³⁹⁷

"Continuous utterance of Sri Hari-Nama purifies the hearts of even the worst of sinners and enables them to uplift their society."³⁹⁸ **"Those extremely blessed and purified souls, who sing the Name 'Govinda' with a delighted heart and single-minded devotion sustain the entire earth."**³⁹⁹ "The tongue of a Vaishnav is not satisfied by saving merely the speaker alone, but by loudly proclaiming the Name and Glories of the Lord, it sanctifies the whole world."⁴⁰⁰ "When a person, merely by singing Your Name sanctifies not only himself, but his listeners as well, is there a need to mention that I am purified by a touch of Your Lotus Feet?"⁴⁰¹ **"O Nrisimha! Those who with a delightful heart loudly utter Your Name are really the Sadhus. They are verily the genuine benefactors of mankind."**⁴⁰²

396 prabhu kahe, — ihān haite yāha' vṛndāvana
nirantara kara kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana
eka 'nāmābhāse' tomāra pāpa-doṣa yābe
āra 'nāma' la-ite kṛṣṇa-caraṇa pāibe
āra kṛṣṇa-nāma laite kṛṣṇa-sthāne sthiti
mahā-pātakera haya ei prāyaścitti
(śrī caitanya-caritāmṛta, m. 25.198-200)

397 kīrtana-kartr-kula-saṅgy-ādi-pavanatvaṁ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

398 mahā-pātaka-yukto'pi kīrtayenn anīśaṁ harim
śuddhāntaḥkaraṇo bhūtvā jāyate paṅkti-pāvanaḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.348)

399 govindeti mudā yuktaḥ kīrtayed yas tv ananya-dhīḥ
pāvanena ca dhanyena teneyam pṛthivī dhṛtā
(laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.349)

400 na caivam ekaṁ vaktāraṁ jihvā rakṣati vaiṣṇavī
āśrāvya bhagavat-khyātim jagat kṛtsnam punāti hi
(hari-bhakti-sudhodaya; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.350)

401 See footnote 111

3. Sri Nama-Sankirtan destroys all diseases⁴⁰³

"Frightened by hearing the utterance of the Names, O Achyuta! O Bliss Embodied! O Govinda! All the diseases get cured, I avow this is an invariable truth."⁴⁰⁴ **"O Samba! Diseases are not cured by other medicines; but by using this great medicine of Sri Hari-Nama, they are definitely removed."**⁴⁰⁵ **"I offer my prostrated obeisances to the Infinite Lord, because by remembering Him and singing His Names, all the physical and mental ailments are forthwith rooted out."**⁴⁰⁶ "A person who is highly afflicted by acute and chronic diseases and oppressed by the ruling powers, is relieved of all his fears and anxieties by the mere chanting of the Name of Sri Narayana"⁴⁰⁷

4. Sri Nama-Sankirtan dispels all griefs⁴⁰⁸

"Incessant chanting of Sri Hari-Nama, destroys all diseases and obstacles. This Name is the best remedy for the rooting out of all misfortunes."⁴⁰⁹ "Continuous chanting of Sri Hari-Nama destroys all kinds of sins, removes obstacles, and strikes at the very root of distress of all kinds."⁴¹⁰ "Just as the sun dispels darkness, or a heavy wind drives away formations of clouds, even so, the Infinite Lord manifesting in the hearts of those persons who listen and chant the narrations connected with His

- 402 te santaḥ sarva-bhūtānām nirupādhika-bāndhavāḥ
ye nṛsimha bhavan-nāma gāyanty uccair mudānvitāḥ
(nṛsimha purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.352)
- 403 sarva-vyādhi-vināśitvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 404 acyutānanda-govinda-nāmoccaraṇa-bhīṣitaḥ
naśyanti sakalā rogāḥ satyaṁ satyaṁ vadāmy aham
(bṛhan-nārādīya purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.353)
- 405 na sām̐ba vyādhijāṁ duḥkhaṁ heyāṁ nānyaūṣadhair api
hari-nāmaūṣadhaṁ pītvā vyādhis tyājyo na saṁśayaḥ
(parāśara-saṁhitā; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.354)
- 406 ādhayo vyādhayo yasya smaraṇān nāma-kīrtanāt
tadaiva vilayaṁ yānti tam anantaṁ namāmy aham
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.355)
- 407 mahā-vyādhi-samācchanno rāja-vadhōpāpiditaḥ
nārāyaṇeti saṅkīrtya nirāṭaṅko bhaven naraḥ
(agni purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.356)
- 408 sarva-duḥkhopaśamanatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 409 sarva-rogoपाśamanaṁ sarvopadrava-nāśanam
śāntidaṁ sarvāriṣṭānām harer nāmānukīrtanam
(brhad-viṣṇu-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.357)
- 410 sarva-pāpa-praśamanaṁ sarvopadrava-nāśanam
sarva-duḥkha-kṣaya-kāraṁ hari-nāmānukīrtanam
(brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.358)

glorious Deeds, destroys all their miseries."⁴¹¹ "Persons who are perplexed and depressed in spirits, those who are sluggish, those who are awfully frightened, and those who are attacked with virulent diseases, are all totally freed from all their afflictions, both physical and mental, and attain perfect happiness by uttering the word 'Narayana.'⁴¹² "By the mere chanting of Sri Hari-Nama, the Lord of incomprehensible prowess, cruel beings like Yakshas, demons, ghosts, evil spirits, etc., flee away. **Sri Nama-Sankirtan is an excellent remedy to destroy all evils.**"⁴¹³ "There is no doubt that Sri Nama-Sankirtan, even when uttered in times of hunger, thirst, or when tumbling down, is the best course to wipe out all sufferings."⁴¹⁴ "The blazing flames of infatuation, that is spreading daily, is burning down mankind incessantly. But the fires would never burn, when one, either uttering or listening Sri Hari-Nama, takes shelter in the cooling shadows of rain-bearing clouds of Sri Hari-Nama."⁴¹⁵

5. Sri Nama-Sankirtan removes the sufferings caused by Kali⁴¹⁶

"Hereafter there is no fear of the sharp fangs of the evil serpent of Kali. By the conflagration of 'Govinda-Nama', not only they are burnt but will be also reduced to ashes."⁴¹⁷ "In this terrible Kali Yuga, those men,

-
- 411 saṅkīrtiyamāno bhagavān anantaḥ
śrutanubhāvo vyaśanam hi puṁsām
praviśya cittaṁ vidhunoty aśeṣam
yathā tamo'rko'bhram ivāti-vātaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 12.12.48; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.359)
- 412 ārtā viṣaṇṇāḥ śīthilāś ca bhītā
ghoreṣu ca vyādhiṣu vartamānāḥ
saṅkīrtya nārāyaṇa-śabdān ekaṁ
vimukta-duḥkhāḥ sukhino bhavanti
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.360)
- 413 kīrtanad deva-devasya viṣṇor amita-tejaśaḥ
yakṣa-rakṣasa-vetala-bhūta-preta-vinayakaḥ
dakinyo vidravanti sma ye tathānye ca himśakaḥ
sarvānārtha-haram tasya nāma-saṅkīrtanam smṛtam
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.361-362)
- 414 nāma-saṅkīrtanam kṛtvā kṣuṭ-ṭṛṭ-praskhalitādiṣu
viyogaṁ śīghram āpnoti sarvānārthair na saṁśayaḥ
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.363)
- 415 mohanalollasaj-jvāla-jvalal-lokeṣu sarvadā
yan-nāmāmbhodhara-cchāyām praviṣṭo naiva dahyate
(padma purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.364)
- 416 kali-badhapaharitam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 417 kali-kala-ku-sarpasya tīkṣṇa-damṣṭrasya mā bhayam
govinda-nāma-dāvena dagdho yāsyati bhasmatām
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.365)

who have taken resort to the chanting of Sri Hari-Nama alone, have fulfilled the noble purpose of their life. Kali can do no harm to them."⁴¹⁸ "The age of Kali is unable to do any harm to those persons who utter daily 'O Kesava! O Hare! O Govinda! O Vasudeva! 'O Infinite One like the universe! And such other Names."⁴¹⁹ "O eminent man! Kali (the personification of the Kali Yuga) does not torment those people who perform the Kirtan of Sri Vasudev - the Supporter of the universe."⁴²⁰

6. Sri Nama-Sankirtan redeems persons destined to hell⁴²¹

"The dwellers of the infernal regions in hell, as they uttered Sri Hari-Nama, being instilled with devotion to Sri Hari, went to Vaikunth Loka."⁴²² "By chanting Sri Hari-Nama, even the worst of sinners who are being tortured for long in the horrible hell, are completely liberated."⁴²³

7. Sri Nama-Sankirtan destroys destiny⁴²⁴

"Hence for those who are after the attainment of liberation, there is no other method so competent as the incessant chanting of Sri Hari-Nama, because Sri Hari-Nama-Sankirtan does not harness the human mind into actions (Karma Kanda) but cuts asunder their restraints; whereas, the expiatory rites once again prompt the mind for impure actions, influenced by the qualities of Rajas and Tamas."⁴²⁵ "People in this age would never

- 418 hari-nāma-parā ye ca ghore kali-yuge narāḥ
ta eva kṛta-kṛtyāś ca na kalir bādhate hi tān
(bṛhan-nāradīya purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.366)
- 419 hare keśava govinda vāsudeva jagan-maya
itīrayanti te nityam na hi tān bādhate kaliḥ
(bṛhan-nāradīya purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.367)
- 420 ye'har-niśam jagad-dhātur vāsudevasya kīrtanam
kurvanti tān nara-vyāghra na kalir bādhate narān
(bhāvārtha-dīpikā; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.368)
- 421 nāraky-uddhāratvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 422 yathā yathā harer nāma kīrtayanti sma nārakāḥ
tathā tathā harau bhaktim udvahanto divam yayuḥ
(nṛsimha purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.369)
- 423 narake pacyamānānām narāṇām pāpa-karmaṇām
muktiḥ sañjāyate tasmān nāma-saṅkīrtanād dhareḥ
(itihāsa-samucchaya; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.370)
- 424 prārabdha-vināśitvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 425 nātaḥ param karma-nibandha-kṛntanam
mumukṣatām tīrtha-padānukīrtanāt
na yat punaḥ karmasu sajjate mano
rajas-tamobhyām kalilam tato'nyathā
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.2.46; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.371)

worship the Supreme Lord Sri Hari, Whose Name even if unconsciously uttered by a man at the threshold of death, bedridden, extremely afflicted, deprived of strength, and unable to move the limbs even, attains the highest goal, completely freed from all the evil bonds of Karma."⁴²⁶ "Even a worm-like person, utterly inferior and insignificant in position, uttering the Name 'Govinda' everyday, having controlled his senses, is totally freed from all the sins, and shines like a god."⁴²⁷

8. Sri Nama-Sankirtan destroys all offences⁴²⁸

"There is no doubt whatsoever that I definitely pardon crores of offences of the person who utters My Names with implicit faith."⁴²⁹

9. Sri Nama-Sankirtan grandly fulfils all wants⁴³⁰

"Any fault of the Vedic Mantras caused by the defective pronunciation or tune, flaws arising from the irregular performance of Tantric rites, any other defects in the observance due to non-conformity of time, place, articles, or persons, are completely removed by the effect of Sri Nama-Sankirtan."⁴³¹ "I offer my prostrated obeisances to the Supreme Lord Achyuta by Whose recollection or by the utterance of whose Name, all the defects in the performance of sacrifices and such other holy rites, are fully remedied."⁴³²

-
- 426 yan-nāma-dheyaṁ mriyamāṇa āturaḥ
patan skhalan vā vivaśo gṛṇan pumān
vimukta-karmārgala uttamām gatim
prāpnoti yakṣyanti na taṁ kalau janāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 12.3.44; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.372)
- 427 govindeti japan jantuḥ praty-ahaṁ niyatendriyaḥ
sarva-pāpa-vinirmuktaḥ suravad bhāsate naraḥ
(bṛhan-nāradīya purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.374)
- 428 sarvapārādha-bhajanatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 429 mama nāmāni loke'smin śraddhayā yas tu kīrtayet
tasyāparādha-koṭis tu kṣamāmy eva na saṁśayaḥ
(viṣṇu-yāmala; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.375)
- 430 sarva-sampūrṭi-kāritvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 431 mantratas tantrataś chidraṁ deśa-kālārha-vastutaḥ
sarvaṁ karoti niśchidraṁ anusaṅkīrtanaṁ tava
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.376)
- 432 yasya smṛtyā ca nāmoktyā tapo-yajña-kriyādiṣu
nyūnaṁ sampūrṇatām eti sadyo vande tam acyutam
(skanda-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.377)

10. Sri Nama-Sankirtan is superior to all the Vedas⁴³³

"By uttering the two syllables 'Ha-ri' one derives all the benefits arising from the study of all the four Vedas, such as Rig, Yajur, Sama, and Atharva. **Hence, the exponents of Sastras emphasize that the effect of uttering the Nama 'Krishna' is far superior to that of the study of Vedas.**"⁴³⁴ "O my dear! Pray do not peruse the Rig, Yajur, or Sama Vedas; daily utter 'Govinda', Sri Hari's Name which is worth singing."⁴³⁵ "Even each Name of Sri Vishnu is far superior to the study of all the Vedas; one Name 'Rama' is equal to one thousand Names of Sri Vishnu."⁴³⁶

11. Sri Nama-Sankirtan is far superior to all pilgrimages⁴³⁷

"Why should one visit Kurukshetra, Kasi, or Pushkar, if on the tip of his tongue always dance the two syllables 'Ha-ri'"⁴³⁸ **"The effects of constantly chanting the Name 'Krishna' is by far superior to that of making crores of pilgrimages."**⁴³⁹ "There are crores of pilgrimages; but when compared with the chanting of Sri Hari-Nama, the benefit that one can derive from such pilgrimages is not even equal to an infinitesimal fraction of the result arising from the chanting of the Name."⁴⁴⁰ "O son! If you are really interested in your deliverance, utter

433 sarva-vedādhikatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

434 rg-vedo hi yajur-vedaḥ sāma-vedo'py atharvaṇaḥ
adhītas tena yenoktaṁ harir ity akṣara-dvayam
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.378)

435 mā ṛco mā yajus tāta mā sāma paṭha kiñcana
govindeti harer nāma geyam gāyasva nityaśaḥ
(skanda-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.379)

436 viṣṇor ekaika-nāmāpi sarva-vedādhikaṁ matam
tadṛṅ-nāma-sahasreṇa rāma-nāma samam smṛtam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.380)

437 sarva-tīrthādhikatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

438 kurukṣetreṇa kiṁ tasya kiṁ kasya puskareṇa vā
jihvāgre vasate yasya harir ity akṣara-dvayam
(skanda-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.381)

439 tīrtha-koṭi-sahasrāṇi tīrtha-koṭi-śatāni ca
tani sarvaṅy avāpnoti viṣṇor nāmānukīrtanāt
(padma purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.382)

440 viśrutāṇi bahūny eva tīrthāni bahudhāni ca
koty-amśenāpi tulyāni nāma-kīrtanato hareḥ
(viśvāmitra-saṁhitā; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.383)

the Name 'Govinda' clearly and repeatedly. Of what avail are the various Sastras, such as Vedas and Agamas, and the innumerable pilgrimages?"⁴⁴¹

12. Sri Nama-Sankirtan is far superior to all holy acts⁴⁴²

"Holy acts, such as presenting a crore of cows on the occasion of the solar eclipse, residing on the banks of the Ganges at Prayag (Allahabad) for a Kalpa, performing billion sacrifices, and offering gifts of gold in quantities as large as 'Sumeru' are not even a part of a hundredth part of what you gain through the Kirtan of Sri Govinda."⁴⁴³ "The observance of any number of pious deeds, such as constructing wells, starting hospitals, etc., render the ties of worldliness tighter and tighter, resulting finally in inescapable bondage; but Sri Hari-Nama alone leads one to the Lotus Feet of Sri Hari."⁴⁴⁴ **"O King! If you covet the fruit of performing a thousand Vajapeya sacrifices daily, do chant the Name 'Govinda' on getting up from the bed early at daybreak."**⁴⁴⁵ "O great King! What benefits would the study of Sankhya principles or Tattvas, which helps towards a discriminative understanding of the soul and matter, afford you? Or even, of what avail would the practice of the eightfold Yogas be to you? If you actually aim deliverance, then, do utter the Name 'Govinda'."⁴⁴⁶

-
- 441 kim tata vedāgama-śāstra-vistarais
tīrthair anekair api kim prayojanam
yady ātmano vāñchasi mukti-kāraṇam
govinda govinda iti sphutaṁ raṭa
(laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.384)
- 442 sarva-sat-karmādhikatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 443 go-koṭi-dānam grahaṇe khagasya
prayāga-gaṅgodaka-kalpa-vāsaḥ
yajñāyutaṁ meru-suvarṇa-dānam
govinda-kīrter na samaṁ śatāmśaiḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.385)
- 444 iṣṭa-pūrtāni karmāṇi su-bahūni kṛtāny api
bhava-hetūni tāny eva harer nāma tu muktidam
(baudhayana-saṁhitā; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.386)
- 445 vājapeya-sahasrāṇām nityam phalam abhīpsasi
prātar utthāya bhūpāla kuru govinda-kīrtanam
(garuḍa purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.387)
- 446 kim kariṣyati sāṅkhyena kim yogair nara-nāyaka
muktim icchasi rājendra kuru govinda-kīrtanam
(garuḍa purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.388)
See footnote 128

13. Sri Nama-Sankirtan grants all prayers⁴⁴⁷

"The constant chanting of the Name 'Krishna', roots out all the evil influence of the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, and prejudice), is an adept in destroying all other hostile causes and is the root of the spiritual well-being."⁴⁴⁸

"O chief amongst Brahmins! A hundred desires of a person are fulfilled when he chants Sri Hari-Nama through any motives."⁴⁴⁹ "The Kirtan of the Name 'Krishna' enables the attainment of all auspicious results, increases longevity, destroys the innumerable diseases, helps gaining both enjoyment and liberation, and the attainment of even Vaikunth itself."⁴⁵⁰ "I bow down repeatedly to all those persons who take the Name 'Vishnu', even if they do so in joke or ridicule, as they too are extremely blessed and fortunate."⁴⁵¹ "Those who utter My Names at all times, are indeed fortunate and blessed. They have indeed achieved everything achievable having taken this birth."⁴⁵² "Indeed, he is blessed who utters even once the Name 'Hari', which is extremely rare to sinners in this age of Kali! There is no doubt about it."⁴⁵³ "Great men who appreciate good qualities and adopt the essence, praise this age, as in this Kali, the uttering of the Name 'Krishna' is the only practice that helps one to attain all the achievements of humanity."⁴⁵⁴ "The Sankirtan of Sri Hari-Nama is the noblest penance in

-
- 447 sarvartha-pradatvaṁ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 448 etad ṣad-varga-haraṇaṁ ripu-nigrahaṇaṁ param
adhyātma-mūlam etad dhi viṣṇor nāmānukīrtanam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.390)
- 449 hṛdi kṛtvā tathā kāmam abhīṣṭaṁ dvija-puṅgavaḥ
ekaṁ nāma japed yas tu śataṁ kāmān avāpnuyāt
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.391)
- 450 sarva-maṅgala-maṅgalyam āyusyaṁ vyādhi-nāśanam
bhukti-mukti-pradaṁ divyaṁ vāsudevasya kīrtanam
(śrī-kṛṣṇāmṛta-stotra; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.392)
- 451 parihāsopahāsādyair viṣṇor gṛhṇanti nāma te
kṛtārthās te'pi manujās tebhya'pīha namo namaḥ
(śrī-nārāyaṇa-vyūha-stava; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.393)
- 452 te dhanyās te kṛtārthās ca tair eva sukṛtaṁ kṛtam
tair āptaṁ janmanaḥ prāpyaṁ ye kāle kīrtayanti mām
(vārāha purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.394)
- 453 sakṛd uccārayanty etad durlabhaṁ cākṛtātmanām
kalau yuge harer nāma te kṛtārthā na saṁśayaḥ
(vārāha purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.395)
- 454 kalim sabhājayanty āryā guṇa-jñāḥ sāra-bhāginaḥ
yatra saṅkīrtanenaiva sarvaḥ svartho'bhilabhyate
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.5.36; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.396)

this age. **As such, to please Sri Krishna, it is imperatively necessary to practise the chanting of His Name.**"⁴⁵⁵

14. Sri Nama-Sankirtan possesses all kinds of power⁴⁵⁶

"Those powers by which all sins are dispelled by the observance of holy acts, such as gifts, vows, penances, and pilgrimages, by the service of gods, saints, etc., by the performance of Sacrifices like Asvamedha, Rajasuya, etc., and by gaining the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, etc., have been attracted from these performances and pursuits by Sri Hari and imbued in His Own Names. Srīman Nama dispels all the most awful sins like a whirlwind that blows up even the heaviest of obstacles in its way or like the sun dispelling pitch-darkness."⁴⁵⁷ "For attaining the ultimate goal, it is incumbent upon everyone to employ (utter) the Name which he likes best, of the Wielder of the Disc, the God of gods, Who is All-powerful."⁴⁵⁸

15. Sri Nama-Sankirtan imparts bliss to the whole universe⁴⁵⁹

"O Hrishikes! By singing Your Glory, the whole universe rejoices and becomes engrossed in It. The demons being awfully afraid, run away helter-skelter in all directions, and a galaxy of Siddhas offer their prostrations to you."⁴⁶⁰

455 tathā caivottamaṁ loke tapaḥ śrī-hari-kīrtanam
kalau yuge viśeṣeṇa viṣṇu-prītyai samācaret
(skanda-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.397)

456 sarva-śaktimattvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

457 dāna-vrata-tapas-tīrtha-kṣetrādīnāṁ ca yāḥ sthitāḥ
śaktayo deva-mahatām sarva-pāpa-harāḥ śubhāḥ
rāja-sūyāśvamedhānām jñānasyādhyātma-vastunaḥ
ākṛṣya hariṇā sarvāḥ sthāpitāḥ sveṣu nāmasu
vāto'py ato harer nāmna ugrāṇām api duḥsahaḥ
sarveṣāṁ pāpa-rāśīnām yathaiva tamasām raviḥ
(skanda-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.398-400)

458 sarvārtha-śakti-yuktasya deva-devasya cakriṇaḥ
yac cābhīrucitaṁ nāma tat sarvārtheṣu yojayet
(brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.401)

459 jagad-ānandakatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

460 sthāne hr̥ṣīkeśa tava prakīrtiyā
jagat prahr̥ṣyaty anurajyate ca
rakṣāmsi bhītāni diśo dravanti
sarve namasyanti ca siddha-saṅghāḥ
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 11.36; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.402)

16. Sri Nama-Sankirtan makes one universally adorable⁴⁶¹

"Those who utter the Names 'Narayana', 'Jagannatha', 'Vasudev', 'Janardan' daily, are the most revered persons throughout the universe."⁴⁶² "I daily offer my prostrated obeisances to him who utters the Name 'Hari' while in his sleep, taking his food, walking, sitting, getting up, speaking, etc."⁴⁶³ "My humble repeated prostrations to all those women, Sudras, and even Chandalas, or others of sinful births, who constantly utter the Name 'Hari' with implicit faith."⁴⁶⁴

17. Sri Nama-Sankirtan singularly rescues even an absolutely helpless one⁴⁶⁵

"Even those persons having no other resort, on account of their births in sinful sections of society, those who are deplorably engrossed in creature-comforts, who inflict sufferings upon others, are devoid of learning and dispassion, are bereft of any celibacy, and who are totally abandoned by all Dharmas and who only utter the Name 'Krishna' all easily attain that rare Resort, unattainable by even all those who practise all their religious rites."⁴⁶⁶

461 jagad-vandyatā-pādakatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

462 nārāyaṇa jagannātha vāsudeva janārdana
itīrayanti ye nityam te vai sarvatra vanditāḥ
(bṛhan-nāradīya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.403)

463 svapan bhuñjan vrajaṁs tiṣṭhann uttiṣṭhamś ca vadaṁs tathā
ye vadanti harer nāma tebhyo nityam namo namaḥ
(bṛhan-nāradīya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.404)

464 strī sūdrah pukkaśo vāpi ye cānye pāpa-yonayaḥ
kīrtayanti harim bhaktyā tebhyo'pīha namo namaḥ
(śrī-nārāyaṇa-vyūha-stava; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.405)

465 agaty-eka-gatitvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

466 ananya-gatayo martyā bhogino'pi parantapāḥ
jñāna-vairāgya-rahitā brahmacaryādi-varjitāḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.406)
sarva-dharmojjhitā viṣṇor nāma-mātraika-jalpakāḥ
sukhena yām gatiṁ yānti na tām sarve'pi dhārmikāḥ
(bṛhat-sahasra-nāma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.407)

18. Sri Nama-Sankirtan can be practised everywhere and at all times⁴⁶⁷

"O Lubdhak! For chanting Sri Hari-Nama, there are no restrictions at all of place and time. There is no objection to utter His Name even with an unclean mouth."⁴⁶⁸ "Sri Hari is the Sanctifier of everything; hence, there is no need of observing any taboo, such as pollution, in uttering His Name; It should be uttered always and everywhere."⁴⁶⁹ **"For uttering the Name no consideration of place, time, or purity, etc., need ever be observed.** The Name alone is quite independent and does fulfil all the desires of Its votaries."⁴⁷⁰ "The utterance of the 'Rama' Nama repeatedly, delivers all from bondage. It never depends upon time or place, or purity and impurity."⁴⁷¹ "O King! There is no special rule in selecting place or time for uttering Sri Hari-Nama. In acts like gifts, sacrifices, uttering Mantras, etc., these are, no doubt, observed; but never for chanting the Name."⁴⁷²

19. Sri Nama-Sankirtan achieves Sri Krishna Himself⁴⁷³

"O earth! He who utters Names like 'Vasudev', 'Achyuta', 'Ananta', 'Narayana', etc. constantly, devotes himself to Me indeed!"⁴⁷⁴ "O King! Of

- 467 sadā sarvatra sevyatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 468 na deśa-niyamas tasmin na kāla-niyamas tathā
nocchiṣṭhādau niśedho'sti śrī-harer nāmni lubdhaka
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.408)
- 469 cakrāyudhasya nāmāni sadā sarvatra kīrtayet
nāśaucam kīrtane tasya sa pavitra-karo yataḥ
(vaiśākha-māhātmya; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.409)
- 470 na deśa-kālāvasthāsu śuddhy-ādikam apekṣate
kintu svatantram evaitan nāma kāmīta-kāmadam
(skanda-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.410)
- 471 na deśa-kāla-niyamo na śaucāśauca-nirṇayaḥ
param saṅkīrtanād eva rāma rāmeti mucyate
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.410)
- 472 na deśa-niyamo rājan na kāla-niyamas tathā
vidyate nātra sandeho viṣṇor nāmānukīrtane
kālo'sti dāne yajñe ca snāne kālo'sti saj-jape
viṣṇu-saṅkīrtane kālo nāsty atra pṛthivī-tale
(vaiṣṇava-cintāmaṇi; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.412-413)
etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akuto-bhayam
yoginām nṛpa nirṇītam harer nāmānukīrtanam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 2.1.11; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.414)
- 473 mukti-pradatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 474 nārāyaṇācyutānanta vāsudeveti yo naraḥ
satatam kīrtayed bhūmi yāti mallayatām sa hi
(vārāha-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.415)

what avails is the study of Sankhya principles, or the practice of Yoga? **If you yearn for Sri Krishna, do shout the Name 'Govinda'**.⁴⁷⁵ He, who utters the two syllables 'Ha-ri' becomes fit to attain Moksha, i.e., Sri Krishna, as it amounts to his having grandly accomplished all the practices.⁴⁷⁶ "Even if persons, with distracted and impure mind, always utter Sri Hari-Nama, they are freed from all sins and attain the Supreme Resort like Sisupal, the ruler of the Chedi country."⁴⁷⁷ "He who utters the Name 'Narayana' even once, avoiding all laziness, becomes pure-hearted and exclusively devotes himself to the Supreme Lord."⁴⁷⁸ "Even a person, who keeps illicit connection with others' wives, and practises malicious wickedness on others, becomes pure-hearted by the chanting of Sri Hari-Nama, and attains Sri Krishna's Lotus Feet."⁴⁷⁹ "Even one, who is rid of all religious conducts and addicted to the commission of various sins, attains Sri Krishna's Lotus Feet through Nama-Kirtan; there is not the least doubt in it."⁴⁸⁰ "Even sinners, howsoever they utter any of the Lord's Names or hear It, are purified and attain the Lord's Lotus Feet."⁴⁸¹

"The twin syllables 'Ha-ri' are the provision for the life's journey, the remedy for the disease of worldliness, and the Sweet Resort for the cessation of grief and deep anguish."⁴⁸² **"Luscious sweetness - ever new at every moment, flows incessantly from Sri Murari's Names, and as such are pregnant with the nectar of music. Those who sing Them aloud unabashed and joyously, are**

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- 475 kim kariṣyati sāṅkhyena kim yogair nara-nāyaka
muktim icchasi rājendra kuru govinda-kīrtanam
(gāruḍa-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.416)
- 476 sakṛd uccāritam yena harir ity akṣara-dvayam
baddhaḥ parikaras tena mokṣāya gamanam prati
(skanda-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.417)
- 477 apy anya-citto'suddho vā yaḥ sadā kīrtayed dharim
so'pi doṣa-kṣayān muktim labhec cedi-patir yathā
(brahma-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.418)
- 478 sakṛd uccārayed yas tu nārāyaṇam atandritaḥ
śuddhāntaḥkaraṇo bhūtvā nirvāṇam adhigacchati
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.419)
- 479 para-dāra-rato vāpi parāpakṛti-kāraḥ
sa śuddho muktim āpnoti harer nāmānukīrtanāt
(mātsya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.420)
- 480 sarva-dharma-bahir-bhūtaḥ sarva-pāpa-ratas tathā
mucyate nātra sandeho viṣṇor nāmānukīrtanāt
(vaiśampāyana-saṁhitā; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.421)
- 481 yathā kathañcit yan-nāmni kīrtite vā śrute'pi vā
pāpino'pi viśuddhāḥ syuḥ śuddhā mokṣam avāpnuyuḥ
(bṛhan-nāradya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.422)
- 482 prāṇa-prayāṇa-pātheyam sāmsāra-vyādhi-bheṣajam
duḥkha-śoka-paritrāṇam harir ity akṣara-dvayam
(bhārata-vibhāga; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.423)

truly the liberated souls, while living. There is no doubt about it."⁴⁸³ "O Lord! Those who in their helpless state, at the time of their death, utter Your Names describing the Attributes, Accounts, etc., of Your Descents, destroying the accumulated sins of many births at once, reach You Who are the naked (uncovered) luminous eternal Truth. I take absolute shelter in You."⁴⁸⁴ "Sankirtan of the Lord's Attributes, Accounts, Names, etc., are more than enough to destroy such sins of people, because the sinful dying Ajamil by calling his son Narayana by his name, attained liberation."⁴⁸⁵

20. Sri Nama-Sankirtan leads to Vaikunth⁴⁸⁶

"People who, while moving, standing, sleeping, inhaling, or exhaling, or even with want of faith, utter the Name 'Hari' - the trampler of Kali, i.e., destroyer of its sins, attains his true nature of liberation. Can there be any doubt of his attaining the highest Dham, i.e., Golok, if he does so with devotion?"⁴⁸⁷ "Even if a Brahmin has illicit intercourse with a Chandala woman in menses, or eats food cooked in intoxicating liquors, but utters the Name 'Hari' at the time of his death, abandoning that very day the heap of sins arising from his past sinful actions, and being liberated from the bondage of worldliness, attains residence with Him."⁴⁸⁸ "He, on the tip of whose tongue the word 'Hari' always exists, i.e. who always utters 'Hari'

483 navyam navyam nāma-dheyam murārer
yad yac caitad geya-pīyūṣa-puṣṭam
ye gāyanti tyakta-lajjāḥ sa-harṣam
jīvan-muktāḥ saṁśayo nāsti tatra
(nārādīya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.424)

See footnote 170

484 yasyāvatāra-guṇa-karma-vidambanāni
nāmāni ye'su-vigame vivaśā gṛṇanti
te'naika-janma-śamalaṁ sahasaiva hitvā
saṁyānty apāvṛtāmṛtaṁ tam ajaṁ prapadye
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.9.15; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.426)

485 etāvatālam agha-nirharaṇāya puṁsām
saṅkīrtanaṁ bhagavato guṇa-karma-nāmnām
vikruśya putram aghavān yad ajānilo'pi
nārāyaṇeti mriyamāṇa iyāya muktim
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 6.3.24; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.427)

486 śrī-vaikuṇṭha-loka-prāpakatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

487 vrajaṁs tiṣṭhan svapann aśnan śvasan vākya-prapūraṇe
nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ viṣṇor helayā kali-mardanam
kṛtvā svarūpatāṁ yāti bhakti-yuktaṁ paraṁ vrajet
(liṅga-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.428)

488 brāhmaṇaḥ śvapacīm bhuñjan viśeṣeṇa rajasvalām
aśnāti surayā pakvaṁ maraṇe harim uccaran
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.429)

attains Vishnu Loka, being freed from the cycle of rebirths."⁴⁸⁹ **"He who utters 'Krishna', 'Krishna' wherever he be, achieves the highest goal of Sri Krishna's loving service, all his sins being destroyed."**⁴⁹⁰ **"The Name 'Kesav' that is uttered, is the highest and purest of auspicious deeds, the sole passport to go to Sri Govinda's Abode and that alone is the only place of good deeds in this world."**⁴⁹¹ "The sinner (the adulterous) Ajamil uttering the Name of Sri Hari in the act of calling his son by his name, at the time of his death, went to Sri Hari's best Dham."⁴⁹² "Ajamil - the resort of all sins, uttering 'Narayana' under the semblance of calling his son, went to Vaikunth. **How much better would the result be, if It is uttered with implicit faith?**"⁴⁹³

"Those who sing the Names of Sri Vishnu - Who has black bee-like Eyes on His Lotus Face, like the Face of Sri Lakshmi, holds the conchshell, lotus, the disc, the bow and arrow, the mace and sword in His Hands, and Who is the Bestower of boons, sure shall go to the Abode of Sri Madhusudan."⁴⁹⁴ **"That a person who utters 'Krishna' out of fear of worldly life and is freed therefrom, attains His Lotus Feet, is quite certain."**⁴⁹⁵ "Even, he who is given to the habit of committing the worst sins at all times, attains to the Ultimate goal Vaikunth by Sri Nama-

abhakṣyāgamyayor jātaṁ vihāyāghaughā-sañcayam
prayāti viṣṇu-sālokyam vimukto bhava-bandhanaiḥ
(nārādīya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.430)

489 jihvāgre vartate yasya harir ity akṣara-dvayam
viṣṇor lokam avāpnoti punar āvṛtti-durlabham
(bṛhan-nārādīya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.431)

490 yatra tatra sthito vāpi kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti kīrtayet
sarva-pāpa-viśuddhātmā sa gacchet paramāṁ gatim
(pādma-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.432)

491 tad eva puṇyam paramaṁ pavitraṁ
govinda-gehe gamanāya patram
tad eva loke sukṛtaika-satram
yad ucyate keśava-nāma-mātram
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.433)

492 evaṁ saṅgrahaṇī-putrā-bhidhāna-vyājato harim
samuccāryānta-kāle'gād dhāma tat paramaṁ hareḥ
(brahma-vaivarta-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.434)

493 nārāyaṇam iti vyājād uccārya kaluṣāśrayaḥ
ajāmilo'py agād dhāma kim uta śraddhayā gṛṇan
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.435)

See footnote 24

494 ye kīrtayanti varadaṁ vara-padmanābham
śaṅkhābja-cakra-śara-cāpa-gadāsi-hastam
padmālayā-vadana-paṅkaja-ṣaṭ-padākṣam
nūnam prayānti sadanam madhu-ghātinā te
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.437)

Sankirtan"⁴⁹⁶ "O great King! If you really aspire after the attainment of the supreme knowledge, and thence the realisation of Eternal Abode, chant constantly with great regard the Name 'Govinda'."⁴⁹⁷

21. Sri Nama-Sankirtan pleases Sri Krishna⁴⁹⁸

"By chanting the Name 'Vasudev', even a patient or a drunkard becomes eternally free and attains the pleasure of Sri Maha Vishnu."⁴⁹⁹ "O Vipras! Sri Kesav is pleased with him who performs the Sankirtan of Sri Vishnu's Name, even when he is hungry, thirsty, or stumbling."⁵⁰⁰ "O blessed one! He who utters the Name 'Vishnu' while he is hungry, thirsty, or while stumbling, etc., pleases Sri Kesav."⁵⁰¹

22. Hence Sri Nama-Sankirtan wins over Sri Krishna⁵⁰²

"The fact Sri Krishnaa (Draupadi) cried aloud piteously calling Me by My Name 'Govinda', though very far from her, cannot be obliterated from My Heart, I am over head and ears in her debt."⁵⁰³ "O Arjun! I swear before you that I become practically purchased by those who sing the Names in My presence and dance, and those who sing My Names and weep before My Sri Murti; I - Janardan, being unpurchasable by others, become

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- 495 vāsudeveti manuja uccārya bhava-bhītitaḥ
tan-muktaḥ padam āpnoti viṣṇor eva na saṁśayaḥ
(āṅgira-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.438)
- 496 sarvadā sarva-kāleṣu ye'pi kurvanti pātakam
nāma-saṅkīrtanam kṛtvā yānti viṣṇoḥ param padam
(nandi-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.439)
See footnote 5
- 497 yad icchasi param jñānam jñānād yat paramam padam
tad-ādareṇa rājendra kuru govinda-kīrtanam
(gāruḍa-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.441)
- 498 śrī-bhagavat-prīṇanatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 499 vāsudevasya saṅkīrtiyā surāpo vyādhito'pi vā
mukto jāyeta niyataṁ mahā-viṣṇuḥ prasīdati
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.442)
- 500 nāma-saṅkīrtanam viṣṇoḥ kṣut-trṭ-praskhalitādiṣu
karoti satataṁ viprās tasya prīto hy adhokṣajaḥ
(bṛhan-nāradya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.443)
- 501 nāma-saṅkīrtanam viṣṇoḥ kṣut-trṭ-praskhalitādiṣu
yaḥ karoti mahābhāga tasya tuṣyati keśavaḥ
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.444)
- 502 śrī-bhagavad-vaśīkāritvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)
- 503 ṛṇam etat pravṛddham me hṛdayān nāpasarpati
yad govindeti cukrośa kṛṣṇā mām dūra-vāsinam
(mahābhārata; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.445)

purchased by them."⁵⁰⁴ **"Truly he, on the tip of whose tongue the twin syllables 'Ha-ri' exist, has allured and attracted the Lord once and for all."**⁵⁰⁵

23. Sri Nama-Sankirtan Itself is the highest End of human existence⁵⁰⁶

"The Kirtan of Sri Damodar is the most auspicious attainment, the earning of the highest wealth (Prem), and the very purpose of human life."⁵⁰⁷ "The Kirtan of Sri Vasudev is the sublime learning, the highest penance and the supreme truth."⁵⁰⁸

24. Sri Nama-Sankirtan is the highest form of devotion⁵⁰⁹

"The Smarana (remembrance) of Sri Vishnu, which destroys all the sins, is accomplished with great exertions; **but His Kirtan (utterance) is completed just by the movement of lips. Hence it is better than remembrance.**"⁵¹⁰ "O Bharata! Hari's Names will manifest Themselves on the tongue of the person who has worshipped Sri Vasudev in hundreds of births."⁵¹¹ "All the fruits that one derived in Satya Yuga by devotedly worshipping Sri Hari even by hundreds of sacrifices, is obtained

504 gītvā ca mama nāmāni nartayen mama sannidhau
idaṁ bravīmi te satyaṁ krīto'haṁ tena cārjuna
gītvā ca mama nāmāni rudanti mama sannidhau
teṣaṁ ahaṁ parikrīto nānya-krīto janārdanaḥ
(ādi-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.446-447)

505 jitaṁ tena jitaṁ tena jitaṁ teneti niścitaṁ
jihvāgre vartate yasya harir ity akṣara-dvayam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.449)
jitaṁ bhagavān vaśīkṛtaḥ
(śrī sanātana gosvāmī)

506 parama-puruṣārthatvam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa)

507 idam eva hi māṅgalyam etad eva dhanārjanam
jīvitasya phalaṁ caitad yad dāmodara-kīrtanam
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.450)

See footnote 1

508 etad eva paraṁ jñānam etad eva paraṁ tapaḥ
etad eva paraṁ tattvaṁ vāsudevasya kīrtanam
(viṣṇu-rahasya, śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.452)

509 bhakti-prakāreṣu śreṣṭhyam

510 aghacchit-smaraṇaṁ viṣṇor bahv-āyāsena sādhyate
oṣṭha-spandana-mātreṇa kīrtanaṁ tu tato varam
(vaiṣṇava-cintāmaṇi, śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.453)

511 yena janma-śataiḥ pūrvam vāsudevaḥ samarcitaḥ
tan-mukhe hari-nāmāni sadā tiṣṭhanti bhārata
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.454)

unimpaired by the Kirtan of Sri Govinda in Kali Yuga."⁵¹² **"What is obtained by meditation in Krita, by offering sacrifices in Treta, and by worshipping Sri Vishnu in Dvapar, is all obtained by the Sankirtan of Sri Kesav in Kali Yuga."**⁵¹³

"The Manifestation of the Supreme Lord in the age of Kali is that of One Who chants constantly the Name of Sri Krishna, but Whose Bodily complexion is the very opposite, i.e., of a molten gold, Who is accompanied by His constant companions, and attendants, and the weapon-like Names of Sri Hari; Who is worshipped in this age by the Sankirtan-like sacrifices by the really wise men."⁵¹⁴ **"Sri Hari-Nama alone, Hari-Nama alone, and Hari-Nama solely is my very life. There is no other go, there is no other go, no other go than His Sankirtan."** "Brahma, even if he has a thousand mouths, will not be able to describe the transcendental fruit of the utterance of Sri Hari-Nama uttered even once."⁵¹⁵ "O Devi! When I hear any names beginning with the syllable 'Ra', my mind always becomes happy, thinking that It will be 'Rama-Nama'."⁵¹⁶ **"I am the lord of all the worlds and am a meditator of Sri Krishna-Nama. I tell you the truth and nothing but the truth that Sri Hari-Nama is the Sole Resort."**⁵¹⁷ **"O Partha! There is always a niche in My Heart for all the names of those, who loudly proclaim My Name with or without faith."**⁵¹⁸

512 yad abhyarcya harim bhaktyā kṛte kratu-śatair api
phalam prāpnoty avikalam kalau govinda-kīrtanāt
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.455)

513 dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais tretāyām dvāpare'rcayan
yad āpnoti tad āpnoti kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam
(viṣṇu-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.456)
saṅkīrtya samyak uccairuccārya
(śrī sanātana gosvāmī)

See footnote 4

514 kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākrṣṇam sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.5.32; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.458)

515 harer nāmaiva nāmaiva nāmaiva mama jīvanam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā
(bṛhan-nāradya-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.460)
sakṛd uccārayanty eva harer nāma cid-ātmakam
phalam nāsyā kṣamo vaktum sahasra-vadano vidhiḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.461)

516 ra-kārādīni nāmāni śṛṇvato devi jāyate
prītir me manaso nityam rāma-nāma-viśaṅkayā
(padma purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.462)

517 īso'ham sarva-jagatām nāmnām viṣṇor hi jāpakaḥ
satyam satyam vadāmy eṣa harer nāma gatir nṛṇām
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.463)

"There is no knowledge, religious vow, meditation, or any other attainment that is equal or superior to the Name. Neither renunciation, control of the mind, any meritorious deed, nor the highest aspiration is equal to or higher than the Name. It is the Name alone that is the highest form of Mukti; the Name alone is the ultimate end in life. Resort to the Name alone yields the highest kind of peace; resort to the Name alone is the abiding welfare; resort to the Name is the highest devotion; recourse to the Name alone is the ultimate end of knowledge. Attachment to the Name alone is the highest Love; recollection of the Name alone is the true remembrance; the Name alone is the Root Cause of all beings and the Name alone is their Sole Master; the Name alone is the highest Object of worship, and the Name alone is the highest amongst all spiritual masters."⁵¹⁹ **"If a person, on seeing devotees engrossed in the chanting of the Name, becomes attached to them, he achieves Golok of Sri Krishna and rejoices in His company, i.e., with Me. Hence, O Partha! Take the Names with a firm determination, as a person who is saturated with the Name is dear to Me; hence O Arjun! I again implore you to take to the service of the Name."**⁵²⁰

Mahaprabhu's exposition on 'Harernama' Sloka

"The following is the exposition on the 'Harernama Harernama' Sloka in the house of Srivas Pandit, as recorded by Murari Gupta in his 'Sri Krishna Chaitanya Charitamrita', also known as 'Sri Murari Gupta's Kadacha', which is an account of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu by Sri Murari Gupta, who was an eye-witness of Sriman Mahaprabhu's Career and His Teachings: "On another day, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu - the Divine

- 518 śraddhayā helayā nāma raṭanti mama jantavaḥ
teṣāṃ nāma sadā pārtha vartate hṛdaye mama
(ādi purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.464)
- 519 na nāma sadṛśaṃ jñānaṃ na nāma sadṛśaṃ vratam
na nāma sadṛśaṃ dhyānaṃ na nāma sadṛśaṃ phalam
na nāma sadṛśas tyāgo na nāma sadṛśaḥ śamaḥ
na nāma sadṛśaṃ puṇyam na nāma sadṛśī gatiḥ
nāmaiva paramā muktir nāmaiva paramā gatiḥ
nāmaiva paramā śāntir nāmaiva paramā sthitiḥ
nāmaiva paramā bhaktir nāmaiva paramā matiḥ
nāmaiva paramā prītir nāmaiva paramā smṛtiḥ
nāmaiva kāraṇaṃ jantor nāmaiva prabhur eva ca
nāmaiva paramārādhyo nāmaiva paramo guruḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.465-469)
- 520 nāma-yuktān janān dṛṣṭvā snigdho bhavati yo naraḥ
sa yāti paramaṃ sthānaṃ viṣṇunā saha modate
tasmān nāmāni kaunteya bhajasva dṛḍha-mānasaḥ
nāma-yuktaḥ priyo'smākaṃ nāma-yukto bhavārjuna
(ādi purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.470-471)

Illuminator, while deeply engrossed in Sri Hari-Sankirtan, gave a discourse on the 'Harernama, etc.,' Sloka at the house of Srivas Pandit.⁵²¹ **Sri Hari-Nama, Hari-Nama, and Hari-Nama alone is the Sole Resort; there is no other, no other, no other go except Sri Hari-Nama in the age of Kali.**⁵²² **In Kali Yuga the Primeval Lord prevails verily in the Form of Sri Hari-Nama, i.e., in His 'Paramaksharakriti'.** Accept that His Svarup is His Nama. He is but 'Kevalam', i.e., the Bestower of final emancipation. 'Kevalam' also means 'Krishnaprem-rasa-svada-prapakam' and hence 'Karunamayam', i.e., the Bestower of 'Sevasvada' of the luscious sweetness of loving devotion to Sri Krishna. This shows that Sri Hari-Nama is 'Karunamaya', i.e., pulsating with kindness, as it is in Its very nature to show kindness to those who have Its Abhas. It removes the heart and mind that are engrossed in worldliness and employs them in Sri Hari with loving devotion.⁵²³ In the Sloka 'Harernama', the indeclinable 'Eva' is used to mean 'Hari-Nama' alone and nothing else, i.e., unaided or unaccompanied by any feelings of devotion, etc., or the acquisition of Jnan, Karma, Yoga, etc., on the part of the aspirant, i.e., by Namabhas alone, all the sins of the Jiva are not only destroyed, but he becomes eligible to receive Sri Krishna Prem too.⁵²⁴ The 'Hari-Nama' in the Sloka (522) above is repeated thrice to lay emphasis on It or to show the vehemence of Sri Hari-Nama to all the aspirants like the Jnanis, Karmis, Yogis, Bhaktas, etc., or others who do not fall under these four heads to acquire a fondness for It. The indeclinable 'Eva' in the second line of the Sloka (522) is repeated thrice, to show that nothing else other than Sri Hari-Nama is able to destroy the sins of a Jiva. All the actions like acquisition of knowledge (Jnan), Karma such as building of hospitals, Dharmasalas, etc., renunciation (Tyag), penance, etc., will never destroy one's sins.⁵²⁵ The word 'Kevalam' is used to indicate that all the 'Tattvas', i.e., all the true or first principles are manifested from or owe their origin

521 śrīmān viśvambhāro devo hari-kīrtana-tat-paraḥ
 aparedyuh paṇḍitasya śrīvāsasya pure vasan
 vyākhyām cakāra ślokasya vakṣyamānasya tac chṛṇu
 (śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta 2.2.26-27)

522 harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
 kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatiḥ anyathā
 (śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta 2.2.28)

523 harau premṇā mano harati saṁsārācca
 haratīti prayojana dvayamuktam
 (sārārtha-varṣiṇī-tīkā)

524 nā 'pumān ādi-puruṣaḥ kalāv asty eva rūpavān
 nāma-svarūpiṇam taṁ tu jānīhi sa tu kevalam
 (śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta 2.2.29)

525 vāra-trayaṁ harer nāma dṛḍhārthaṁ sarva-dehinām
 eva-kāraś ca jīvanām pāpānām nāśa-hetave
 (śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta 2.2.30)

to Sriman Nama alone, i.e., Nama is described as 'Mahah' which is explained by Sri Sanatan Gosvami as under: Sriman Nama discloses everything. All the Vedas, etc., too originate from the Divine Name alone.⁵²⁶ It is also said by Brahma in the Tapani Sruti in connection with the eighteen syllable Mantra full of Names - 'Having manifested the future creation in those syllables'. But the Vedantins belonging to the monistic school of philosophy hold that 'Kevalam' or 'Kaivalyam' means the final emancipation arising from the extinction of 'Prarabdhakarma'. The word 'Kevalam' is used in Sloka (522) to indicate its full meaning of achieving for the ardent devotee of Sri Hari-Nama, the power of having a thorough relish of the loving devotion to Sri Krishna, i.e., 'Krishna-prem-rasasvada-prapakam', in addition to its power of destroying all the sins by Its Abhas and not in the sense of the Vedantins, where their 'Kaivalyam' or final emancipation is attained by Bhog or by enduring their prarabdha.⁵²⁷ The word 'Kevalam' is used in place of 'Kaivalyam-bhavit', i.e., the ultimate result will surely be auspicious; but 'Kevalam' (522) means that which will be conducive to the achievement or attainment of the ability to have a thorough taste of the delightful sweetness of loving devotion to Sri Krishna. The meaning of the root 'Keva' is 'Sevan' and the termination 'la' is used in the sense of 'Vrish' having the meaning to grant or bestow or impart. Hence the word 'Keval' is taken to mean that which grants 'Asvadan' or relish of the 'Krishna-prem-rasa', i.e., enduring sweetness of Divine Love to Sri Krishna. Therefore, Sri Hari-Nama is the 'means' or the 'Sadhan' to achieve 'Krishna-prem-rasavada'. Sri Hari-Nama is also the end of human achievements. The termination 'la' means 'consists of', 'constituted of', 'embodiment of', or 'having the constitution of'. Hence, Sri Hari-Nama is the very embodiment of 'Krishna-prem-rasa-svada'. So it is both the 'Sadhan' (means) and the 'Sadhya' (end in Itself). Sri Hari-Nama by Its very constitution imparts Its 'Asvadan' to Its adherent and is full of or saturated with kindness or 'Karunamayam', i.e., It does not at all take into consideration the aspirant's fitness or the want of it to receive Its

526 aum āsya jānanto nāma cid viviktaṁ
mahas te viṣṇo sumatiṁ bhajāmahe
mahaḥ sarva prakāśakam tata eva sarva vedādy
āvīrbhāvāt tathā coktaṁ śrī brahmaṇā nāma
mayāṣṭādaśākṣara mantra prasaṅge
(tāpaniya-śrutau 1.28)

'teṣv akṣareṣu bhaviṣyaj-jagad-rūpaṁ prakāśayat' iti
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 1.169)

527 sarva-tattva-prakāśārthaṁ kevalaṁ manyate ca hi
prārabdha-karma-nirvāṇaṁ kathyate'dvaita-vādidbhiḥ
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta 2.2.31)

kindness. The Sloka 'Nama chintamani'⁵²⁸ strengthens the view.⁵²⁹ **This conclusively proves that Sri Hari's Svarup is Sri Hari-Nama.** There is no difference or distinction between the two. For a person who holds the contrary view or says otherwise, there is no salvation or goal. This is quite certain as Srīman Mahāprabhu has Himself said so."⁵³⁰ The Slokas given below from 'Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita Mahakavya' by Sri Kavikarnapur, convey the meaning identical with the ideas conveyed in Srīman Mahāprabhu's discourse on 'Harernama' Sloka.⁵³¹

Sri Krishna-Namashtak

"I bow down to Sri Krishna-Nama. "O Nama! The Vedic texts say that Mukti (emancipation) which is ever hankered after by the Yogis, is achieved by Your Abhas or dim reflection. O Lord! Be pleased to shower Your Grace on me to enable me to write my commentary on You; I do not even beg for access of devotion to You." The author begins his praise of the Divine Name: "O Hari-Nama! I take absolute shelter in You, the tips of Whose nails forming the limits of Your Lotus Feet are illumined by the lustre emanating from the jewel necklace, viz., the Upanishads forming the crest of all the Vedas and Who is ever being served by multitudes of liberated souls, viz., the Yogis."⁵³²

528 See footnote 8

529 bhaved iti ca bodhārtham kaivalyam kevalam smṛtam
kṛṣṇa-prema-rasāsvāda-prāpakam karuṇā-mayam
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta 2.2.32)

530 tat-svarūpam harer nāma yo'nyad eva vadet pumān
tasya nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir ity avadat svayam
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-caritāmṛta 2.2.33)

531 nādyah pumān ayam udeti sadaiva bhūmau
nāma-svarūpam iti tam tu kalau vidantu
vāra-traye ca punar-uktir athaiva-kāro
dārḍhyāya sarva-jagato bahu-jāḍya-bhājah
kaivalyam eva tad idam tv iti kevalasya
śabdasya dārḍhya-manane pratipādanam tat
yas tv anyathā vadati tasya gatir hi nāsti
nasty eva niścitam idam punar eva-kārāt
(śrī-caitanya-caritāmṛta mahā-kāvya 6.4-5)

532 śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭakam |
śrīkṛṣṇanāmne namaḥ |
nāmābhāsenāpi te yogimṛgyā muktiḥ syādityāhurāmnāyavācaḥ |
tvad vyākhyāne mahyamīśa pradadyāḥ svasminbhaktim nādhikam tatprayāce ||
bhagavannāma stauti-nikhiletyādibhiḥ |
nikhila-śruti-mauli-ratna-mālā-
dyuti-nīrājita-pāda-paṅkajānta
ayī mukta-kulair upāsyamānam
paritas tvām harināma samśrayāmi
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka 1)

"O Hari-Nama! I unconditionally take absolute resort in You. The Upanishads form the crests of Srutis which are the jewel necklaces, by the lustre of which are illumined the tips of the nails, forming the limits of the Lotus Feet, establishing thereby the identity or oneness of the Nama and Nami, i.e., One Whose Name It is. By the lustre from the jewel necklaces on the heads of the personification of the Vedas, are illumined the nails of Your Lotus Feet. The meaning is that all the Vedas respectfully salute Your Lotus Feet. In conclusion, it is established that there is no difference between the Nama and the Nami consequent on the use of such terms as 'Feet, Nails, etc' The author describes the qualifications of the Nama in his direct address to It (Him) by the term 'Mukta-kulairupasyamanam'. The Sama Veda sings thus: "Who else other than the man - the killer of the innocent beasts will desist from the praises, etc., of the Lord, which are the divine panacea for all worldly ills, alluring to the ears and the mind, and which are ever being sung by those whose minds have ceased to have any attraction to the worldly desires." "O King! It has already been decided by the Sastras that the incessant utterance of Sri Hari-Nama is the sole and sure means for the Yogis, who strive to free themselves from the clutches of worldly desires, and cherish to be free from all fears." Thus the Glory of the Name is described by the Srutis and Smritis, etc. The term 'Yogi' also means those who desire union or intercourse with the Lord."⁵³²

"To the query how I shall give shelter to you who are full of sins, the second Sloka is the answer: "Victory to You O Nama! Who have taken the Form of Aksharas (syllables) for gratifying the people. O You Who are ever being sung by hosts of sages! If You are just uttered even out of want of respect, You wipe out that thick covering of sins."⁵³³

"O Nama! O the One, ever being sung by the sages! Be victorious The idea is that You should display Your greatness which consists in Your

nikhileti | he harināma tvāmaha paritaḥ sarvabhāvena saṁśrayāmi |
 nikhilāḥ śrutimaulaya upaniṣadāstā eva ratnamālāstāsām dyutibhīrṅirājitaḥ
 pādapaṅkajayoranto naśvarupā sīmā yasyeti vācye na saḥābhedādidam
 bodhyam | 'yatra mūrtidharāḥ kalāḥ' iti smaraṇānmūrtānām nikhilānām śrutīnām
 vedānām mauliṣu śiraḥ su yā ratnamālāstābhīrityapare | śrutayaśca sarve vedā
 yatpadamānatītyādyāḥ | tātparyeṇa pumarthabhāvena tābhiḥ prātipādyeti
 bhāvaḥ | tvām kimbhūtamityāha-muktakulairapyupāsyamānamiti | etatsāma
 gāyannāste 'nivṛttatarṣairupaḡiyamānāt' |
 'etannirvidyamānānāmicchatāmakutobhayam | yoginām nṛpa nirṇotam
 harernāmānukīrtanam ||' ityādi śrutismṛtibhyaḥ | yoginām bhagavadyogabhājām
 muktānāmityarthaḥ ||

533 nanu dūritākrāntāya te katham saṁśrayam dāsyāmi tatrāha -
 jaya nāma-dheya muni-vṛnda-geya he
 jana-rañjanāya paramākṣarākṛte
 tvam anādarād api manāg udīritam
 nikhilogra-tāpa-paṭalīm vilumpasi
 (śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka 2)

capacity to destroy completely all the accumulated sins. 'Anadarat', i.e., without respect, means that the unintentional taking of the Nama, etc., as in the case of Ajamil on his deathbed, or uttering a little of the Name jokingly or out of contempt, destroys the layers of the most heinous sins not of this mortal frame alone, but even of the Lingadeha or the subtle body. Footnote Nos. 243, 375 and 451 are in support of this particular contention. So the Smritis say about the power of the Nama to destroy all the sins. Hence, by remembering Your prowess, purify me. The sense is that I am the propagator of Your Glory. You have taken the Form of Transcendental Aksharas or syllables to entertain Your devotees. This indicates Your kindness. The Transcendental Aksharas are indicative of 'Pararupatva' of Sri Krishna, i.e., 'Chit-svarup'. The Smritis say, 'O Vishnu! We take resort to Your Nama only, being convinced about Its greatness, Its Spiritual Form and Its Transcendental Blissful Nature.' "It is the highest luminous fruit, i.e. Chit-svarup of all the Vedic creepers.' This shows that the Svarup of the Aksharas is also Transcendental in the same way as the Forms of the Avatars, like the Divine Swan, the Divine Boar, of the Transcendental Krishna."⁵³³

"The Namabhas or the dawning of the Nama. alter burning out all sins of the person, does not halt there, but it further imparts to him devotion or Bhakti to Its Possessor, i.e., Sri Krishna. "O Bhagavan! O the Sun of Sri Krishna-Nama! Which Pandit in this world will ever be able to aptly describe Your prowess? By the dawning of Your Abhas, even the pitch-darkness of this mundane existence is swallowed up and a loving devotion to You is simultaneously conferred on him, who is blind to the cardinal principles of Dharma and aim of life."⁵³⁴

"O Krishna! O the Sun of Krishna-Nama! Which scholar in this world will ever be able to explain Your most exalted Glory? None at all. Why?

jayeti | he nāmadheya he munivṛndageya tvam jaya |
duritarāśinirdāhakatālakṣaṇam svotkarṣamāviṣkurviti bhāvaḥ | anādarāt
sāṁketyapārihāsādināpi manāgalpamevodītimuccāritam sa tvam
nikhilānāmugratāpānām liṅgadehaparyantānām paṭalīm vilumpasi nāśayasi |
'sāṅketyam pārihāsyam vā stobham helanameva vā |
vaikuṅṭhanāmagrahaṇamaśeṣāghaharam viduḥ ||
parihāsopahāsādyairviṣṇornāma gṛṇanti ye | kṛtārthāste'pi manujāstebhyo'pīha
namo namaḥ || pramādādapi saṁsprṣṭo yathānalakaṇo dahet |
tathoṣṭhapuṭasaṁsprṣṭam harināma dahedagham ||' ityādi smṛtibhyaḥ | tathā ca
svaprabhāvam smṛtvā mām punīhi tvadyaśaḥ pracārako'hamiti bhāvaḥ | he
janarañjanāya paramakṣarākṛte iti dayālutvam vyajyate | paramakṣaretyatra
śakandhvāditvātṭeḥ pararupatvam | 'aum āsya jānanto nāma cid viviktan mahas
te viṣṇo sumatīm bhajāmahe ' iti śruteḥ | 'sakalanigamavallīsatphalam
citsvarupam' iti smaraṇacca cidātmakākṣarākāram nāma yathā nāminah
kṛṣṇasya cidrūpasya haṁsaśūkarāvīpuścīdrūpameva tadvat ||

534 na ca nāmābhāsaḥ pāpānyeva dagdhvā nivartate api tu svavācye bhaktim
ca prakāśayatītyāha -

Because even Your Abhas in the form of utterance of Your praises, etc., bestows loving devotion on those who are engulfed in the darkness of worldliness. Thus being blind to the very essence of his existence, even a wise and learned person will never be able to fathom the magnitude of Your Glory; at the most he may only be able to guess it, but not to have an exact idea except one who knows the secrets of the truths about you. This idea is clearly elucidated in the words of Sruti "Aum Asya, etc." The prefix 'A' denotes mere or just mention of the Nama, (even unintentional, jokular, contemptuous, etc.) that imparts a loving devotion to Sri Krishna."⁵³⁴

"Thus if absolute shelter is taken in Sri Hari-Nama, then It destroys the Prarabdha, without the person having to undergo its influence and which is terminable only after it is endured. "The Vedas proclaim at the top of their voice that Prarabdha, i.e., the accumulated good or bad actions of previous births, which are not destructible even by the constant revelation of Brahman, completely disappears the moment Sri Hari-Nama dawns on the tongue of Its devotee."⁵³⁵

"O Nama! That Prarabdha Karma, which even by the unbroken meditation on Brahman, practised continuously like unbroken stream of oil, does not reach its end without the person having to suffer from its good or bad consequences, takes to its heels the moment Sri Hari-Nama dawns on the tongue of that person; thus the Vedas proclaim at the top of their voice. By the achievement of knowledge of Brahman, the fruits of the meritorious and sinful deeds, which are being accumulated in this birth only, are destroyed. The Srutis say, "He surmounts both the good and bad consequences of the deeds performed in this life." When the accumulated

yad-ābhāso'py udyan kavalita-bhava-dhvānta-vibhavo
 dṛśam tattvāndhānām api diśati bhakti-praṇayinīm
 janas tasyodāttam jagati bhagavan-nāma-taraṇe
 kṛtī te nirvaktum ka iha mahimānam prabhavati
 (śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka 3)

yaditi | he bhāgavannāmataraṇe kṛṣṇanāmasūrya iha jagati kaḥ kṛtī
 paṇḍito janasta udāttamatyuccam mahimānam nirvaktam prabhavati | na
 ko'pītyarthaḥ | kuta iti cettatrāha-yasya tavābhāso'smākam
 stutyādibhiruccāraṇam kalikavalito grasto bhavadhvāntāvibhavaḥ
 saṁsṛtimivasampadyena tādrśaḥ san tattvāndhānām tattvadṛṣṭihīnānāmapi
 bhaktipraṇayinīm kṛṣṇabhaktiviśayām dṛśam prajñām diśatvarpayatīti tavedṛśam
 mahimni vijño'pi vinā tvattatvavidupadeśādato vinirvaktum na prabhavatīti |
 etatpadyārthaśca 'aum āsya' iti śrutau vikphuṭaḥ |
 āiśatsāmketvādibhirnāmaprabruvatām viṣṇuviśayakasumatilābhābhidhānāt |
 535 athaikāntikabhāvenopāsitam nāma bhogaikavināśyamapi prārabdham
 vinaiva bhogādvinaśayatītvāha -

yad brahma-sākṣāt-kṛti-niṣṭhayāpi
 vināśam āyāti vinā na bhogaīḥ
 apaiti nāma sphuraṇena tat te
 prārabdha-karmeti virauti vedah
 (śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka 4)

or sinful deeds of the past births begin to bear fruits, they are called Prarabdha. This Prarabdha diminishes only when its fruits, good or bad, are endured and not even by the acquisition of knowledge of Brahman. The Srutis say: "They will adhere to him so long as I do not free him from their consequences." Thus it has been decided by the revered author of the aphorisms: "Even when he has experienced the Supreme Spirit, the consequences of the sins which are being committed in this life are destroyed." This is adduced by the Srutis. Similarly, the reduction and the destruction of the consequences of the other meritorious deeds too, will take place only when the form or body in which one is caused to be born as a result of his Prarabdha, falls and then only his liberation takes place. Thus it is clear that the meritorious and sinful deeds of this birth, which have not commenced to bear fruits, are alone destroyed by Brahma-Vidya. But those of the previous births which have already commenced to bear fruits, are not destroyed by Brahma-Vidya, until their good or evil consequences have been undergone. **This Prarabdha Karma, the Srutis proclaim, melts away by the utterance of Sriman Nama alone.** The Srutis say, "Know that a person who is born out of sins, will have the disposition to practise nothing but wickedness alone." Because it is said that 'all' the sins are destroyed by the utterance of Nama, it is clear that the word 'all' includes all the sins arising out of Prarabdha also.

yaditi | yayā brahmaṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ sāḥṣātkṛtiḥ syāt
 tayāpyavicchinnaailadhārāvātpravūttayā niṣṭhayā brahmacintayā
 yatprārabdham karma bhogairvinā na vināśamāyāti he nāma tatte sphuraṇena
 jihvādau bhāsanenaivāpaiti dūrībhavati viśliṣyatīti vedo virauti | gadatītyarthaḥ |
 brahmavidyayābhyuditayā saṁcitakriyamāṇayoḥ puṇyapāpayorvināśāśleṣau
 bhavataḥ | 'ubhe ihaiveṣa ete taratyamṛtaḥ sādhasādhanī' iti śruteḥ |
 phaladānāya pravṛtte puṇyapāpe prārabdham karmocyate |tattu bhogenaiva
 kṣiyate na tu brahmavidyayā | 'tasya tāvadeva ciram yāvanna vimokṣye' iti
 śruteḥ | evameva nirṇītam bhagavatā sūtrakāreṇa - 'tad-adhigama uttara-
 pūrvāghayor aśleṣa-vināśau tad-vyapadeśāt | itarasyāpy evam asaṁśleṣaḥ | pāte
 tu anārabdha-kārye eva tu pūrve tad-avadheriti | eṣāmārthāśca' -tadadhigame
 brahmānubhave satyuktarapūrvayoḥ kriyamāṇasaṁcitayoraghayoraśleṣavināśau
 staḥ | tad vyapadeśācchṛtau tathokteriti | itarasya puṇyasyāpyevamasamśleṣo
 vināśāśca dehasya prārabdharacitasya pāte tu mokṣaḥ syāditi
 pūrve'nārabdhakārye saṁcite pāpapuṇye vidyayā vināśyato na tarabdhakārye ca
 te | tannāśasya bhogāvadhivāditi | tacca prārabdham karma
 nāmoccāraṇādapagacchatīti tasyoditi nāma 'sa eṣa sarvebhyaḥ pāpebhya uditī
 udaiti ha vai sarvebhyaḥ papmabhyo ya evam veda' iti śruteḥ | atroditi
 bhagavannāmopāsanayā sarvapāpāpagamokteḥ prārabdhasyāpyapagamaḥ
 spaṣṭaḥ | itthamabhipretya sātyāyaninaḥ paṭhānti - 'tasya putrā dāyamupayanti
 suhṛdaḥ sādhuḥkṛtyām dviṣantaḥ pāpakṛtyām' iti | kauṣītakinaśca -
 'tatsukṛtaduṣkṛte vidhunute tasya priyā jñātayaḥ sukutamupayantyapriyā
 duṣkṛtam' iti | evamāha bhagavānsūtrakāraḥ - 'ato'nyāpi hyekeṣāmubhayeriti |
 asyārthaḥ - ekeṣām nāmaikāntinām paramānurāgiṇām vinaiva bhogāt
 prārabdhayoḥ sukṛtaduṣkṛtayoḥśleṣo bhavātīti svīkāryam | hi yasmāttasya
 tāvadeva ciramityādikāyāḥ prārabdham bhoganāśyamiti vadantyāḥ śruteranyā
 tasya putrādāyamityādikā tadarthikā śrutirasti' iti ||

Having thus described it, the Satyayan, i.e., an oblation for remedying a wrong in the performance of a rite, is quoted: "His sons receive presents, the doers of good deeds will be their friends, and they will hate the evil doers." Kaushitakinah say, "When it comes to the distribution of their good or evil actions, his dear kinsmen gain the good, and those who are not dear, receive the bad actions." Hence, the venerable author of Sutras or Aphorisms says thus: "Hence, the 'Anyapi', i.e., even the sins amongst the two kinds of Sukrits and Dushkrits are washed away, i.e., it is to be accepted that the meritorious or sinful deeds, which have begun to show their effects, of persons who have taken absolute resort in Nama with full loving devotion to It, are completely annihilated without their having to undergo their influence." Because the Srutis say, "That his Prarabdha will stick to him so long as I do not liberate him from its consequences and that it will disappear only when he suffers its consequences, etc."⁵³⁵

"This Nama is very kind, as in order to give indescribable different kinds of joys to its devotees, It reveals Itself in manifold forms. "O Nama! O the Son of Nanda! Yours are manifold Forms (Svarupas) such as Aghadaman, Yasodanandan, Nandanandan, Kamalanayan (Lotus-eyed), Gopichandra (the Moon amongst the star-like Gopis), Vrindavanendra (the Lord of Vrindavan), Krishna, Pranatakaruna (Merciful to those taking absolute shelter at Your Feet). May my love to You ever grow in intensity and profusion."⁵³⁶

"Your great kindness is quite evident; hence, I take absolute shelter in You alone. "O Nama! Your two Svarupas, viz., one that is conveyed (Vachya) and one that conveys (Vachak) shine. Of the two the Latter is kinder than the Former, because a person who has committed countless offences against the Vachya Svarup, i.e., Sri Krishna Svarup, has all his sins destroyed and even it submerged in the ocean of bliss the moment he serves the Vachak Svarup (Sri Krishna-Nama), by mouth by uttering Sri Krishna-Nama."⁵³⁷

"O Nama! You shine in two Forms as Nami and Nama, i.e., Sri Krishna-Svarup and Sri Krishna-Nama. This 'Vachyam' is the all-pervading

536 bhaktebhyo vicitrānandānpradātum
bahurupatayāvīrbhāvadatikaruṇamidam nāmeti bhāvenāha -

agha-damana-yaśodā-nandanau nanda-sūno
kamala-nayana-gopī-candra-vṛndāvanendrāḥ
praṇata-karuṇa-kṛṣṇāv ity aneka-svarūpe
tvayi mama ratir uccair vardhatām nāma-dheya
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka 5)

agheti | he nāmadheya evamavitarkyamahimni tvayi mama ratirvardhatām
| tvayi kīdrśi | he aghadamana he yaśodānandana he nandasūno
ityevamādividhayānekasvarūpe'ṣṭottaraśatatām prāpta ityārthaḥ ||

537 atikaruṇatvaṁ te sphaṭamasti atastvāmeva saṁśrayāmīti bhāvenāha -

Svarup full of Bliss, as the Supreme Lord. In the 'Vachak' Form, You assume the Form of Transcendental group of letters (Varna-prachaya-rupa) like 'Krishna', 'Govinda', etc. There we take the Latter, i.e., 'Varna-prachaya-rupa' Which is Vachak as more kind than Your Vachya-Svarup. Why? Because, if a person commits nothing but countless offences on every side against Your Vachya-Svarup, i.e., Sri Krishna-Svarup, he by simply serving Your Vachak-Svarup by mouth, i.e., by uttering Sri Krishna-Nama, gets all his sins destroyed and takes a deep plunge in the ocean of eternal bliss of loving devotion to You. "There is no doubt whatsoever that I forgive that person, who sings My Nama with implicit faith, of crores of his offences and becomes blessed." **The Nama and the Nami are One and the Same.** The Smritis say again, "Nama Chintamani", i.e., the jewel that fulfils all desires, is Sri Krishna, i.e., Whose Svarup (Form) is Chaitanya Rasa, i.e., enlivening, luscious sweetness or Nama Chintamani is Sri Krishna Chaitanya, Who animated the whole of India with the Divine Consciousness of Sri Krishna by His incessant and ecstatic utterance of Sri Krishna-Nama. He is the fullest Manifestation, ever pure, ever free, as there is no difference between the Nama and the Nami."⁵³⁷

"Verily, if all the thirty-two kinds of offences against the Nami. i.e., against Its Svarup mentioned in the Puranas are destroyed by uttering the thirty-two Names, and ten Namaparadhas or offences against the Nama, such as scandalising the Bhaktas, etc., by the utterance of the ten Names, even then It is the Nama alone that does the trick, "O Nama! O Krishna! I bow to You Whose lustre (Kanti) is all-pervading and Who are the destroyer of all the offences of those who have taken absolute refuge in You, Whose Svarup is delightfully charming, giving intense enlivening and celestial happiness. I bow to You Who are the object of festivity and rejoicing to the whole of Gokul."⁵³⁸

vācyo vācakam ity udeti bhavato nāma svarūpa-dvayaṁ
pūrvasmāt param eva hanta karuṇā tatrāpi jānīmahe
yas tasmin vihitāparādha-nivahaḥ prāṇī samantād bhaved
āsyenedam upāsya so'pi hi sadānandāmbudhau maj-jati
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka 6)

vācyamiti | he nāma tava vācyam vācakamiti svarupadvayamṛdeti cakāsti
| vācyam vibhu caitadānandāsmo vighraḥ pareśaḥ | vācakam kṛṣṇa-
govindetvādiko varṇapracayaḥ | tatra pūrvasmādvacyāttādr̥g vighrahātparameva
tādr̥gvarṇapracayarupam vācakameva vayam karuṇam jānīmahe | kuta iti
cettatrāha | yaḥ prāṇī tāsminvācyasvarupe samantādvihitāparādhanivahaḥ
kṛtāpacāravṇdo bhavet | so'pīdam vācakasvarūpamāsyenopāsya
mukhenocārya vinaṣṭatatrivahaḥ san sadānandāmbudhau bhagavatpremasukhe
majjati kṛtārtho bhavatīti | 'mama nāmāni loke'sminśraddhayā yastu kīrtayet |
tasyāparādhakoṭīstu kṣamāmyeva na samśayaḥ ||' iti smaraṇāt |
nāmanāminoradvaitam tu 'nāma-cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś-caitanya-rasa-vighraḥ pūrṇaḥ
śuddho nityamukto 'bhinnatvān nāma nāmīnoḥ' iti smaraṇāt ||

538 nanu nāmnyaparādhā dvātrīṁśannāmnā vinaśyeyurnāmāparādhāḥ
sādhunindādayo daśakena vinaśyeyuriti cette'pi nāmnaiveti bhāvavānāha -

"O Nama! O Krishna! I offer my prostrated obeisance to You, Who remove all kinds of distress arising from the commission of offences against You, by those who whole-heartedly depend upon You. If one commits an offence against the Nama through inadvertence or howsoever, by clearly and loudly uttering the Nama always, he should take absolute shelter in It. The Names alone remove the sins of those who commit Namaparadhas. **They should take to the uttering the Nama tirelessly, as They (Names) alone will enable such persons to achieve the highest goal of Sri Krishna Prem, and the Asvadan or relishing the delicious sweetness of Sri Nama-Sankirtan, provided they desist from the commission of such offences.** Kindly forgive me for the existing offences. It should be understood from the above Sloka, that the Names are muttered or uttered simultaneously refraining from committing Namaparadhas. One should practise the Nama, being free from the offences at the same time. To Him Whose Svarup is of Transcendental ecstasy, as in the Sloka "Nama Chintamani, etc." I bow to Him Who causes intense joy to the whole of Gokul and Who is the fullest Manifestation."⁵³⁸

Now he (Sri Rupa Gosvami) prays for manifestation of Sriman Nama on his own tongue. "O Sri Krishna-Nama! O the Enlivener of Narada's lute! O the Causer of the floods of Divine Ecstasy oozing out nectarine waves, kindly dance on my tongue in all Your sweetness to Your heart's content for ever."⁵³⁹

"You are the Enlivener of Narada's lute; Whose inundation of the sweetness, resembles the exudation of nectarine billows. O Krishna-Nama! Kindly manifest Yourself on my tongue with ardent love to Your heart's

sūditāśrita-janārti-rāśaye
 ramya-cid-ghana-sukha-svarūpiṇe
 nāma gokula-mahotsavāya te
 kṛṣṇa-pūrṇa-vapuṣe namo namaḥ
 (śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka 7)

sūditeti | he nāma he kṛṣṇa te tubhyaṁ namo namaḥ | te kīḍṛśāyetyāha-
 sūdito vināśita āśritajanānāmārtirāśirnāmāparādhānto yena tasmai | 'jāte
 nāmāparādhe tu pramādena katham ca na | sadā saṅkīrtayannāma tadekaśaraṇo
 bhavet || nāmāparādhayuktānām nāmānyeva harantyaḍham |
 aviśrāntaprayuktāni tānyevāryakarāṇi yat ||' iti smaraṇāt |
 vṛttānaparādhānkṣamaya | tāsām prati kebhyo vinivṛttena sarvadā prayuktāni
 japtānīti bodhyam | 'aparādhavimukto hi nāmni yatnam samācaret' iti smaraṇāt |
 punaste kīḍṛśāya | ramyaṁ cidghanam yatsukham tatsvarupiṇe |
 nāmacintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇa ityādeḥ | punaste kīḍṛśāya | gokulasya mahānutsavo
 yasmāttasmai | pūrṇavapuṣe vyāpakāya ||

539 atha nāmnaḥ svasminsphūrti prārthayati-
 nārada-vīṇoj-jīvana-sudhormi-niryāsa-mādhurī-pūra
 tvaṁ kṛṣṇa-nāma kāmam sphura me rasane rasena sadā
 (śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāṣṭaka 8)

content, for I am devoid of any power to grasp You. You Yourself kindly reign supremely on my tongue. **Because of the outstanding qualities of Sri Krishna-Nama, the Mahanubhav (Sri Rupa Gosvami) at the conclusion humbly begs of Sri Krishna-Nama alone to throb on the tongue. This is because Sri Krishna Himself says that of all His Names Sri Krishna-Nama is the most important.** The fruit of reading the Namashtak is made clear in the Ashtak only; hence, it is not separately stated. So ends the commentary on Sri Namashtak. If Sri Rupa Gosvami, who is an ocean of mercy, had not written 'the Stavamala' or the collection of praises, the devotees would not have known and enjoyed the sweet qualities of the Son of the Lord of Vraja, His Svarup and His Lilas, etc."⁵³⁹

nāradeti | nāradasya vīṇāmujjīvayati cetayatīti he tādrśa | sudhorminiryāsa
iva mādhurīpūro yasya | he kṛṣṇanāma tvam rasenānurāgeṇa me rasane sphura |
kāmaṁ yatheṣṭam | tvadgrahaṇe na me sāmāthyam tvameva majjihvāyām
virājasvetyarthaḥ | mukhyatvātkṛṣṇeti nāmnaḥ sphūrtirante'bhyarthitā |
'nāmnām mṛkhyatamaṁ nāma kṛṣṇākhyam me paramtapa' iti vacanāt |
aṣṭakapāṭhaphalamaṣṭakādeva vyaktam atastannoktam | iti śrīnāmāṣṭakam
vyākhyātam |

śrīrupadevaḥ karuṇekasindhuḥstavālimetām yadi nākariṣyat |
bhaktā yathāvadvrajarājasūnornāvāgamiṣanguṇarupalīlāḥ ||

SRI KRISHNA SANKIRTAN - THE QUINTESSENCE

THIS concluding chapter is an epitome, as it lays great emphasis on 'Sri Krishna-Bhakti' and 'Sri Krishna-Nama-Sankirtan' that is evidently the main subject-matter of this treatise. A special attempt is made in this chapter to point out threadbare, the unique position of unalloyed loving devotion to Sri Krishna. It needs no mention that while making efforts to reinforce the main subject, and to bring out its unparalleled glory, the author never, consciously or unconsciously, wishes to wound the feelings of others, who are the votaries of other gods or other modes of worship. **The subject is based fully and obediently on the authentic scriptures, as expounded by the six renowned Saints of Vrindavan, who are the pillars of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's cult of loving devotion to Sri Krishna, and Sri Krishna-Nama-Sankirtan, and whose works are living monuments of their tireless work in this field. Sri Krishna-Nama-Sankirtan is the highest form of devotion for all the Jivas in this Kali Yuga.** It shows clearly how Sri Krishna-Bhakti is superior to all other forms of worship or religious practices. A few examples are also quoted to enable the reader to come to the same conclusion.

King Parikshit, while hearing Srimad Bhagavata from the holy mouth of Sri Sukadev, puts a salient question to him thus, "How is it that the devotees of Siva who apparently seems 'Asiva,' i.e., inauspicious, because of his wearing a necklace of human skulls, smearing his person with the ashes from the burning-Ghat, and carrying serpents on his person, etc., are found to enjoy wealth and worldly enjoyments in plenty, whereas, the devotees of Sri Krishna, Who is ever being served by the Goddess of wealth, i.e., Sri Lakshmidēvi, do not become voluptuaries?"⁵⁴⁰

Krishna-Prem - The highest spiritual wealth

Sukadev replies thus, "You have put the same question to me that your grandfather Yudhishtir, after the completion of his horse-sacrifice,

540 devāsura-manuṣyesu ye bhajanty aśivaṁ śivam
prāyas te dhanino bhojā na tu lakṣmyāḥ patim harim
etad veditum icchāmaḥ sandeho 'tra mahān hi naḥ
viruddha-śīlayoḥ prabhvor viruddhā bhajatām gatiḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.88.1-2)

had put to Sri Krishna. I shall quote to you Sri Krishna's answer to him." "I gradually deprive the devotee of his wealth, whom I oblige with My Grace. He who desires to renounce enjoyment of worldly pleasures, gets somehow entangled therein and then grieves. To free such a person from the shackles of worldliness is definitely a favour to him, as in the case of devotees like Dhruv, etc., who were averse to the enjoyment of worldly pleasures; or to be more accurate, by first bestowing prosperity on him according to his desires, gradually at the end of its enjoyment, I create in him a nausea for such transient pleasures and free him with intent to confer on him the highest favour." It is already said by Sri Krishna, "The desires of those whose mind is engrossed in Me, do not tend towards the enjoyments of worldly pleasures, in the same way as the grains which are parched or boiled cannot be used as seeds for sowing." Hence, his (devotee's) own people forsake him and he becomes doubly grieved; he becomes apathetic for the loss of his wealth in the first instance, and secondly because he is forsaken by his own kith and kin; this grief being caused by the Divine Will, cannot be taken as the fruit of his actions. Similarly for a devotee, his happiness too is neither the result of his actions, nor it is the fruit connected with his devotion. "It is already said that practice of Dharma achieves liberation, and the most insignificant creature-comforts or the enjoyment of worldly pleasures, consequent on the satisfaction of the cravings of the sense-organs or senses, are not the real fruits." In the words of Bhishma also, it is established that in the case of devotees, who are addicted to Bhakti alone, all their Prarabdha Karmas, i.e., the accumulated sins of past births, along with their despised seed or the root-cause, are gradually destroyed, like the gradual piercing through or the plucking of the petals of the thousand-petalled lotus. This is the opinion of the devotional code, as also of the Srutis, and Gopal Tapani.

Krishna's deeds are unfathomable

"Bhakti is His devotion, which means concentrating the mind in Him, without impediments of any kind, in this world or in the next. This itself is Naishkarmya, i.e., freedom from worldly acts; this means fixing the mind in Sri Krishna, unimpeded and without any extraneous desires; this is nothing else than the employment of the sense-organs and senses in the service of Sri Krishna. This kind of service alone is Naishkarmya, or freedom, or exemption from worldly acts or their consequences. Hence, because of the ultimate similarity (but not identity) of the situations, as the devotees get more and more engrossed and advanced in Bhakti or devotion, their Naishkarmya or exemption from all kinds of worldly acts or their consequences results automatically; but this shows that inactivity or

idleness is not Naishkarmya, unless one engages himself in the service of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. The sustenance of the body or the physical well-being of the devotees, is due to the inexplicable power of the Lord, which is conducive to the attainment, or achievement of the fruit of intense devotion. But their happiness or sorrow which are apparently similar to the happiness or sorrow arising as the fruit of Prarabdha, are assigned by the Lord or caused by His Will only, and what the Srutis say as co-existent with 'Subha' and 'Asubha', i.e., auspicious and inauspicious. How does the Lord Who is Bhaktavatsala (or kind to His devotees), cause affliction to His Own devotees? If any one puts this question, the answer to it, is truly in the affirmative, in the same way as the father who, even if he is kind to his sons, causes pain to them by asking them to study and to give up their enjoyments; he alone knows what this Vatsalya or kindness to his children is and not even those very sons, in the heat of the moment realise it. It should not be construed that the Lord is keen in doing what is beneficial to His devotees, favours only a few Bhaktas like Prahlada, Dhruv, etc., by giving them the means of worldly enjoyments and that He is unfair to His other devotees and causes only grief to them. Even great personages like Yudhishtir - the crest-jewel amongst the most eminent sages with Bhim - the expert in the art of the use of the mace, Arjun - the expert archer with the bow 'Gandiv', and even having the Divine Friend Sri Krishna, had to undergo untold miseries. Even the great Bhishma has uttered the words in grief thus, "O King Yudhishtir! A person can never understand the actions of Sri Krishna in their true perspective, and becomes deluded if he persists in such efforts." The conclusive proof is that He Who is kind to His devotees, alone knows His intention and no one else; this is the true logical conclusion."

God-given griefs -vs- those from one's acts

"Whatever little is inferred therefrom, can be seen there only. Because of the similarity in the enjoyment and suffering of both the kinds of happiness and sorrow, arising as the result of one's own actions (Svakarmottha) and those caused by the Will of the Lord (Bhagavaduttha), what special peculiarity can one see in these two kinds of happiness and misery? **The seed or the root-cause of the former type of happiness or sorrow arising as a consequence of one's acts (Svakarmottha) remain even after their enjoyment or suffering; those who have this seed within them, will again have the disposition to commit fresh sins, persistently indulge in them, and go to the infernal hell; and the enjoyment or suffering as a natural sequence to their good or bad actions, will be in proportion to the latter and so this will be the third result of the triad.** But as the root-cause of those

that are caused by the Will of the Lord, rests in Him only, their (devotees) enjoyment or suffering, will last so long as the necessity is felt by Him and not beyond that. Yama-the god of death, says to his servants. **"Bring those non-devotees here who do not utter the Name and Attributes of the Lord, nor remember Him, nor bow Sri Krishna with their heads even once, nor do any kind of service to Him."** He further says in Nrisimha Purana, **"I have been appointed by the Creator - Who is ever being worshipped by other gods, for maintaining justice amongst the people. I punish those people who do not accept Sri Hari Himself as their Guru; whereas I bow down to those who take shelter as the Lotus Feet of Sri Hari as the Guru."** Hence, from the words of Yama, it is inferred that devotees of the Lord have not to suffer in the infernal hell; because of their being worthy to receive their Lord's affection, they have not to undergo excess of grief or suffering. There is as much difference in the suffering arising as a consequence of one's actions (Svakarmottha), and that caused by the Divine Will (Bhagavaduttha) as there exists between the beatings of one's enemy and the punishment by his own mother. There is as much difference between them as there is between a deadly poison and nectar. One should decide for himself how there could ever be a comparison between these two. For the Supreme Lord Who can do and undo anything and everything, can anyone with any modicum of justice say that He teases His devotees without any adequate cause or that He has nothing else to do, except the teasing of His Own devotees and that too without any just purpose? **Truly there is some purpose behind it. He is an Ocean of Divine Pastimes. To maintain the secrecy of the loving faith, to prevent the total eradication of other creeds, and to enhance the ardent longing, etc., of the devotees for the Divine Beloved Sri Krishna by loving devotion, even causing pain at times to the Bhakta who is always dear to Him, results in the end in his happiness only, like the application of the somewhat irritating collyrium to the eyes.** Similarly if the devotees are always happy, there will not arise any occasion for Him to descend on this earth, as stated in the Gita, "For the protection of the devotees, the destruction of the wicked, and for the maintenance of the Yuga Dharma, I come down on this earth in every age." So if this main reason for His Descent on this earth, as stated in the Gita, were removed, there would not have been the Descents of Sri Krishna, Sri Rama, etc. In that case, how will the devotees enjoy themselves to their heart's content in the Nectarine Ocean of His Divine Pastimes, like the Rasa-Lila, etc.? What wrong would it be for Him to come down here without this sound and appropriate cause of yielding protection to the aggrieved? True but O brother! You seem to lack in the sense and quality of appreciating the

beauty underlying therein. You do not seem to be a Rasabhiṅga! So hear me. The sunrise is appreciated only because of the nights; the sweetness of cold water is experienced only because of the summer or the hot season; hot water is very much liked only in the contrasting cold season; a lamp looks beautiful and is valued and useful only in pitch darkness and not in the sun-light; food tastes sweet only when one is afflicted by extreme hunger; too many instances have already been quoted; so this should be enough."⁵⁴¹

"Such a person at the instance of his kith and kin, though still aspiring after wealth, through My uncommon Grace, Which showers Nectarine Bhakti Rasa on him, and when his efforts prove fruitless, again gets disgusted and seeks the company of My devotees and I oblige him as I would oblige Myself."⁵⁴² A judicious person, who knows his interests well experiencing the ever-existing, limitless, highest, and indistinct (even to him because of its very nature of) loving devotion to Me, and because of its being Spiritual or Transcendental in Nature, having nothing dross or materialistic in it, attains Me, being freed from worldly bondage. "Hence, such of them as were engrossed in the worldly enjoyments and not keen in achieving Moksha, discarding Me, as I am appeased only after intense, very difficult, and selfless devotion, resort to other gods, like Siva, etc. They consider Me, 'Suduraradhya', i.e., very difficult to be pleased or pleased with great difficulty, as I cause their worldly enjoyments to disappear."⁵⁴³ "After obtaining boons to enable them to enjoy the wealth of Kingship from these easy-to-appease gods, they become obstinate, proud, and lascivious (wanton) and forget these gods, who bestowed boons on them and insult them."⁵⁴⁴ Sri Sukadev says, "O King! Sri Vishnu, Brahma, Siva, etc., are quite competent to confer boons or to curse; but Brahma and Siva become pleased with even a little devotion by their devotees, and confer boons on them immediately. Similarly if they are offended, that very moment they curse the offenders; but that is not the way with Sri Krishna."⁵⁴⁵

541 yasyāham anugrṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanaṁ śanaiḥ
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.88.8)

yasyāhamanugrṇāmīti ayamārthaḥ | yo viṣayān parijihīṣurapi
kathañcidvidyamāneṣu viṣayeṣu sajjate kliśyati ca tasya viṣayāpahāra
evānugraha itī yathā śrutatve dhruvādīnāmaīśvāryavirodhāt athavā prathamam
vibhūtiḥ kāmānurupā datvā śanairviṣayabhogāvasāne tasya nirvedamutpādya
hariṣyāmi paramānugrahaṁ kartumīti | taduktīm bhagavataiva "na mayy āveśita-
dhiyām kāmāḥ kāmāya kalpate | bharjitā kvathitā dhānāḥ prāyo bījāya neśate ||
bhā. 10.22.26" itī | duḥkhaduḥkhitamīti duḥkhādanu punarduḥkhitamiva
pratīyamānamītyārthaḥ ||
(bhāvārtha dīpikā; śrī śrīdhara svāmī)

Krishna Bhakti leads to shelter at His Lotus Feet

"Besides even if one performs the services of Sri Krishna for the fulfilment of his various worldly desires, **Sri Krishna gives him shelter at His Lotus Feet voluntarily because the fruit of Sri Krishna's service is the attainment of His Lotus Feet.** Tesham Krishna-charana-praptirev tadbhajan phalamityarthah. Sri Krishna says, **"That fellow is a fool not knowing his own welfare, which consists in taking unconditional and absolute shelter at My Lotus Feet. No doubt he**

duḥkhāt dhanavigamajanyādapi punarduḥkhitam svajanakarṭṛ katyāgāt |
duḥkhamidam bhagavaddattatvāttasya na karmaphalam sukhamapi
bhagavadbhaktānām karmaphalam kintu bhakterananusamhitam phalamiti |
"dharmasya hy āpavargyasya nārtho 'rthāyopakalpate | nārthasya
dharmaikāntasya kāmō lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ | (bhā. 1.2.9)" ityatra bhīṣmuktāvapi
pratipāditaṁ bhaktānām bhaktimātre pravṛtta
evāprārabdhakūṭabījaprārabdhakarmanām krameṇa nāśa
utpalasahasradalabhedavaditi bhaktiśāstramatam | tathāca śrutirgopālatāpanī
"bhaktir asya bhajanam tad ihāmutropādhi-nairāsyenāmuṣmin manaḥ-kalpanam
etad eva ca naiṣkarmyam" iti | arthaśca upādhinairāsyena kāmanārāhityena
namaḥ kalpanam kṛṣṇe mana ādisarvendiyavinīyogo yastadeva bhajanam
etadeva bhajanameva naiṣkarmyamiti bhavati hi tātparyāttācchabdya mataḥ
sāmānādhikaraṇyādbhajane pravṛtta eva bhaktānām naiṣkarmyam
sarvakarmadhvamso bhavati | dehasthitistu
bhajanādhikyatatphalapatipādakabhagavadacintyaśaktereveti | ye tu prārabdhe
phale iva sukhaduḥkhe dr̥śyete te bhagavaddatte eva | yaduktaṁ śrutibhiḥ -
"bhavadutthaśubhāśubhayo" iti bhaktavatsalo bhagavān bhaktebhyaḥ katham
duḥkham dadātīti cen satyam putravatsalo'pi pitā putrebhyo
bhogadūrikaraṇenādhyayanādikṛcchram yaddadāti tadvātsalyam sa eva jānāti
natu tadānīm tatputrā apīti | na ca prahlādaghra vādibhyo mogasampatti -
sukhamātradānāt sādhaakebhya eva hitārthinā bhagavatā duḥkham dīyata iti
vācyam siddhaśiromaṇinām yudhiṣṭhirādīnāmapi " yatra dharmasuto rāja" ityatra
"suhṛt kṛṣṇastato vipat" iti | bhīṣmoktau duḥkhaśravaṇāt | tasmāt "na hyasva
karhicidrājan punām veda vidhistsitam" iti bhīṣmoktestasya vidhistsitam sa eva
bhaktavatsalo veda nānya iti siddhāntaḥ | kiñcittatra samāhitam yattadapi
tatraiva dr̥śyam nanu ca svakarmotthayorbhagavadutthayośca sukha-
duḥkhayorbhogyatvena tulyatvāt ko viśeṣa ucyate karmotthānām
sukhaduḥkhānām bhogenāpi tadvījam tiṣṭhatyeva tadvatām narakapātaśca
karmatāratamyavatām sukhaduḥkhatāratamyāñceti tritayam bhavet |
bhagavadutthānām tu bhagavadicchayaiva bījam sā ca prayojanaparyantaiva na
taduttarā - "jihvā na vakti bhagavad-guṇa-nāmadheyam cetaś ca na smarati tac-
caraṇāravindam | kṛṣṇāya no namati yac-chira ekadāpi tān ānayadhvam asato
'kṛta-viṣṇu-kṛtyān | (bhā. 6.3.29)" yathā hi nṛsihi purāṇe ahamamaragaṇārcitena
dhātṛā yama iti lokahitāhite niyuktaḥ | hariguruvimukhān praśāsmi martān
haricaraṇapraṇatān namaskaromīti yamoktestadvatām na narakapātaḥ
bhagavataḥ snehapātratvāt na duḥkhātīśayaśceti |
svakarmotthabhagavadutthayoḥ śatrukutamāṭṛkṛtatāḍanotthayoriva
duḥkhayorviśāmṛtayoriva kṛtastulyateti vivecanīyam | nanu ca sarvasamarthasya
bhagavato bhaktaduḥkhadānam vinā kim tatprayojanam na sidhyat satyam
līlānidhestasya na sidhyedeva bhaktiyogasya rahasyatvarakṣārtham
nānānyamatānāmutkhātābhāvārtham bhaktautkaṇṭhyādivardhanārthañca kvacit
priyebhyo duḥkhadānamapi tastukhodarkameva yathā nayanābhyām

serves Me; but discarding My Nectarine Lotus Feet, he asks for chaff - the most deadly poison of the fulfilment of his worldly desires. How can I allow him to do so? After all he is a fool; he knows not his own interest; but I am Omniscient. So how can I give him what he asks of Me, like a child that asks of its father to give it some cheap eatables that will upset its health and well-being? Hence I certainly give him My Nectarine Lotus Feet, and make him forget his covetousness to drink the poison of worldliness."⁵⁴⁶

Krishna Bhaktas -vs- other devotees

"Vrikasur practised penance and appeased Siva and obtained from him the boon of reducing those to ashes, on whose head he placed the palm of his hand. Being diffident as to the infallibility of this boon, he

kadutarāñjanadānamiti | tathāhi yadi bhaktāḥ sadā sukhina eva kṛtāḥ syustadā
 "paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām | dharmā-saṁsthāpanārthāya
 sambhavāmi yuge yuge || (gī. 4.8)" iti gītoktanimitābhāve sati
 kṛṣṇarāmādyavatārā api na syuḥ | yadi ca na syustadā rāsādilīlāmṛtasindhau
 bhaktānām khelanam katham syāditi | nanu ca sādhu
 duḥkhatrāṇātmakanimitam vināpi tasyāvatāre ko doṣaḥ syāt ? satyam bho
 bhrātastvam na rasābhijño'si śrūyatām yāminyām satyāmeva sūryodayaḥ
 śobhate grīṣme satyeva śītalāmbhaḥ sukhadam śīte satyevosṇāmbhaḥ
 tamasyeva dīpaḥ śobhate na tu prakāse khutpīḍāyām satyāmevānnamati svādu
 bhavatītyalamativistareṇa ||
 (sārārtha-darśinī; śrī viśvanātha cakravartī)

- 542 sa yadā vitathodyogo nirviṇṇaḥ syād dhanehayā
 mat-paraiḥ kṛta-maitrasya kariṣye mad-anugraham
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.88.9)
- 543 tad brahma paramam sūkṣmam cin-mātram sad anantakam
 vijñāyātmatayā dhīraḥ saṁsārāt parimucyate
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.88.10)
- 544 ato mām su-durārādhyaḥ hitvānyān bhajate janaḥ
 tatas ta āśu-toṣebhyo labdha-rājya-śriyoddhatāḥ
 mattāḥ pramattā vara-dān vismayanty avajānate
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.88.11)
- 545 śāpa-prasādayor īśā brahma-viṣṇu-śivādayaḥ
 sadyaḥ śāpa-prasādo 'nga śivo brahmā na cācyutaḥ
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.88.12)
- 546 teṣam kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-prāptir eva tadbhajana phalam ity arthaḥ
 (caitanya-caritāmṛta m. 22.37; śrī viśvanātha cakravartī-tīkā)
 anya-kāmī yadi kare kṛṣṇera bhajana
 nā māgiteha kṛṣṇa tāre dena sva-caraṇa
 kṛṣṇa kahe, — 'āmā bhaje, māge viṣaya-sukha
 amṛta chāḍi' viṣa māge, — ei baḍa mūrkhā
 āmi — vijñā, ei mūrkhē 'viṣaya' kene diba?
 sva-caraṇāmṛta diyā 'viṣaya' bhulāiba
 (caitanya-caritāmṛta m. 22.37-39)

wanted to experiment its genuineness on Siva only, who ran for his life to Sri Krishna, and was ultimately saved from Vrikasur's experiment."⁵⁴⁷ **"Prahlada, Dhruv, Vibhishana, Bali, Vyas, Ambarish, etc., are devoted to Sri Vishnu, and are dear to Brahma and Siva as well, and make the whole universe auspicious, i.e., are venerated by the whole universe;** there is the other class of devotees like Ravana, Bana, Paundrak, Vrika, Krauncha, etc., who are not liked even by him whose devotees they are, i.e., they are neither liked by Brahma, Siva, nor Sri Hari. Hence, they are the enemies of the whole universe, i.e., they are hated by all."⁵⁴⁸ "Siva may be a devotee of Sri Vishnu, or Sri Vishnu may Himself be a follower of Siva (as He is Bhaktaparadhin), or Sri Vishnu, Brahma, and Siva may even be treated on a par with one another. But seeing the practices of the devotees of Brahma and Siva, and bowing down those two with my head, I take absolute shelter at the Lotus Feet of Sri Upendra (Sri Krishna) as His servant."⁵⁴⁹

What Krishna bestows on His Bhaktas

The gods say with reference to Sri Krishna thus, "It is true that Sri Krishna confers on them the boons asked of Him; but He does not bestow on them 'Paramartha' or the highest or the most sublime goal; because as soon as they enjoy the fruit of His boons pertaining to this world, they ask Him again for other worldly gains. Does this mean that He does not give anything to those, who do not ask of Him anything and serve Him selflessly? Sri Vyasadev removes this doubt by emphatically stating, **"He (Sri Krishna) of His Own accord, confers on His selfless servitors the Shelter of His tender Lotus Feet Which are the Fulfillers of all their spiritual desires and Which form the cover for their worldly cravings. The selfless devotees are truly blessed. Besides even if one serves Him (Sri Krishna) with some ulterior motives, He out of His causeless Mercy, bestows only the highest and ultimate good. When He is supplicated, He really grants the boon;** but He never

547 atra codāharantīmam itihāsam purātanam
vṛkāsurāya giriśo varam dattvāpa saṅkaṭam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.88.13)

548 prahlāda dhruva rāvaṇānujabali vyāsam varīṣādaya ste
śrī viṣṇu parāyaṇā vidhi bhavapreṣṭhā jaganmaṅgalāḥ
ye 'nya rāvaṇa bāṇa pauṇḍraka vṛka krauñcādayaste svayam
yad bhakta na ca tat priyā na ca hares tasmajjagad vairiṇaḥ
(siddhānta-ratna, śrī baladeva vidyabhūṣaṇa)

549 śivo bhavatu vaiṣṇavaḥ kim ajito 'pi śaivaḥ svayam
tathā samatayāthavā vidhiharādi mūrti trayam
vilokya bhavavedhasoḥ kim api bhakta varga kramam
praṇamya śirasā hi tau va yam upendra dāsyam śrītāḥ
(siddhānta-ratna, śrī baladeva vidyabhūṣaṇa)

confers such worldly boons a second time, even if such requests are repeated, because He is the bestower of boons, and worldly enjoyments are disastrous in the end. Then what does He grant? He of His Own accord bestows upon His devotees the highest boon of shelter at His tender Lotus Feet, even if they were never desired by the latter. Because by so doing, he is not troubled any more by worldly desires. **Hence, He confers on His Bhakta the highest good, although the latter prayed for 'Anartha' as it is in His very Nature to favour thus.** It is because of this very Nature that a mother who removes earth from the hands or mouth of her children, even if they cry aloud and are unwilling to part with it, gives them sugar candy. **In the end, the devotees become attached or devoted to His Lotus Feet, without craving for the earth-like worldly enjoyments.**"⁵⁵⁰

Selfless service -vs- selfish service

"Those of the devotees who practise pure loving devotion, though for the fulfilment of some desires, become equally blessed like the selfless devotees. When He (Sri Krishna) is served by His devotees and begged to grant certain worldly boons, He does confer such boons on them; but if such supplications are repeated, at the end of the enjoyment of those conferred first, He never confers such mundane favours on them a second time, as the worldly enjoyments are disastrous in the end. How is this understood? "The desires are not satiated by enjoying the objects of such desires; on the contrary, they increase endlessly like the fire that increases in proportion to the ghee added." "Because He of His Own accord and unasked, bestows upon His devotees like Dhruv, etc., who

550 satyaṁ diśaty arthitam arthito nṛṇāṁ
naivārthado yat punar arthitā yataḥ
svayaṁ vidhatte bhajatām anicchatām
icchāpidhānaṁ nija-pāda-pallavam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 5.19.27)

tatrāpi niṣkamaḥ kṛtārthā ityāhuḥ "satyam" iti | prārthitaḥ san arthitam
dadātīti satyaṁ tathāpi paramārthado na bhavatyeva | yadyasmāt yato
dattādanantaram punararthitā bhavati | nanu nārthitaścet kimapi na dadyāt
ityāśamkyāhuḥ anicchatām niṣkāmānāntu icchānām vidhānam ācchādakam
sarvakāmaparipūrakam nijapādapallavam svayameva sampādayatīti ||
(bhāvārtha dīpikā)

yadvā kāmenāpi bhajatām kṛpayā paramahitameva vidhatte ityāhuḥ
"satyaṁ diśati" iti | arthitaḥ san arthitam dadāti iti satyaṁ punararthito daiva
dadāti | kutaḥ yataḥ arthadaḥ saḥ vibayāścānarthāḥ | tarhi kim dadāti
ityapekṣyāmahuḥ | nijapādapallavamanicchatāmapi teṣāṁ svayaṁ vidhatte |
yataḥ ko'pi kāmo nodeti | ata eva anarthaprārthane paramārthad eva | evaṁ
prakṛtirbhagavān | yathā mātā bālānām mṛdamapahāya rūdatāmanicchatām
śarkarām dadāti | jñātaraso'hi vālo mṛdamapahāya śarkarāyamanurajyate |
tadvaditi bhāvaḥ ||
(tīppanī, cai.ca.ma. 22.40, śrī viśvanātha cakravartī)

serve Him selflessly, the highest boon of Shelter at His tender Lotus Feet, Which form a cover for the desires, i.e., because He forcibly gives shelter to such devotees at His Lotus Feet and clouds their desires therewith; thereby they are no more troubled by worldly desires. And again like children who give up their desires for earth after obtaining (unasked) a piece of sugar candy from their father, these devotees giving up worldly desires, achieve shelter at His Lotus Feet." "A wise person who is desirous of obtaining Moksha (Sri Krishna) should serve the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna with intense devotion, with or without ulterior desires." **Here 'Akamatah' means a devotee who wholly serves Sri Krishna or who firmly believes that his happiness consists solely in pleasing the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Who is the Object of his worship.** 'Tivrena' means unalloyed or unadulterated with Jnan, Karma, etc., like the intensely hot autumnal sun's rays uncovered by the clouds. It should not be understood that there is absolute similarity in the mode of the ultimate achievement of the tender Lotus Feet of the Lord by the selfless devotees and those who have got their desired objects. The mode of the Sakama devotees is not pure by nature, but is completely refined; an object is assessed or judged on its merits. **Hence, the selfless service of devotees, like Hanuman, is far superior to that of Dhruv, etc.**"⁵⁵⁰

Krishna is Svayam Bhagavan

Sri Krishna is Ecstasy Incarnate and hence accepts only our love and gives love in return too. Worldly pleasures, such as Bhukti, Mukti, etc., are as nothing before Sri Krishna Prem. Devotion to Sri Krishna is the highest form of Bhakti and Sri Krishna-Nama-Sankirtan is the most exalted in Navavidha Bhakti. "Ete chamsa kalah pumsah Krishnas tu Bhagavan

śrddham bhaktim kurvāṇastu sakāmā api kṛtārthā niṣkāmabhaktatulyā eva bhavantītyāhuḥ | satyamiti | nṛṇaṃ bhajatāmarthitaṃ kāmītaṃ padārtha tairarthitaḥ san diśati dadātīti satya kintu yadyathā punararthitā bhogānte yācakatvaṃ syāttathāṃ naivārthadaḥ | kathamevamavagatamityata āha | "na jātu kāmāḥ kāmānāmupabhogena śāmyati | haviṣā kṛṣṇavartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate || bha. 9.19.14" yataḥ nijapādapallavamanicchatāmapi bhajatām svayameva dhruvādīnāmiva icchāpidhānaṃ sarvakāmācchādakaṃ tadeva nijapādapallavaṃ vidhatte kṛpayā dadāti nijapādapallavaṃ svayameva balādrtvā icchāyāḥ pidhānamācchādanam vidhatte karotīti vā | tataścānabhīpsitāmapi sitaśarkarāṃ pituḥ sakāśāt prāpya śīśavo yathā mṛdi sprhām tyajanti tathaiva kāmānapītyarthaḥ | ataeva "akāmāḥ sarvakāmo vā mokṣakāma udāradhīḥ | tivreṇa bhaktiyogena yajeta puruṣaṃ param || bha. 2.3.10" ityādau tivreṇa jñānakarmādyamiśreṇa bhaktiyogena yajetetyuktam | atra niṣkāmānām sakāmānāṅca bhaktānāmantaḥ pādapallavapraptāvapi naiva sarvathā aikarupyam bhāvanīyam | na hi jātyaiva śuddham balāt śodhitaṅca vastutulyamūlyam bhavatyato dhruvādibhyaḥ sakāśāddhavumadādīnāmuktarṣaḥ parama eva drśyata iti || (sārārtha darśinī)

Svayam"⁵⁵¹ says that all these Avataras already mentioned and those to be mentioned later or further, are all the Partial Manifestations in greater or lesser degree of the Purush - Sri Maha-Vishnu; **but Sri Krishna is Svayam Bhagavan. He is full of Shadaisvarya, i.e., the six Divine Attributes in the fullest measure. These reside in Him and emanate from Him only. He does not depend upon others like the Purush for the manifestation of these Saktis, as the other Manifestations depend on Purush or Maha-Vishnu.** It is again said, "Sri Krishna is Himself the Supreme Lord of Trailokya and as He is ever being served by the Samrajya Lakshmi Herself, none of His desires yet remains to be fulfilled; Emperor of gods like Indra and other Kings offer tributes to Him and honour His Footstool by the tips of their crowns."⁵⁵² **The epithet 'Svayam' is used in the case of Sri Krishna alone and not in the case of any other Avataras. "I bow that Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Who manifested Himself in all His fullness of the six Divine Qualities as Krishna, also known as 'Govinda', the Supreme Being, Who inspired the Avataras like Rama, etc., with only the partial and restricted manifestation of His 'Aisvarya' or Divine Attributes."**⁵⁵³

'Krishna' Nama reigns supreme

"Hence, amongst the various forms of Sri Krishna Kirtan, like reading Puranas, chanting the Vedas, singing His Praises, or describing His Attributes, or hearing His Pastimes, etc., **the Sankirtan or the incessant, clear, and loud chanting of His Names is important, as it quickly kindles in the chanter's heart a craving to love Sri Krishna of its own accord and without having to take resort to other courses like Dhyān, etc. This then matures into a wealth of Divine Love.** 'Tannama sankirtanamev mukhyam' also means 'Tat Sri 'Krishna' Nama-Sankirtanamev sreshthatamam', i.e. **His Sri 'Krishna' Nama-Sankirtan is the most important one, because that is the**

551 ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.3.28)

552 svayaṁ tv asāmyātīśayas tryadhīśaḥ
svārājya-lakṣmy-āpta-samasta-kāmaḥ
balim haradbhiś cira-loka-pālaiḥ
kirīṭa-koṭy-eḍita-pāda-pīṭhaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 3.2.21)

553 rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan
nānāvātāram akarod bhuvaneṣu kintu
kṛṣṇaḥ svayaṁ samabhavat paramaḥ puṁān yo
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi
(brahma-saṁhitā 5.39)

Name most dear to Him."⁵⁵⁴ "O hero (Arjun)! Out of all My Names, 'Krishna' is the most important Name. It is the sole atonement for all the sins and is also the Best Rescuer."⁵⁵⁵

"The Name 'Krishna' was always most dear to all the Gopis, and so was 'It' to Krishna too. Whenever they were separated from Him or even when they were enjoying His very company they used to utter 'Krishna', 'Krishna', accompanied by the nodding of their heads to indicate their consent and even when the Rasa dance readied its climax, these Gopis never forget to utter 'Krishna', 'Krishna' incessantly. **They were so much enamoured and attracted by 'Krishna', 'Krishna-varnah' - the syllables 'Kri-shna', the 'Krishna-varna' - the colour of the rain-bearing clouds, 'Krishna' Svarup, etc., that they always used to think and dream of 'Krishna'. Whenever they saw anything black, the peacock, the Kadamba tree, or even the black hair they were reminded of their Divine Lover Sri Krishna. The word 'Krishna' had become their very life-breath. This was the name most dear to them. They liked very much to address Him by this particular distinguished Name which charmed them the most.** 'Krishneti varnayugala-sravananubandha pradurbhavajjadimadambar sanvrintangim'; **when such is the overpowering effect of the Name 'Krishna', it is but quite natural that they should call Him by the Primeval and most important Name 'Krishna', dear both to Him and to them as well, as these twin syllables 'Kri-shna' embrace all the aspects of His marvellous Form, Attributes, Pastimes, etc., and thus ever dwell in their mind and heart."⁵⁵⁶**

554 kṛṣṇasya nānā-vidha-kīrtaneṣu
tan-nāma-saṅkīrtanam eva mukhyam
tat-prema-sampaj-janane svayaṁ drāk
śaktam tataḥ śreṣṭhatamaṁ mataṁ tat
(bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta 2.3.158)
tat śrī kṛṣṇa nāma saṅkīrtanam eva śreṣṭhatamaṁ mataṁ
sadbhirasmabhirvā

See footnote 336

555 nāmnām mukhyataram nāma kṛṣṇākhyam me parantapa
prāyaścittam aśeṣāṇām pāpānām mocakam param
(prabhāsa purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.498)

556 punaḥ pulinam āgatya kālindyāḥ kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāḥ
samavetā jaguḥ kṛṣṇam tad-āgamana-kāṅkṣitāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.30.44)
kṛṣṇaḥ śarac-candramasaṁ kaumudī-kumudākaram
jagau gopī-janas tv ekaṁ kṛṣṇa-nāma punaḥ punaḥ
rāsa-geyaṁ jagau kṛṣṇo yāvattārayat adhvaniḥ
sādhu kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti tāvat tā dviguṇam jaguḥ
(viṣṇu purāṇa)

The blind devotee, Sri Bilvamangal was being led by Sri Krishna to Vrindavan by holding the former's stick. As they neared the place, Sri Krishna told him, "See! here is Vrindavan. Please let Me go now." Sri Bilvamangal, being overwhelmed with the help rendered by the Cowboy, held fast to His Hand out to gratitude and by the Divine Touch of Sri Krishna, he was overcome with ecstasy. He realised that the Cowboy was None Other than Sri Krishna Himself. He held fast and still more firmly than before to Sri Krishna's Hand and would not leave It, although implored by the Latter. Then Sri Krishna with a jerk of His Hand, got It released from his hold. And Jo! the following words spontaneously came out of his mouth. "O Krishna! What wonder is there that You forcibly got Yourself released from the hold of my hand? I shall certainly consider it a great feat of Yours, if You can leave my heart!" **This Sloka aptly describes the most loving challenge thrown to Sri Krishna by one of His greatest devotees to leave his heart and the Latter's Bhaktaparadhinata before which the Lord's other powers pale into insignificance. It also shows the unbreakable power of the silken cords of loving devotion to Sri Krishna with which He is bound to His devotees. This is quite in keeping with the Lord's words: 'Ye yatha mam prapadyante tamstathaiv bhajamyaham' (Gita 4.11), i.e., I serve them in the same way as they serve Me. By practising loving devotion, this stage is reached, when he cannot forget the Lord and His Name, even if he wants to, nor the Lord too can obliterate Himself from the devotee's heart and mind, even if requested to do so, as in the above case.**^{556.1}

Sri Rupa Gosvami's following Sloka describes a stage higher than the above, reached by Sri Radhika. **"Look at the irony of things! That pretty Maiden Radhika - the Embodiment of innocence, wants to divert Her Mind from 'Krishna', for Whose mere glimpse even the sages yearn with their heart and soul, and divert their minds from worldly objects and concentrate on Him. Similarly the Yogis too try their utmost to have even His slightest glimpse in their hearts as in a flash. But this Sri Radhika, in Her youthful simplicity,**

kr̥ṣṇeti-varṇa-yugala-śravaṇānubandha-
prādurbhavaj-jaḍi maḍ-ambara-saṁvitāṅgīm
(stava-mālā; utkalikā-vallarīḥ 14)

he kr̥ṣṇeti
sarva tadīyādbhuta rupa guṇa kṛḍākrodī kāritayā santa taṁ
nijāntaḥ sphuratā viśeṣya nāmnā prathamataḥ sambodhanam
(vaiṣṇava-tantra)

556.1 hastam ākṣīpya yāto'si balāt kṛṣṇa kim adbhutam
hṛdayād api niryāsi pauruṣaṁ gaṇayāmi te
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta; tr̥tīya-śataka 95)

wants to rid Her Heart of His memory even, but cannot do so."^{556.2}
 "For, those in whose hearts a feeling of selfless love for 'Krishna' sprouts, alone realise that separation from Him causes distress more severe than even the acutest suffering caused by the most deadly and fresh poison known as 'Kalakut'; similarly union with Him causes ecstasy which throws the joy caused by the sweetness naturally flowing from Nectar entirely into the background. In the same way those moments when 'Krishna' Nama does not appear on the tongue should be more bitter than the worst suffering in hell, and the moment when 'Krishna' Nama appears on the tongue or when It is heard by the ears, will cause ecstasy which will surely excel the proverbial sweetness of Nectar, provided there is adequate intensity of love for 'Krishna' Nama in the Sevak."^{556.3}

The following lines show the magic effect of Krishna Nama on Sri Radhika, Who is at a loss to know as to what She should do. So She speaks to Her intimate friends thus:-

**Who hath made Me hear Sri 'Krishna' Nama?
 For It has twanged My vitals by Its charm!
 O! My soul is in dire distress!
 How charming is Its sweetness!
 I ask thee in all meekness.
 My mouth can't leave It in any event!
 Muttering It every moment,
 It causes separation's torment.
 All is lost, even My self-control!
 O! Tell Me how I should see Him alone?
 If by the prowess of the Name alone,
 It thus afflicts My Soul and makes Me feel lone,
 O! Tell Me what will not His magic touch cause?
 For thus awhile to think I pause!
 If ever I stay at the place where He stays,
 Family name is sure to be stained in disgrace.
 I'm doing My best to forget Him and yet,
 Quite unable am I Him to forget.**

556.2 pratyāhṛtya muniḥ kṣaṇam viṣayato yasmin mano dhitsate
 bālāsau viṣayeṣu dhitsati tataḥ pratyāharantī manaḥ
 yasya sphūrtilavāya hanta hṛdaye yogī sumutkaṇṭhate
 mugdheyam kila tasya paśya hṛdayān niṣkrāntim ākāṅkṣati
 (vidagdha-mādhava 2.17)

556.3 pīḍābhir nava-kāla-kūṭa-kaṭutā-garvasya nirvāsano
 niḥsyandena mudām sudhā-mādhurīmāhaṅkāra-saṅkocanaḥ
 premā sundari nanda-nandana-paro jāgarti yasyāntare
 jñāyante sphuṭam asya vakra-madhurās tenaiva vikrāntayaḥ
 (vidagdha-mādhava 2.18)

**O! What shall I do or where shall I go?
It affects My reputation, I can't forego.
At last it has thus come to pass!
So sings piteously Dvija Chandidas.⁵⁵⁷**

When Sri Radhika is too much afflicted by grief caused by the pangs of separation from Sri Krishna, She wails thus:

**T'is certain that I shall die, as die I must,
But with Krishna-virtues' treasureland whom to trust?
My best friends you have been so dear to My Heart!
Tattoo My Body, if I die, with 'Krishna', on your part,
Lalita dear, sure shall utter into My ears 'Krishna' Nama.
That on deathbed I may hear My life's Sole Psalm.
Nor burn My Body nor consign to Yamuna in a huff,
But hang It on safely on the lofty Tamal bough.
The Tamal like Krishna is in colour of sky-blue hue,
Let My Body, if you please, in unconsciousness rue.
My Belov'd whene'er happens to visit Vraja's land,
Instilled with life I shall, kenning Him stand.
Unable if I am to see Him for any reason,
Let separation's fire burn Me this very season.⁵⁵⁸**

557 sakhi, kevā śunāila kṛṣṇa-nāma
kānera bhitara diyā marama paśila go
ākula karila mora prāṇa
na jāni kateka madhu śyāma-nāme āche go
vadana chāḍite nāhi pāre
japite japite nāma avaśa karila go
kemanē pāiba sakhi tāre
nāma-paratāpe jāra aichana karila go
aṅgera paraśe kibā haya
jekhāne vasati tā'ra nayane dekhiyā go
yuvati dharama kaiche raya
pāsarite cāhimane pāsarā nā yāya go
ki kariba ki habe upāya
kahe dvija-caṅḍīdāse kulavatī kulanāśe
apanāra yauvana jācāya

558 mariba mariba sakhi niścaya mariba
kṛṣṇa hena guṇanidhi kāre diyā yāba
tomarā yateka sakhi theke majhu saṅge
maraṇa kāle kṛṣṇa nāma likha mora aṅge
lalitā prānera sakhi mantra dio kāne
morā deha paḍe yena kṛṣṇa nāma śune
nāpoḍāio mora anganā bhāsāio jale
marile tuliye rakho tamālera ḍāle
sei se tamāla taru kṛṣṇa-varṇa haya
acetana tanu mora tāhe yena raya

Call 'Krishna' with a feeling of separation

Sri Madhavendra Puri - a great devotee of Sri Krishna, was always engrossed in calling 'Krishna' with an intense feeling of love-sickness. Though he was a Sanyasi, he was a great Prem Bhakta. He used to lose his body consciousness and transport with divine ecstasy by the mere sight of a rain-bearing cloud or a peacock, being reminded of Sri Krishna and His eternal Sports. He is the Param Guru of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and is the first off-shoot of the unique cult of unalloyed loving devotion to Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna used to sport with him, as a Cowboy. Sri Madhavendra Puri was always submerged in the intense feeling of separation from Sri Krishna, and Sri Krishna Prem, and in the climax of this particular sentiment and mood, he addressed Sri Krishna and calling Him in utter anguish of heart and uttering his own Sloka^{558.1} in his last moments, he

kavahum̐ se piyā yadi āse vṛndāvane
parāṇa pāyaba hāma piyā daraśane
puna yadi cānda mukha daraśanā pāva
viraha anale māha tanu teyāgiba

558.1 ayi dīnadayādra nātha he
mathurānātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayam̐ tvad-aloka-kātaram̐
dayita bhrāmyati kiṁ karomy aham
(padyāvalī 330)

mahāviraheṇa bhāvaśāvalyodayāt kṛṣṇam̐ prati yadāha tat
śrīmanmādhavendrapurīpādānam̐ padyenānuvarṇayati ayīti | tatra prathamam̐
svāparādhenāsau naiṣyatīti matvā paramadainyodayāt sakāku prāha ayīti
komalasaṁmbodhane madvidhe dīnajane yā dayā nirargalakaruṇā tayaivādraḥ
paramasnigdhaḥ he tādrśa yadyapyaham̐ tvayyaparādhinī tathāpi
dayādracittatvena dīnāyai mahyam̐ darśanam̐ dehīti bhāvaḥ | punaḥ
pūtanādivadhasmarāṇena nirdayatvasphūrtyā sambodhayati he nātheti |
strīvadhādiṣvatinirdayatvena tavāsmākam̐ tyāgo na vigīta iti bhāvaḥ | yadvā
dakhīnatvasphūrtyāha nātha sarvajanarakṣaka tādrśasvabhāvam̐ tvaktvā asmān
mārayitum̐ katham̐ mathurām̐ gato'si | yadvā pālanādiguṇasphūrtyāha he nātha
tvayā vayam̐ bahuśo rakhitāḥ kathamadhunā tyaktum̐ yogya iti punardenyam̐ |
punarīrṣyayā sambodhayati | he madhurānātha mathurānāgarībhirḥ tacittatvāt
kathām̐ grāmyān asmān ramayitumāgamiṣyasīti | yadvā nanu yuṣmākamaham̐
sadā pālakaḥ mathurāsthānām̐ yādavādīnām̐ sukham̐ vidhātumaham̐ kati dināni
tatra tiṣṭāmīti | tatra sadainyamāha | he māthurajanapālaka tvamasmābhiḥ
kadāvalokyase | nanu suhṛdām̐ sukhavīdhānānantaramevāgamiṣyāmīti cettatra
savaikalyamāha | he dayita prānatoṣaka tavāloko yadadarśanam̐ tena kātaram̐
sat hṛdayam̐ bhrāmyati na svāस्थ्यam̐ prāpnoti ataḥ kimaham̐ karomi dayitatayā
tat tvameva vadetyarthaḥ | bhāvādīnām̐ lakṣaṇam̐ yathā |
mahāśaktivilāsātmābhāvo'cintyasvarupabhāk | ratvākhva ityayam̐ yukto nahi
tarkeṇa bādhitum̐ | śabalatvantu bhāvānām̐ saṁmardaḥ syāt parasparam̐ iti |
prāyastatraiva mohanodayāt sarva sambhavitumarhatīti | tathāca modano'yam̐
praviśleṣadaśāyām̐ mohano bhavet | yasmin virahavaivaśyāt sudīptā eva
sātvikāḥ | prāyo vṛndāvaneśvaryām̐ mohano'yamudañcatīti | samyag vilakṣaṇam̐
yasya kārya sañcāri mohana ityādi ||

(śrī vīracandra gosvāmī kṛta-rasika-raṅgadā ṭīkā)

concluded his Lila in this world. "Due to the blazing up of a variety of sentiments consequent on the separation from the Divine Beloved, Sri Madhavendra Puri expresses his emotions in his direct appealing address to Sri Krishna as 'Ayi', which is an affectionate and appealing term of address. Pray bless me with Your Sight. You are the Embodiment of infinite sweetness, infinite kindness, and limitless munificence (Madhurya, Karunya, and Audarya). Whereas, I am lacking in adequate power (Anurupa Abhiruchi) to relish Your sweetness and an adequate craving to plunge myself therein. Out of extreme kindness, You bestow Your sweetness on all who show the least 'Sevonmukhata', irrespective of their fitness to receive your Kindness or not; You drown all those aspirants who show the least 'Sevonmukhata', i.e., a craving for better service while being in service (Sevayam sevayai unmukhata). You are the Protector of all. So, why not protect me? On many occasions in the past, You have protected me. Why not kindly do so again? Or is it that You are a Tormentor? For You did not hesitate even to kill a woman! You killed Putana without taking her sex into consideration. You are now the Lord of Mathuravasis and have been attracted by townswomen; and that is why You show Your aversion to Vrajavasis, who are rustics like me! You are the Lord of Madhurya Rasa; so why not give me a taste of It too? When will You ever be seen by me? When shall I have the good fortune to have Your Sight? My heart is distressed without You! O Merciful Lord! My heart is extremely restless for want of a sight of You. I cannot bear the separation from You any longer. My heart becomes unsteady and enters into a stupor. Your separation stupefies me. What shall I do? Where shall I go? To whom but You alone shall I resort? What am I doing here? So saying and in extreme agony of heart and anguish, Sri Madhavendra Puri breathed his last." **It is with such extreme feeling of separation and anguish of heart that the Lord must be directly called by His Name 'Krishna' by Which He is as good as purchased and is compelled to give His Darsan to His ardent devotee.**^{558.1}

'Krishna' Nama makes Krishna subservient

"Any one of the Names pertaining to the Descent of Sri Krishna will grant all the advantages that one obtains by the thrice repetition of the auspicious thousand Names (Sri Vishnu-Sahasra-Nama)."⁵⁵⁹ "Arjun, with an eye on the Pasupatastra, having muttered 'Krishna' Nama to the fullest extent, not only got it, but became as dear to Him as His very Soul, Whom he got as his Divine Charioteer."⁵⁶⁰ "Why praise more? By merely uttering any Name pertaining to 'Krishnavatar' or Krishna's Descent constantly, one

559 sahasra-nāmnām puṇyānām trir-āvṛṭṭyā tu yat phalam
ekāvṛṭṭyā tu kṛṣṇasya nāmaikaṁ tat prayacchati
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.488)

can obtain excessive joy right from Brahmananda or Spiritual Bliss leading finally to association with Krishna Himself in His eternal service."⁵⁶¹ "One who, having killed a Brahmin with his own hands out of excessive infatuation or lust or having drunk liquor, utters only 'Krishna', 'Krishna' and nothing else, becomes absolutely pure. The word 'Atyanta' indicates 'Sakshat' i.e., in person or with his own hands and in plenty; the participle 'Hanan'. i.e. having killed, shows his desisting from such heinous acts. Similarly 'Suram piban', i.e., having copiously drunk liquor, but has now given up this dirty habit. 'Ahoratramekamev Sankirtya' indicates excess of Sankirtan; or even if he having drunk liquor, day in and day out, utters only 'Krishna', 'Krishna', becomes absolutely auspicious and pure; or even if he drinks liquor day and night, but utters 'Krishna', 'Krishna', he becomes purified."⁵⁶²

"O King! Even crores of the vilest sins of the person are totally destroyed, in whose speech the most auspicious 'Krishna' Nama somehow predominantly exists, i.e. the 'Krishna' Nama somehow manifests itself in his mouth, without faith, etc., and unintentionally. His sins are not only immediately destroyed, but his speech too becomes highly propitious. Even if It remains in his mouth as a symbol, without his having any faith, the result is always good, as it is in Its very nature to be very auspicious to all."⁵⁶³ "I lift him who daily remembers even once My Name 'Krishna', even from the most infernal hell, as I lift the earth at the time of the universal destruction; or like the lotus immersed in water, I lift him who is immersed in the hell of worldliness. He will be untouched or unaffected by worldliness any more, indicating his liberation there from, as is the case with the lotus that has burst forth from the quagmire."⁵⁶⁴ "A person

560 idam kirīṭi samjapya jayī pāśupatāstra-bhāk
kṛṣṇasya prāṇa-bhūtaḥ san kṛṣṇam sārathim āptavān
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.489)

561 kim idam bahunā śamsan mānuṣānanda-nirbharaḥ
brahmānandam avāpyānte kṛṣṇa-sāyujyam āpnuyāt
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.490)

562 hanan brāhmaṇam atyantam kāmato vā surām piban
kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇety aho-rātram saṅkīrtya śucitām iyāt
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.494)

atyantam sāksāt svahastena bāhulyenetyarthaḥ | tatra ca hanan dhnanniti
vartamānanirdeśēnānivr̥tti bodhayati | evamanyatrāpyuhyam |
ahoratramekameva saṅkīrtya iti saṅkīrtanasya bāhulyamātramabhipretam |
yadvā ahorātram surām pibannapīti sambanadhāḥ

563 kṛṣṇeti maṅgalaṁ nāma yasya vāci pravartate
bhasmībhavanti rājendra mahā-pātaka-koṭayaḥ
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.495)

564 kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti kṛṣṇeti yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ
jalam bhittvā yathā padmam narakād uddharāmy aham
(nṛsimha-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.496)

hearing the Vaishnav Mantra 'Krishna' - the Divine Remedy even to him who is lost to himself, being bitten by the serpent-like worldliness will become liberated there from. 'Krishna' Nama is the medicine to revive a person who has lost his consciousness, being bitten by the serpent of worldliness. There is no other remedy so sure as this 'Krishna' Nama, i.e., It is second to none."⁵⁶⁵

"O hero! Amongst all My Names, 'Krishna' is the most important Name. It is the sole atonement for all sins and is also the Best Rescuer. The word 'Mochak' means the Giver or Bestower of the highest Mukti, i.e., Sri Krishna Himself."⁵⁶⁶ "He who utters 'Krishna', 'Krishna', in whatever situation he be placed or wherever he may be, attains the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna in Golok."⁵⁶⁷ "O Ballavikanta (Gopa)! Why should you entertain any idea for practising other courses, so long as the 'Krishna' Nama ever exists on your tongue? When the Name 'Krishna' throbs on your tongue, even Mahakal will be afraid of you. What is the earthly good of following Karmamarga, Jnanamarga, Yoga, etc. or even other forms of devotion, like Sravana, i.e., hearing His Pastimes, etc? When 'Krishna' Nama always manifests on the tongue, It curbs the 'Tritapas' or the three kinds of distress caused by this Samsar or the course of worldly life, or It makes him averse to liberation as 'Krishna' Nama is more full of Transcendental Bliss and is of a higher order than the state of liberation. It makes even Krishna subservient to the devotee, in spite of the latter and much against his will."⁵⁶⁸

'Krishna' Nama is weightier than Nami

"I am telling you, O Sambhu nothing but the bare truth, which is to be properly cherished. Sri 'Krishna' Nama is the Divine Elixir to restore

565 saṁsāra-sarpa-saṁdaṣṭam naṣṭa-ceṣṭaika-bheṣajam
kṛṣṇeti vaiṣṇavam mantraṁ śrutvā mukto bhaven naraḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.497)

566 nāmnām mukhyataram nāma kṛṣṇākhyam me parantapa
prāyaścittam aṣeṣāṇām pāpānām mocakam param
(prabhāsa-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.498)

567 yatra yatra sthito vāpi kṛṣṇa-kṛṣṇeti kīrtayet
sarva-pāpa-viśuddhātmā sa gacchet paramām gatim
(pādma-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.499)

568 ballavī-kānta kim tais tair upāyaiḥ kṛṣṇa-nāma te
kintu jihvāgragam jāgran nirundhe hi mahā-bhayam
(viṣṇu-dharma; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.500)

taistaiḥ karmajñānādibhiḥ śravaṇādibhaktiprakāraiśca kim ? jāgat sadā
prakāśamānam jihvāggamapi san mahābhayam saṁsāram nirundhe vyāvartayati
; yadvā mahadabhayam mokṣastamapi nirundhe tato 'pi
paramānandaraviśeṣamayatvāt ||

even death itself or like the life-restoring remedy to the dead."⁵⁶⁹ "He who breathes his last, uttering 'Krishna', 'Krishna', 'Krishna', by the first utterance of the Name Krishna', he attains to His Lotus Feet and the 'Krishna', 'Krishna' uttered a second and a third time, remain ever indebted to the utterer out of a sense or feeling of shame due to Their indebtedness. This shows that 'Krishna' Nama ever remains in his mouth, i.e., It will always manifest Itself on his tongue; since the Possessor of the Name is not different from the Nama, He too, will ever remain indebted to the utterer, indicating that the Lord too, is won over by uttering His Name."⁵⁷⁰ **"I bow down to those whom the twin syllables 'Kri-shna' cause to dance out of rapturous joy, as soon as they enter into their ears and the hair on whose bodies to bristle up out of thrills and whose sandals even are quite capable of liberating those stuck in the quagmire of chronic worldliness."**⁵⁷¹ "Spiritual knowledge has found comparison by the fruits that it accomplishes as in the Sloka 'Salokya-sarshti-sarupya', etc.; **but it has never been possible to weigh the selfless loving devotion to Krishna, Who is actually won over more by loving devotion than by the acquisition of spiritual knowledge.** Similarly the 'Ashta Siddhis' or the mystic supernatural powers by practising which, everything belonging to this mundane world can be achieved, except the Lord, are of no consequence and can be compared too with the results that they achieve. **But Sri 'Krishna' Nama has never been compared, as It is weightier than even Sri 'Krishna' Svarup**"^{571.1} Those who taste the sweetness of the ever-blissful Sri 'Krishna' Nama, do not care to entertain the least possible

569 satyam bravīmi te śambho gopanīyam idaṁ mama
mṛtyu-samjīvanīm nāma kṛṣṇākhyām avadhāraya
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.501)

570 kṛṣṇaḥ kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa ity anta-kāle
jalpan jantur jīvitam yo jahāti
ādyaḥ śabdaḥ kalpate tasya muktyai
vrīḍā-namrau tiṣṭhato'nyāvṛṇasthau
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.502)

antakāle maraṇasamaye'pi ādyaḥ prāguktiḥ śabdaḥ kṛṣṇanām anyau dvau
śabdau ṛṇasthau ṛṇinau tiṣṭhatiḥ tadvasyatayā kṛṣṇakṛṣṇeti sadā tanmukhādiṣu
prādurbhavatīti bhāvaḥ | nāmanāminorabhedena nāmna ṛṇasthatvāt nāmīno'pi
ṛṇasthatayā bhagavadvaśīkāritvam jñeyam ||

571 tebhyo namo'stu bhava-vāridhi-jīrṇa-paṅka-
samagna-mokṣaṇa-vicakṣaṇa-pādukebhyaḥ
kṛṣṇeti varṇa-yugalam śravaṇena yeṣāṁ
ānandathūrbhavati nartita-roma-vṛndaḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.504)

571.1 jñānam asti tulitam ca tulāyām
prema naiva tulitam tu tulāyām
siddhir eva tulitātra tulāyām
kṛṣṇa-nāma tulitam na tulāyām
(padyāvalī 15)

longing for liberation in the remotest corner of their hearts. This feeling is described in Sri Isvar Puri's Sloka thus, "Let those twice-born, such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, etc., who practise 'Yoga, Dhyan, Dharana', etc., or follow the teachings of the Srutis or do what they will in a dense lonely forest to achieve concentration of the mind leading up to 'Atmaramatva or Brahma-sakshatkar' and final emancipation, or roam about from one holy place to another in search of the above. But I shall never be vexed even if I have to pass through lacs and lacs of births, while relishing the sweetness of Sri 'Krishna' Nama of Syamasundar, Who has the splendour of the colour of the collection of night lotuses inside the bower amongst the dark Kadamba trees. The conclusion is that those people who practise 'Yoga, Dhyan, Dharana, etc.,' have nothing but final emancipation as their ultimate goal; **but the Bhakti-rasajna Bhaktas, who can well appreciate and relish the sweetness of the Divine Name 'Krishna', treat that type of liberation as worse than chaff. Sri 'Krishna'-Nama-Sankirtan to these Rasajnas is both the Sadhan and Sadhya, i.e., It is the ultimate end of human existence.** ^{571.2}

"The yearning to enjoy the pleasures of heaven makes all people in their pursuit only very wretched; the desire for liberation only causes intense distress; even the practice of Yoga or abstract meditation is quite insipid; what is the use of such abortive exertions? **So let my tongue giving up all these practices, only shout 'Krishna! Krishna!'**"⁵⁷² "This - my inexplicable existence called 'Krishna' manifesting in my mouth, doubly enhances its beauty, as the rise of the cool moon brings on the swelling of the ocean of my thirst for Thee."⁵⁷³ This Sloka^{573.1} vividly shows the inexhaustible fund of utter humility of a selfless devotee. "O

571.2 yoga-śruty-upapatti-nirjana-vana-dhyānādhva-sambhāvita-
svārājyaṃ pratipadya nirbhayaṃ amī muktā bhavantu dvijāḥ
asmākaṃ tu kadamba-kuñja-kuhara-pranmīlad-indīvara-
śreṇī-śyāmala-dhāma-nāma juṣatāṃ janmāstu lakṣāvadhī
(padyāvalī 18)

572 svargārthīyā vyavasitir asau dīnayatī eva lokān
mokṣāpekṣā janayati janam kevalam kleśabhājam
yogābhyāsaḥ parama-vīrasas tādṛśaiḥ kiṃ prayāsaiḥ
sarvaṃ tyaktvā mama tu rasanā kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇeti rautu
(padyāvalī 27)

573 puṣṇānam etat punar-ukta-śobhām
uṣṇetarāmśor udayān mukhendoh
tṛṣṇāmburāśīm dviguṇīkaroti
kṛṣṇāhvayaṃ kiñcana jīvitam me
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛtam 84)

573.1 dīna-bandhur iti nāma te smaran
yādavendra patito'ham utsahe
bhakta-vatsalatayā tvayi śrute
māmakam hṛdayam āśu kampate
(padyāvalī 64)

Yadavendra! O Krishna! When I remember Your Name 'Dinavatsala', i.e., One Who is kind to or the friend of the fallen or miserable souls, It fills me with ever-fresh hopes that I will receive Your succour, because all Your Names have the meaning easily deducible from Their etymology and it is Your Creed to live up to Them. But when I hear from other devotees about Your other Name 'Bhaktavatsala', i.e., a Friend of the devotees, my heart actually shudders to think if I will ever be eligible to receive Your Kindness, as I am utterly devoid to Bhakti; as such I may not have the good fortune to have even a particle of Your Grace." This true feeling doubly enhances their (devotees) thirst and craving for intense devotion and Sri Krishna too, being the Embodiment of Munificence (Audarya), and Sweetness, instead of quenching the devotional thirst, enhances it fourfold and this process goes on endlessly, without the least feeling of satiation on either side. This is the true nature of Divine Intoxication of Sri 'Krishna' Nama^{573.1}

**Victory to Thee, O God! Victory to Thee!
O Divine Illuminator! Have the better of me!
Thou art Krishna! Victory, victory, victory to Thee.
Thou art Nectar to the ears, the mind, and the eyes.⁵⁷⁴**

"May Sri 'Krishna' Nama, Which is the Reservoir of all that is auspicious, the Destroyer of all the sins of Kali, the Purifier of all that is pure, i.e., the Primeval Source of Purity, the provision or allowance to the sage desirous of final beatitude to secure for him the highest goal of Golok, the only place of eternal rest, for the words of the wise men like Sri Vyasadev, Sukadev etc., i.e., whenever the Name is remembered for the materialisations of their actions, their words, without taking the form of advice to others, culminate in the resplendent glorification of Sri Nama Mahatmya, i.e., the grandeur of the Divine Name, and hence the ultimate resting place for the words of the sages, the life-breath of saints who are engrossed in Nama-Sankirtan, and the seed of the tree of Dharma or religious practices, because all such practices find their origin in Nama alone, provide in profusion for the welfare of all of you."⁵⁷⁵

574 jaya jaya jaya deva deva deva
tri-bhuvana-maṅgala divya-nāma-dheya
jaya jaya jaya deva kṛṣṇa deva
śravaṇa-mano-nayanāmṛtāvatāra
(śrī-kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛtam 108)

'Krishna' Nama - The wish-yielding Gem

"The Name Itself is 'Chintamani', i.e., the wish-yielding Gem including the achievement of Sri Krishna because it is not different from Sri 'Krishna' Svarup. All the phrases in the Sloka are adjectival clauses to the word 'Krishna'. Krishna is 'Chaitanya-rasa-vigraha', i.e., the Embodiment of luscious sweetness of Divine Consciousness as (1) 'Asvadya', that which is to be tasted, (2) 'Asvadak', that which imparts taste to others, and (3) 'Asvadan', the act of tasting itself, because the 'Nami', viz., 'Krishna' Svarup is the same as the Name 'Krishna'. **Krishna is also the Divine Embodiment of all-alluring sweetness as 'Chaitanya', i.e., Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Who not only tasted the ever-fresh sweetness of 'Krishna' Nama, but also imparted It to one and all, in all possible unimaginable ways that they too should relish Its ravishing sweetness.** He is the Embodiment of the 'Rasa' or the relishing of the Supreme Spirit as the essence of all being and source of our sensation. **'Chaitanya' is the self-illuminory principle which increases one's craving to taste the 'Krishna-Nama-Sankirtan-Rasa' more and more, once one tastes of It a bit, i.e., one who tastes even a drop of this Transcendental Ocean of 'Krishna-Nama-Sankirtan-Rasa' is sure to be carried away by Its current and would go on relishing It more and more and never like to come out of It, inspite of himself.** Hence, He is Krishna - the dual manifestation of the 'Sacchidananda-Rasa-Rupa', i.e., the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Incarnate as 'Nami' - the Possessor of the Name, and the 'Nama' - the Transcendental Name Itself. Hence, It is Purna, i.e., endowed with all His potentialities or powers including those to enable them to taste sweetness. He is Suddha, i.e., pure without the least tinge of Maya or His illusory energy and free from any attribute of the material world and its objects. He is Nitya-mukta, i.e., ever-free. **As such those who take absolute recourse to chanting of the Name are also freed, once and for all, from the bondage of worldliness.** There is no categorical difference between the 'Nami' and the 'Nama'.⁵⁷⁶

575 kalyāṇānām nidhānam kali-mala-mathanam pāvanam pāvanānām
pātheyam yan mumukṣoḥ sapadi parapadaprāptaye procyamānam
viśrāma-sthānam ekam kavi-vara-vacasām jīvanam sajjanānām
bījam dharma-drumasya prabhavatu bhavatām bhūtaye kṛṣṇa-nāma
(padyāvalī 19)

576 nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya rasa vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya mukto 'bhinnatvān nāma nāminoḥ
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.503)

Krishna is the Primeval Cause

"Sri Krishna - the Supreme Lord known as the 'Govinda', Who is the most perfect Embodiment Of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss existing from eternity, is the Source of everything and the Primeval Cause of all causes."⁵⁷⁷ It is already said in Srimad Bhagavata that "All these are His Partial Manifestations in various degrees, **but Sri Krishna is Svayam Bhagavan Himself, i.e., the Supreme Lord.**"⁵⁷⁸ Hence, He is called 'Paramah', 'Isvarah', and 'Krishna'. In the Sloka⁵⁷⁷ Krishna is the distinctive 'Noun' or 'Name' and all the other terms are Its Attributes qualifying 'Krishna'. "It is also said by sages like Sukadev that Krishna, Who is Vasudev, Devakinandan, etc., proving clearly that **'Krishna' is the singularly Pre-eminent Name amongst all His Names.**"⁵⁷⁹ "At the time of His naming ceremony too, Sri Gargamuni said that **His Name for that Yuga, would be 'Krishna', because of (1) the heavenly blue colour of His complexion, (2) His power of attracting to Himself all - both animate and inanimate creations, (3) because of His assuming upon Himself all the powers of His Partial Manifestations and of all Yugavataras too in super-abundance which conclusively proves His authority over all, including the other Avataras.**"⁵⁸⁰ Because of these, **His Name 'Krishna' is etymologically significant, i.e., has all the meaning easily deducible from etymology of the Name, 'Krishna', and (4) includes the meaning of One Who has the twin syllables (Varnas) 'Kri-shna' in His Name.** It is also said in Prabhas Khanda, 'O hero (Arjun)! **Out of all My Names, 'Krishna' is the most important Name.**"⁵⁸¹ In Brahmanda Purana it is said, **'All that is obtained by the thrice repetition of Sri Vishnu-Sahasra-Nama is grandly achieved by the utterance of 'Krishna' Nama once.**"⁵⁸² All these facts refer to 'Krishna' only as the

577 *Īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ saccidānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1)*

578 *ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.3.28)*

579 *kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya devakī-nandanāya ca
nanda-gopa-kumārāya govindāya namo namaḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 1.8.21)*

580 *āsan varṇās trayo hy asya gr̥hṇato 'nuyugaṁ tanūḥ
śuklo raktas tathā pīta idānīm kṛṣṇatām gataḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.8.13)*

581 *nāmnām mukhyataram nāma kṛṣṇākhyam me parantapa
(prabhāsa-purāṇa; śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.498)*

582 *sahasra-nāmnām puṇyānām trir-āvṛtṭyā tu yat phalam
ekāvṛtṭyā tu kṛṣṇasya nāmaikaṁ tat prayacchati
(śrī hari-bhakti-vilāsa 2.11.488)*

Supreme Lord. The Epithet 'Govinda' only explains His special aspect of Mastery, Overlordship, or Indratva over all the sense-organs, i.e., 'Gavendratva' and hence It qualifies 'Krishna'.

"Hence, by conventional acceptance, the eminence of 'Krishna' Nama is proved, the other terms being Its adjectives."⁵⁸³ It is clearly mentioned thus: "He assumed appropriate Forms befitting the three Yugas with **suitable tints of complexion, like white, red and yellow, which are now merged in 'Krishna'** (sky blue) colour. Hence, He will be known as 'Krishna', because that is the tint that predominates in this Yuga."⁵⁸⁴ "He has many Names depicting His characteristic qualities."⁵⁸⁵ "The syllable 'Krish' denotes the property of 'drawing towards oneself or attracting', or 'Existence', and the suffix 'na' denotes 'Bliss'. The culmination of these realities in the Supreme Being is 'Krishna', i.e., Who is Eternal Bliss."⁵⁸⁶ "The meaning derived etymologically is also the same. A similar Sloka⁵⁸⁷ is met within the commentary of the 18-letter Mantra in Gautamiya Tantra. The root 'Bhu' is used to indicate that from which all wishes originate, which has the same meaning as that of 'Krishna'. In the Gautamiya Tantra, the root 'Bhu' is used to indicate its quality of 'Existence'. Hence, the root 'Krish' denotes 'Existence'; the suffix 'na' means 'Bliss'; 'Atma' means Bliss. So if the meaning of 'Krish' is also that of the root 'Bliss' then only all the meanings can be established, because the roots 'Krish', 'Bhu' and 'Asti' are indicative of all 'Kriyas' or actions. In the Gautamiya Tantra, even if the root 'Bhu' stands for 'Satta' or existence, its meaning is the same as that of the root 'Krish'. When it is said that an earthen jar exists, it refers to its own existence and not to that of any other object like cloth, etc. Similarly if the root 'Krish' is taken to mean 'attraction', the suffix 'na' means bliss or happiness arising therefrom. 'Samanyadhikarana' or the state of their relating to the same object is not possible; hence, it is to be taken as the use of identity between the cause and effect, as in the statement 'Ayurghritam', i.e., 'ghee is life'. Here though 'ghee' is the 'cause' for the longevity of life, it is taken as 'life' itself. In the same way 'Bliss' is the cause of 'attraction', and

583 ataeva kṛṣṇe kartṛtvāt sarvotkarṣakatvāt kṛṣṇa iti mukhyaṁ nāma
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

584 See footnote 580

585 bahūni santi nāmāni rūpāṇi ca sutasya te
guṇa-karmānurūpāṇi tāny ahaṁ veda no janāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.8.15)

586 kṛṣiṁ bhū-vācakaḥ śabdaḥ ṇas ca nirvṛti-vācakaḥ
tayoṛ aikyaṁ paraṁ brahma kṛṣṇa ity abhidhīyate
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

587 kṛṣi-śabdaḥ ca sattārtho ṇas cānanda-svarūpakāḥ
sukha-rūpo bhaved ātmā bhāvānanda-mayatvataḥ
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

the former has been substituted by its effect, i.e., 'attraction' - the effect of 'Bliss' or the effect is identified with the cause. **He, Who through His Own Bliss causes attraction or attracts, is Himself 'Krishna'**. "He is also known as 'Param Brahman' because of the ever-increasing superiority of His attractive power over those of all. He is also known as the Supreme Lord because of His vastness and His Nature to cause others to increase."⁵⁸⁸ How He accomplishes this is told in the Srutis. It is also said in the Brihad Gautamiya Tantra thus: "The root 'Krish' denotes 'Existence' and the suffix 'na' denotes 'Bliss'. Hence, by their union, the term 'Chit' is attributable to Param Brahman only."⁵⁸⁹ **"Krishna is Bliss endowed with the power of attracting all; because of His Blissful Svarup or disposition, the Jiva or Atma becomes blissful, being engrossed in Divine Love."**⁵⁹⁰ **"He is called 'Krishna' because He attracts all both movables and immovables.** He is also called 'Kala' because He is the Controller of all."⁵⁹¹ Uddhav says, "Sri Krishna because of His incomprehensible affluence, is the Master of the three worlds. He, Whose all desires are fulfilled and Whose footstool is ever being respected by the tips of the crowns of all the Kings, offering their due tributes to Him, is also ever being served by the goddess of fortune, prosperity, and beauty."⁵⁹² **Sri Krishna says to Arjun, "I am pervading the whole universe with an aliquot part of My Person."**⁵⁹³ In the Tapani Sruti, it is said. **"Krishna is the Sole Controller and He is solely to be sung and glorified by all."**⁵⁹⁴ "Because of His Overlordship, He is 'Paramah', i.e., He Who is served by Sri Lakshmi, i.e., the Goddess of affluence of all Saktis or regal powers."⁵⁹⁵ **"That Sri Krishna is the highest God."**⁵⁹⁶ In Srimad

588 bṛhattvād bṛmhaṇatvāc ca tad brahma paramaṁ vidur
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

589 kṛṣi-śabdaś ca sattārtho ṇaś cānanda-svarūpakāḥ
sattā-svānandayor yogāc cit param brahma cocyate
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

590 yasmād evaṁ sarvākarṣaka-sukha-rūpo'sau tasmād
ātmā jīvaś ca tatra sukha-rūpo bhavet
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

591 athavā karṣayet sarvaṁ jagat sthāvara-jaṅgamam
kāla-rūpeṇa bhagavān tenāyaṁ kṛṣṇa ucyate
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

592 See footnote 552

593 viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat
(śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā 10.42)

594 eko vaśī sarvagaḥ kṛṣṇa īdyāḥ
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

595 paramaḥ sarvotkṛṣṭā mā lakṣmī-rūpāḥ śaktayo yasmin
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

596 kṛṣṇo vai paramaṁ daivatam
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

Bhagavata it is said, **"I bow down to the Primeval Purush known as 'Krishna.'"**⁵⁹⁷ Sri Sukadev tells Parikshit thus, **"Know Him to be Krishna, Who is the Soul of all souls, and Who, for the welfare of all, i.e., to attract the minds of all towards Himself wherein lies their eternal welfare, manifests Himself as a Human Being out of sheer kindness."**⁵⁹⁸ His Pastimes like a Human Being are solely due to His being under the influence of His Kindness. Suta says, "O Krishna, O Krishnasakha, i.e., the Friend of Arjun! O the most excellent among the Vrishnis! O the Destroyer of spiteful Kings! O Ye of undiminishing prowess! **O Govinda, i.e., Controller of all the sense-organs! You Whose Glory is ever being sung by Your servants like Narada and multitudes of Gopis! O Ye Who are auspicious to the ears! Protect us by instilling in us selfless devotion to You.**"⁵⁹⁹

Gauranga - The Namavatar of Krishna

In this Sloka 'Krishnavarnam tvishakrishnam'⁶⁰⁰ the Kali Yugavatar, after the descent of Svayam Bhagavan Sri Krishna, is referred to as "Who is 'Akrishna', i.e., is fair and yellowish in colour. Wise people adore the splendour of His complexion as in 'Asan Varnastrayo hyasya, etc.'." In this Sloka after describing the three colours of His Complexion for the three

597 puruṣam ṛṣabham ādyaṁ kṛṣṇa-saṁjñam nato'smi
(śrī-brahma-saṁhitā 5.1; śrī-jīva-gosvāmi-ṭīkā)

598 kṛṣṇam enam avehi tvam ātmānam akhilātmanām
jaḡad-dhitāya so 'py atra dehīvābhāti māyayā
(śrīmad-bhāḡavata 10.14.55)

599 śrī-kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa-sakha vṛṣṇy-ṛṣabhāvani-dhruḡ-
rājanya-vaṁśa-dahanānapavarga-vīrya
govinda gopa-vanitā-vraja-bhṛtya-gīta
tīrtha-śravaḡ śravaṇa-maṅgala pāhi bhṛtyān
(śrīmad-bhāḡavata 12.11.25)

600 kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḡ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḡ
(śrīmad-bhāḡavata 11.5.32)

śrī-kṛṣṇāvatārānantara-kali-yugāvatāram pūrvavad āha—kṛṣṇeti | tviṣā
kāntyā yo'kṛṣṇo gauras taṁ sumedhaso yajanti | gauratvam cāsyā,

āsan varṇās trayo hy asya ḡṛṇato'nuyugam tanuḡ
śuklo raktas tathā pīta idānīm kṛṣṇatām gataḡ
(śrīmad-bhāḡavata 10.8.13)

ity atra vāri-śeṣya-pramāṇa-labdham idānīm eva tad-avatāra-
padatvenābhikhyāte dvāpare kṛṣṇatāṅgata ity ukteḡ, śukla-raktayoḡ satya-tretā-
gatatvena darśitatvāc ca | atītasyātītatvam prācīnāvatārāpekṣayā atra śrī-
kṛṣṇasya paripūrṇa-rūpatvena vakṣyamāṇatvād yugāvatāratvam tasmin sarve'py
avatārā antar-bhūtā iti tat-tat-prayojanam tasminn ekasminn eva sidhyatīty
apekṣayā tad evam yad dvāpare śrī-kṛṣṇo'vatarati tadaiva kalau śrī-gauro'py
avataratīti svāryasya-labdhaḡ śrī-kṛṣṇāvīrbhāva-viśeṣa evāyam gaura ity āyāti,
tad-avyabhicārāt |

Yugas, the colour of the residuary Yuga, viz., of Dvapara adopted by Him is described as 'Krishna' - heavenly blue hue. Because the Satya and Treta Yugas had already elapsed, the 'Pitavarna' of the Descent refers to the already past Avatar. Here it is said that Sri Krishna is the Fullest Manifestation, i.e., Svayam Bhagavan,⁵⁵¹ all the other Avatars are merged or included in Him and all the functions of the Yugavataras will be accomplished by Him only. **He, Who descends as Svayam Bhagavan Sri Krishna in Dvapara, will certainly descend as 'Gaur' in the following Kali Yuga, indicating thereby that the 'Gaur' Avatar is the special Descent of Sri Krishna Himself possessing a natural excellence and elegance.** This Descent of 'Gaur' is described by Sri Vyasadev with unfailing accuracy with His Own Epithets like 'Krishnavarnam', etc., i.e., One in Whose Name the two syllables 'Kri-shna' exist as the Name 'Sri Krishna Chaitanya' discloses His Krishnatva (Svayam Bhagavattva) of Which the twin syllables 'Krishna' connected

tad etad āvirbhāvatvaṁ tasya svayam eva viśeṣaṇa-dvārā vyanakti—
 kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ kṛṣṇety etau varṇau ca yatra yasmin śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-deva-
 nāmni kṛṣṇatvābhivyañjakam kṛṣṇeti varṇa-yugalam prayuktam astīty arthaḥ |
 tṛtīye śrīmad-uddhava-vākye samāhṛtā ity ādi padye śrīyaḥ savarṇena [bhā.pu.
 3.3.3] ity atra ṭīkāyām, śrīyo rukmiṇyāḥ samāna-varṇa-dvayaṁ vācakaṁ yasya
 sa śrīyaḥ sa-varṇo rukmī ity api drśyate |

yad vā, kṛṣṇaṁ varṇayati tādrśa-sva-paramānanda-vilāsa-smaraṇollāsa-
 vaśatayā svayam gāyati, parama-kāruṇikatayā ca sarvebhyo'pi lokebhyas tam
 evopadiśati yas tam | athavā, svayam akṛṣṇaṁ gauram tviṣā sva-śobhayā
 viśeṣeṇaiva kṛṣṇopadeṣṭāram ca yad-darśanenaiva sarveṣāṁ kṛṣṇaḥ sphuratīty
 arthaḥ | kiṁ vā, sarva-loka-draṣṭāram kṛṣṇaṁ gauram api bhakta-viśeṣa-drṣṭau
 tviṣā prakāśa-viśeṣeṇa kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tādrśa-śyāmasundaram eva santam ity
 arthaḥ | tasmāt tasmin śrī-kṛṣṇa-rūpasyaiva prakāśāt tasyaivāvirbhāva-viśeṣaḥ sa
 iti bhāvah |

tasya bhagavattvam eva spaṣṭayati—sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārśadam aṅgāny
 eva parama-manoharatvāt, upāṅgāni bhūṣaṇādīni mahāprabhāvatvāt, tāny
 evāstrāni sarvadaivaikānta-vāsivāt, tāny eva pārśadāḥ bahubhir mahānubhāvair
 asakṛd eva tathā drṣṭo'sāv iti gauḍa-varendra-suhmotkalādi-deśīyānām mahā-
 prasiddheḥ | yad vā, atyanta-premāspadatvāt tat-tulyā eva pārśadāḥ śrīmad-
 advaitācārya-mahānubhāva-caraṇa-prabhṛtayas taiḥ saha vartamānam iti
 cārthāntareṇa vyaktam |

tad evaṁ-bhūtaṁ kair yajanti ? yajñaiḥ pūjā-sambhāraiḥ, na yatra yajñeśa-
 makha mahotsavāḥ (śrīmad-bhāgavata 5.19.24) ity ukteḥ | tatra ca viśeṣeṇa tam
 evābhidheyam vyanakti—saṅkīrtanam bahubhir militvā tad-gāna-sukham śrī-
 kṛṣṇa-gānam tat-pradhānaiḥ | tathā saṅkīrtana-prādhānyasya tad-āsriteṣv eva
 darśanāt, sa evātrābhidheya iti spaṣṭam | ata eva sahasra-nāmni tad-avatāra-
 sūcakāni nāmāni kathitāni, suvarṇa-varṇo hemāṅgo varāṅgaś candanāṅgadī |
 sannyāsa-kṛc chamaḥ śāntaḥ ity ādīni darśitam ca | etat parama-vidvac-
 chiromaṇinā śrī-sārvabhauma-bhaṭṭācāryeṇa

kālān naṣṭa bhakti-yogaṁ nijam yaḥ
 prāduṣkartuṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmā
 āvirbhūtas tasya pādāravinde
 gāḍham gāḍham liyatām citta-bhrṅgaḥ
 (krama-sandarbhah)

with His Name are befittingly present; or One Who Himself sings 'Krishna' out of excessive joy arising from the recollection of His ecstatic Pastimes and out of sheer uncontainably exuberant kindness to Jivas, preaches It to all of them; or One Who is 'Akrishna', i.e., 'Gaur' (yellowish fair complexioned), by the splendour of His complexion alone infuses into the people the feeling to take 'Krishna' Nama, or Who by His very presence alone inspires one and all to utter 'Krishna'; or the Caretaker of all people; Krishna, though He descends as 'Gaur', is realised by His ardent devotees as Svayam Bhagavan Sri Krishna only by the splendour or Divine illumination which conclusively proves that He, i.e., 'Gaur' is the Descent in toto of Sri Krishna only. His Svayam Bhagavattva is elucidated by the explanation of the term 'Sangopangastraparshadam', i.e., He Who is ever present with His Attributes, secondary Attributes, which are in themselves His ornaments due to their all-alluring nature and are also His because of their great prowess, and are also His Parshadas as His retinue or attendants residing always near Him; thus He has been experienced by a great many personages of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, etc., or Who lives with His Angas, i.e., Sri Nityananda Prabhu, Sri Advaita Acharya, etc., Who like Him are also the subject of the intense love and esteem of all in a like manner; by the second meaning, the same meaning is arrived at. How is He worshipped? He is worshipped with the necessities of worship to which the words like 'Na yatra yajnesamakhah, etc, Bh. 5.19.24' of gods bear testimony. By the adjective 'Sankirtan-prayaih' qualifying the word 'Yajnah', Sri Vyasadev indicates the subject-matter, viz., **'Sankirtan', i.e., the loud congregational chanting of 'Krishna' Nama in unison and relishing the Bliss thereof.** This shows that Sankirtan was also the subject-matter of His followers. Hence, in Sahasra-Nama, the 149th Chapter of Mahabharata in Dan Dharma, all His Names describing His various Attributes and indicative of Descent as 'Gaur' are met with, of which, the particular Sloka 'Suvarna-varno hemango, etc.,' means, "One Who has the splendour of gold, of yellowish complexion, of beautiful Body, Wearer of the most excellent bracelets, a Sanyasi, etc.," Which are applicable to Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu. This has been clearly disclosed by the most eminent Sri Sarvabhaum Bhattacharya, "O the wasp-like mind! Clasp fast to the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Who descends on this earth to manifest the Glory of His loving devotion, which had disappeared with the lapse of time." "In Prahlada's words 'Chhannah kalau yadabhavastriyugotha sa tvam, Bh. 7.9.38', He is known as 'Tri Yuga' also, as His real Form is concealed (not disclosed) in Kali Yuga, i.e., One Who assumes His Real Forms in Krita, Treta, and Dvapara Yugas.⁶⁰⁰

Prayers invoking Gaur-Krishna's blessings

"O Protector of those gone to You for refuge! O Supreme Lord! I bow to Your Lotus Feet Which are always fit to be mediated upon without the least restrictions of time and place, which destroy all impediments like, Karma, Jnan, Yoga, to the practice of unalloyed devotion to You, Which are the wish-yielders, and holy because of Their being the resort of the holy river Ganga, Which are ever being extolled by Siva and Brahma, Which are the fittest sanctuary to be sought after by all, Which destroy the acutest distress of their servants and Which are the ship to cross this ocean of worldliness."⁶⁰¹ "O Omnipresent Illuminator! O Lord Who manifest the six divine excellences! He who is indeed favoured even with an iota of Your Grace, alone knows the true significance of Your grandeur, and no one else, even if he hankers after it for a long time, by practising everything other than Your loving devotion."⁶⁰² "O my Protector! O Divine Fulfiller of all desires! Either in this existence or in any other birth, if it be my good fortune to happen to be counted one amongst Your countless devotees, I shall wholeheartedly serve Your Lotus Feet. Then only such a person would be considered very fortunate and not otherwise."⁶⁰³ "O Lord! Though none of Your wishes yet remains to be fulfilled, You dearly drank the milk of Vraja's cows and Gopis in the Form of their calves and sons, although all the sacrifices offered from ages immemorial have not been able to satisfy You. How highly blessed indeed are the cows and the Gopis of Vraja!"⁶⁰⁴ "I shall consider myself as more than highly fortunate, if I am allowed to be born in any species, either as a blade of grass or even as a worm, so that I may have a full and thorough top-to-toe ablution in the feetdust of any of

601 dhyeyaṁ sadā paribhava-ghnam abhīṣṭa-dohaṁ
tīrthāspadaṁ śiva-viriñci-nutaṁ śaraṇyam
bhṛtyārṭi-haṁ praṇata-pāla bhavābdhi-potaṁ
vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 11.5.33)

602 athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya-
prasāda-leśānugṛhīta eva hi
jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavan-mahimno
na cānya eko 'pi ciraṁ vicinvan
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.29)

603 tad astu me nātha sa bhūri-bhāgo
bhava 'tra vānyatra tu vā tiraścām
yenāham eko 'pi bhavaj-janānām
bhūtvā niṣeve tava pāda-pallavam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.30)

604 aho 'ti-dhanyā vraja-go-ramaṇyaḥ
stanyāmṛtaṁ pītam atīva te mudā
yāsāṁ vibho vatsatarātmajātmanā
yat-tṛptaye 'dyāpi na cālam adhvarāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.31)

the Vrajavasis whose very life-breath is Sri Mukunda, a particle of Whose Feetdust is even now being sought after by the Srutis from time immemorial."⁶⁰⁵

"O Krishna! So long as people do not accept You as their own, i.e., so long as they do not form any relationship like Dasya, Sakhya, Vatsalya, and Madhurya, or that of a beloved wife with You, all the peculiarities like passion, love, anger, etc., act as thieves with them, the house becomes a dungeon and the delusion of the mind which makes them think the transient objects and pleasures as eternal bliss and by which they become addicted to the gratification of the senses, fetters their feet. **But as soon as they take absolute shelter in You, even anger conduces to the advancement of their devotion to You. O Krishna! The Embodiment of Transcendental Bliss! When people become devoted to You, they naturally treat all the worldly enjoyments, relations, friends, guests, etc., as emblems of Your Grace and all the five passions, like Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (delusion), and Mada (passion), which in a non-devotee cause his retrogradation, become the supporters of his continued progress of devotion.** If You do not accept them as Your Own, all these feelings become so to say their curses which jointly and severally bring about their downfall."⁶⁰⁶ "O Krishna! Pray forgive me. You are Omniscient. You are the Supreme Being. You are the Lord of the universe. This whole creation is treated by me as Yours. I am only Your vassal. Hence, without your Grace I am not fit to acquire the good fortune of these blades of grass and other fortunate beings of Vrindavan."⁶⁰⁷ "Fie upon us all who are averse to You, O Adhokshaj! Cursed be our births, in spite of our triple purity of birth as Brahmins, purity attained because of the Gayatri Mantra, and the purity because of our performance of the sacrifices (Yajnas)! Cursed be our learning, our Yogic practices and plenty of knowledge too!"⁶⁰⁸ "I bow down again and again to Sri Krishna, Who is known as 'Vasudev', the Supreme Being 'Hari', and 'Govinda', Who

605 tad bhūri-bhāgyam iha janma kim apy aṭavyāṁ
yad gokule 'pi katamāṅghri-rajo-'bhiṣekam
yaj-jīvitam tu nikhilam bhagavān mukundas
tv adyāpi yat-pada-rajah śruti-mṛgyam eva
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.34)

606 tāvad rāgādayaḥ stenās tāvat kārā-grham grham
tāvan moho 'ṅghri-nigaḍo yāvat kṛṣṇa na te janāḥ
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.36)

607 anujānīhi mām kṛṣṇa sarvaṁ tvam vetsy sarva-dṛk
tvam eva jagatām nātho jagad etat tavārpitam
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.14.39)

608 dhig janma nas tri-vṛd yat tad dhig vrataṁ dhig bahu-jñatām
dhik kulaṁ dhik kriyā-dākṣyam vimukhā ye tv adhokṣaje
(śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.23.40)

destroys all kinds of distress of those who have taken shelter in Him."⁶⁰⁹
 "Sages have praised that Your Nectarine Accounts revivify the tormented and sullen souls, that they destroy all kinds of sins, that they are auspicious to the ears, that They are full of Divine Attributes, and that those people who sing Them are indeed very fortunate on the face of the earth."⁶¹⁰ **"I bow down to the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, Whose Nama-Sankirtan totally destroys all kinds of sins, i.e., Adhidaivik, Adhibhautik, and Adhyatmik, and only the prostrated obeisances to Whom completely eradicate all kinds of distress."**⁶¹¹ **"I bow down to Him Whose Svarup is the Divine Name, to him who babbles the Name, to him who is purified by the Name and to Him Who is full of Names and to Him Who is saturated with the Names."**⁶¹²

**Hast thou a heart to cross life's stormy ocean,
 And yearnest thou for luscious Sankirtan's fruition,
 And blessings of Fulsome Bliss of Krishna-Prem?
 Then take absolute refuge in Gaur-Krishna's Name.**

609 kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya haraye paramātmāne
 praṇāta-kleśa-nāśāya govindāya namo namaḥ
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.73.16)

610 tava kathāṃṛtaṃ tapta-jīvanam
 kavibhir īḍitaṃ kalmaṣāpaham
 śravaṇa-maṅgalaṃ śrīmad ātataṃ
 bhuvi gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 10.31.9)

611 nāma-saṅkīrtanam yasya sarva-pāpa praṇāśanam
 praṇāmo duḥkha-śamanas taṃ namāmi hariṃ param
 (śrīmad-bhāgavata 12.13.23)

612 namo 'stu nāma rupāya namo 'stu nāma jalpine
 namo 'stu nāma śuddhāya namo nāma mayāya ca

ADDRESS TO MY ERRING SELF

Sing aloud, sing aloud 'Krishna' Nama in prayers,
That cleans mind's mirror of sins' many layers.
Chant aloud, O chant aloud Krishna's sweet Names,
That rid life's fires and the fury of their flames.

Drink deep of the Fount of Krishna's Name aright,
That virtue may thrive as water-lily by moonlight.
Utter 'Krishna', utter 'Krishna', utter Krishna's Name,
That enlivens the Lores and Vraja's Fairy Dame.

Delve deep, delve deep in Krishna's lovely Name:
It swells ecstasy's tide and sets all aflame.
Shout 'Krishna', shout Krishna' with your might and main;
Its Nectar sure shall saturate souls innermost grain.

Cry 'Krishna' cry 'Krishna', 'Krishna' aloud and bold,
That 'Krishna' wins you o'er and holds you in His fold.
See 'Krishna' see 'Krishna' - the Enchanter of hearts sore;
He envelops the soul with Love right up to the core.⁶¹³

Krishna! Your Powers full are imbued in Your Name!
'Time and clime control not chain of Name' You claim.
So Mighty Kind You are and I - horridly, incurably blind!
Misfortunes sorely grind, by Your Love is untouched my mind.⁶¹⁴

A drooping blade of grass ne'er raises its head,
Nor grumbles e'en a little, when trod on its bed,
So let me be humbler than this grass-blade,
And chant 'Krishna' aloud with tears' raid.

The tree offers all it owns, to one who asks,
Tho' itself e'er in drought, rain, and sun basks;
It shelters the traveller from the scorching sun,
And asks naught in return for services done.

613 ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 1)

614 nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smarāṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgah
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 2)

The heartless man plunders it of fruit and flow'r,
Of bark and bough: and once for all fells it o'er,
To roof his house; he burns it! so odd it sounds!
Man's un-ending greed knows no bounds!

Yet matchless is the tree in forbearance;
Pray give me patience in plenty, for once.
Free me of my ego and lust for name and fame,
Make me civil and for ever chant Your Name.⁶¹⁵

I covet not the bait of poesy, pelf, and paradise,
Yet meekly in Ye I seek selfless devotion likewise;
In life after life, I care not for any station,
'Twixt Ye and me, I pray for no separation.⁶¹⁶

O Krishna! Lift this luckless slave stuck in worldly mire,
Grievously tormented am I with countless calamities dire!
Pray give me space that a speck of dust would take,
On Your Lovely Lotus Feet, if only, for pity's sake!⁶¹⁷

When shall my eyes, while uttering Thy Name,
Be flooded with tears and my mortal frame
Be bristled with the hair standing on end
And to choke my voice, my feelings would tend?⁶¹⁸

O Govinda! A moment metamorphoses into a Deathless age,
And tears gush out like rivers in rage;
Separation from Ye has cost me so much harm,
That the world to me, has lost all its charm.⁶¹⁹

Let Him hug me - His belov'd to pulp, if He Will,
Or crush my vitals or His absence kill.

615 tṛṇād api su-nīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 3)

616 na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye
mama janmani janmaniśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 4)

617 ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
patitam mām viśame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūli-sadṛśam vicintaya
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 5)

618 nayanam galad-aśru-dhārayā
vadanam gadgada-ruddhayā girā
pulkair nīcitam vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 6)

Or the Self-Willed Dissolute hold me in fee!
My Sole Overlord is He! O none else than He!⁶²⁰

619 yugāyitaṁ nimeṣeṇa cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitaṁ
śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ govinda-vīraheṇa me
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 7)

620 āśliṣya vā pāda-ratāṁ pinaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marma-hatāṁ karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparah
(śrī śikṣāṣṭaka 8)

THE HYMN OF LIFE

Hail Thee 'Hari Nama! Kali Yuga's Sole Resort!
For the ship of life, foul weather's safest Port.
Without Thee there's no other Support to seek;
With my heart and soul, honestly to Thee I speak.

O 'Hari' Nama! In Thee I take refuge with all my heart;
Tho' in singing Thy Glories. Upanishads play their part,
Yet unable are they to do justice to Thy Greatness.
Thou art e'er being sung by Yogis in their sedateness!

O Akshara-Form! Victory to Thee! Thou art always sought,
For Thou appeasest e'en those who in worldliness are caught.
Thou art e'er being sung by sages with bright prospect,
As Thou purifiest e'en a sinner, uttering Thee in disrespect.

O Bhagavan! the Sun of 'Krishna' Name!
Who can aptly describe Thy enduring Fame?
Thy dim reflection, dispelling Universe's ignorance,
Confers on all the boon of Krishna-Prem's affluence.
The deeds of past births, which the Vedas call,
Destiny, remain undestroyed unless endur'd by all;
Yet, unendur'd. Thy dim reflection destroys them as well,
Tho' meditation on Brahman fails to save them from their spell.

Victory to Thee! O 'Krishna' Nama - the Fount of Divine Bliss!
Meditation's pains and troublesome rituals Thou dost thus dismiss.
O Harbinger of Krishna's Feet! howsoe'er Thou art spoken,
My Faith in Thee - my Nectar, Life, and Ornament be unshaken!

Thou art both a Means and an End in Itself to me.
Make me Thy 'ternal slave till the soul in this body be.
Without Thy Mercy there's in the world no succour for me!
If Thou deniest my wish, what would my fate be?

Except for Thee there's none I can call my own;
O where should I go, if Thou dost me disown?
In sins vile, I am sunk o'er head and shoulders.
And ruefully I am aflame in their smoulders.

Calling Thee aloud unmotivated,
My heart by Thy glamour is captivated,
For diffusest Thou resplendent Love around,
My soul by Thy Kindness is spell-bound.

God's Grace is the richest possession of mankind,
Before which Fate's cruellest blows fail to grind;
Death, as it must come, comes to all ere long,
Let Gaur-Hare! Gaur-Krishna! be my swan-song.