

ŚRĪ UPADEŚĀMṚTA

THE AMBROSIAL ADVICE OF
ŚRĪ RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ

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śrī śrī guru-gaurāṅgau jayataḥ

ŚRĪ UPADEŚĀMṚTA

THE AMBROSIAL ADVICE OF
ŚRĪ RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ

WITH THE COMMENTARIES OF

Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa Gosvāmī

Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda

AND AN ABRIDGMENT OF 12 ESSAYS BY

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

ON VERSES 2 & 3

Translated from the Hindi edition of

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja



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Rūpagosvāmī, active 16th century, author.

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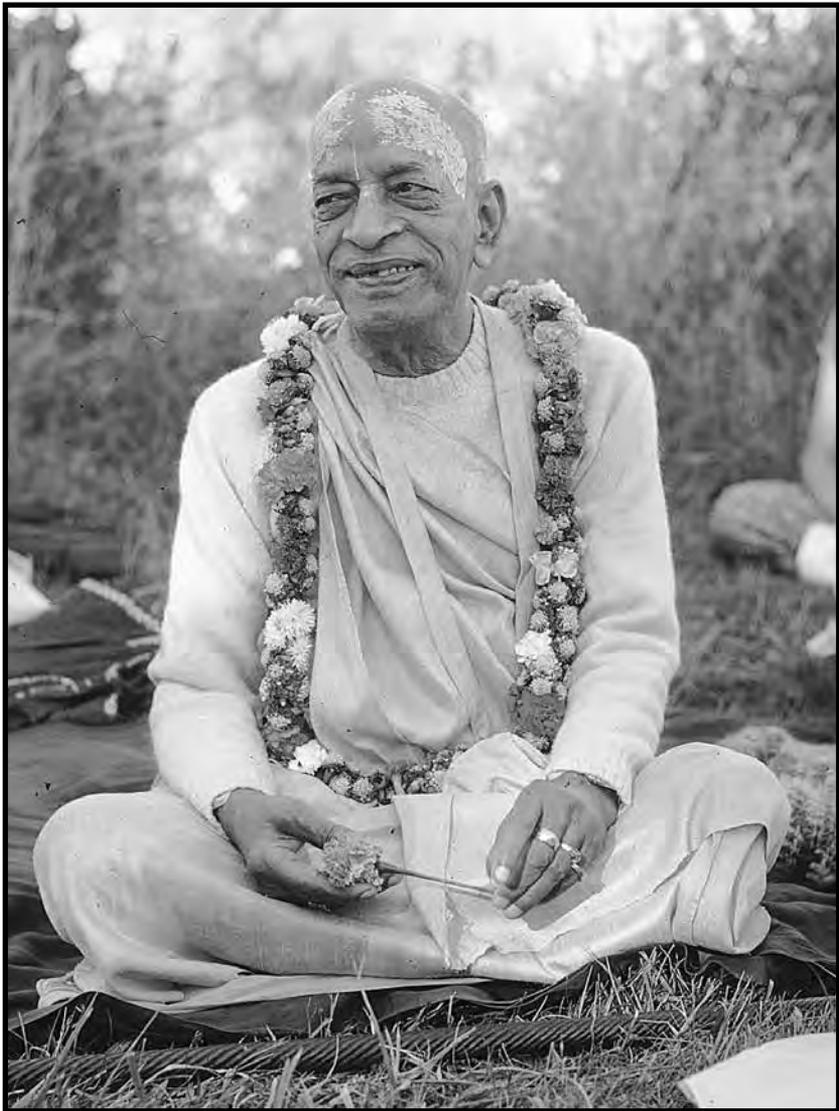


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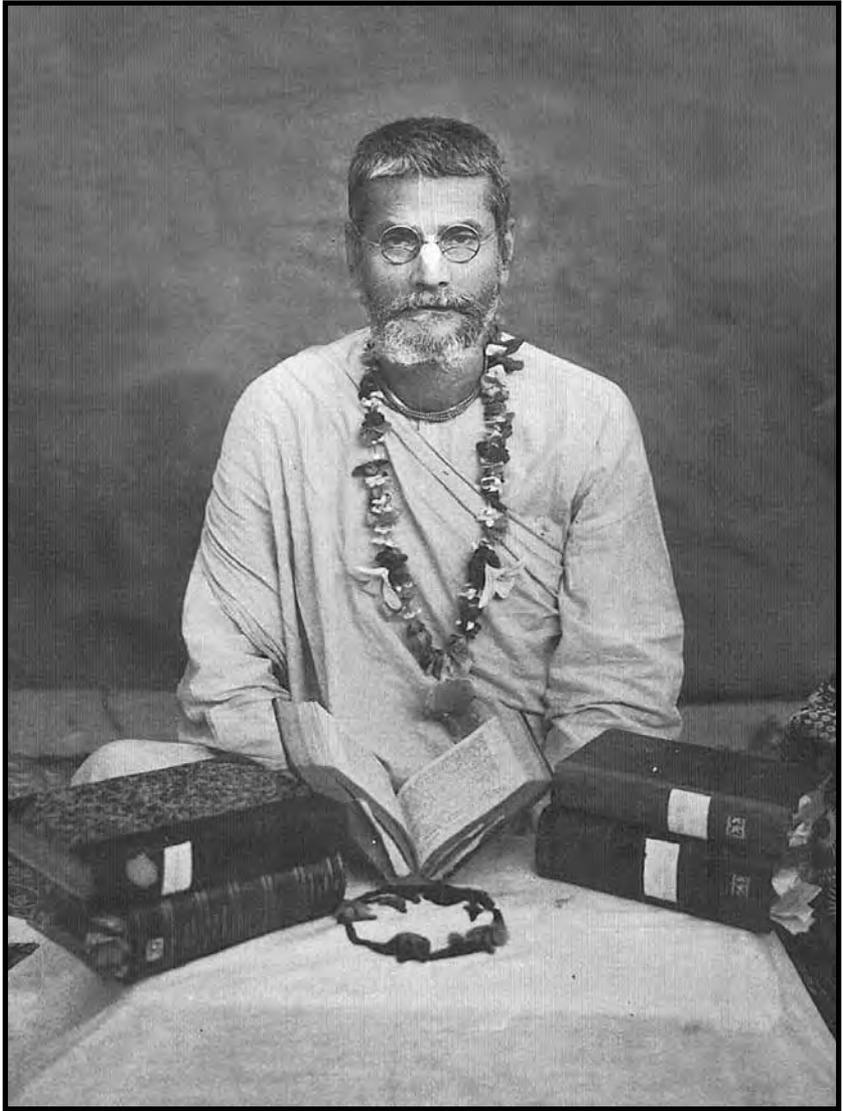


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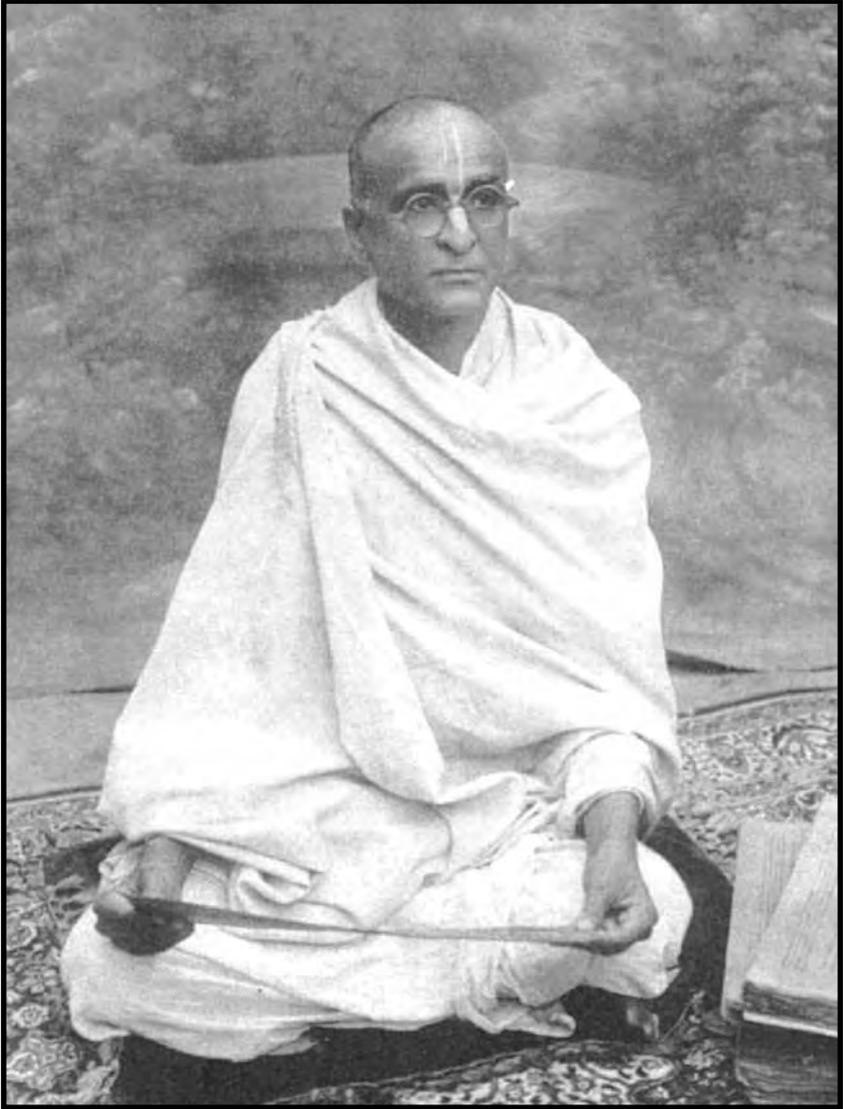


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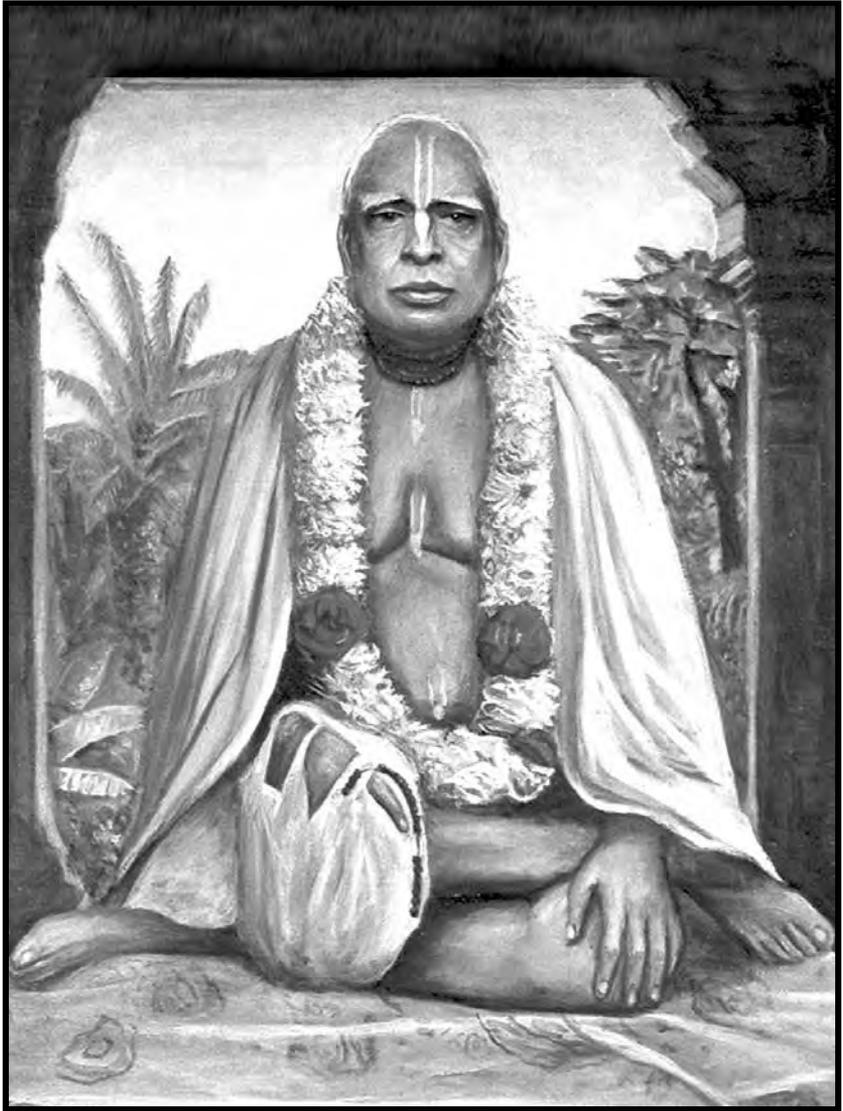
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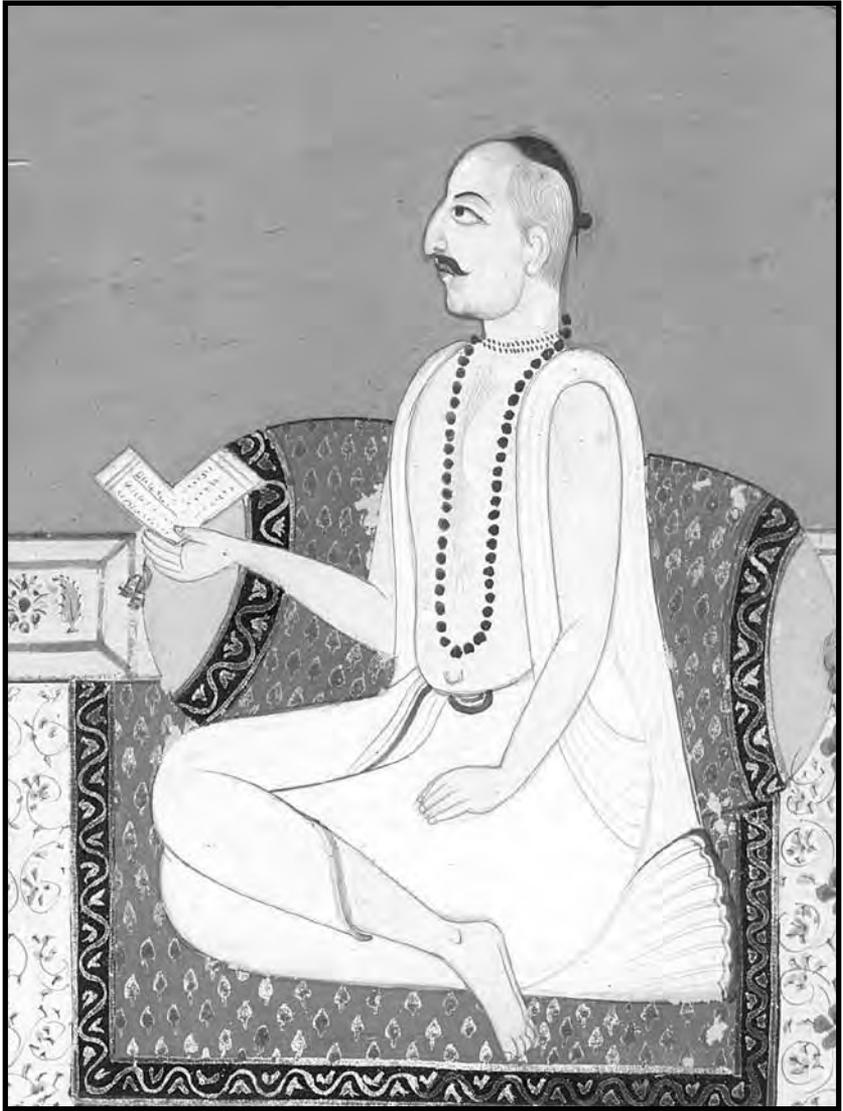
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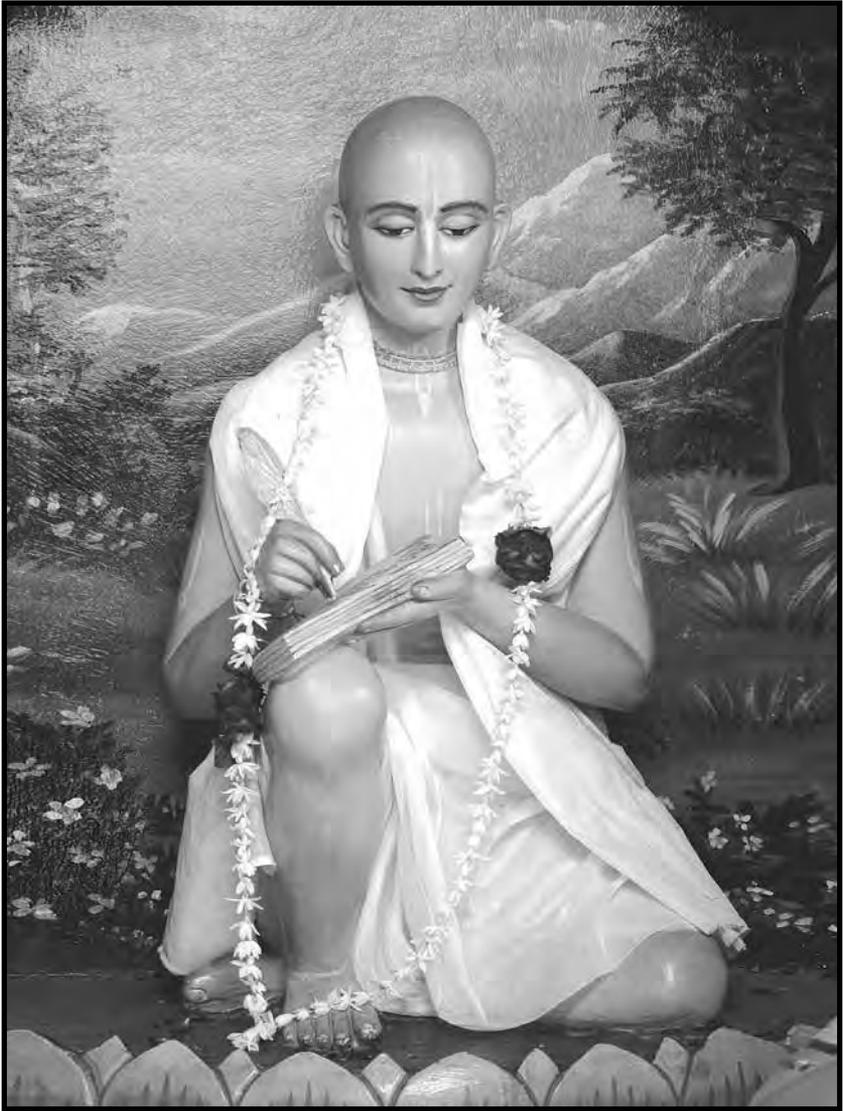


Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura



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Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa Gosvāmī



Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

Introduction

[translated from the Hindi edition]

Śrī *Upadeśāmṛta* is highly revered in the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava spiritual community (*sampradāya*). Resplendent with the inner sentiment and outer complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the inaugurator of the congregational chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy names (*śrī nama-saṅkīrtana*) and the bestower of that most elevated, radiant divine love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa that had never been given before. For the benefit of all living beings, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī churned the ocean of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's instructions and extracted the essence in the form of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*. The instructions given in this book are indispensable for practitioners (*sādhakas*) of the devotional path (*bhakti*). Without following these instructions, entering the realm of pure devotion and especially following the intricate and elevated path of spontaneous devotion (*rāgānuga-bhakti*) is not only difficult, but impossible.

We learn from the diary of Govinda dāsa, the personal servant of the *prema-avatāra* (incarnation of divine love), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, that prior to returning to His eternal, unmanifest pastimes, Mahāprabhu remained constantly overwhelmed in a highly inflamed (*sūddīpta*) mood of divine separation (*vipralambha*). At that time Mahāprabhu's two intimate, eternal servitors, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, would try to pacify Him by singing verses that were relevant to His mood. On one occasion Mahāprabhu was sitting with His devotees on the shore of the ocean engaged in hearing narrations concerning Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-kathā*). Seeing the dense grove of trees lining the shore of the blue ocean and the tall sand dunes, remembrance of Govardhana Hill and the Yamunā River with the many beautiful gardens and groves (*kuñjas*) situated on her banks suddenly sprang up inside Him. Then He

began bitterly weeping in separation from Kṛṣṇa. When after some time His excitement subsided and He became peaceful, He gave the assembled devotees some instructions in a soft and sweet voice. Those instructions comprise the verses of this *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*.

From the very beginning it is compulsory for *sādhakas* desirous of entering the realm of *bhakti* to renounce activities that are unfavourable for progress in spiritual life. These include the urges of mind, speech, anger, tongue, stomach and genitals, as well as avoiding overeating, unnecessary endeavours, useless conversation, improper compliance with the rules and regulations of devotion, bad association, and either greed or the restlessness of the mind to adopt worthless opinions. Simultaneously it is imperative to adopt those things that nourish one's *bhakti*, such as enthusiasm, determination, patience, the good behaviour associated with *bhakti* and the ideals for devotional life that have been established by pure devotees.

After progressing somewhat, one should engage in the six kinds of devotee association, give appropriate respect to the three levels of Vaiṣṇavas and serve them accordingly. Finally, while residing either physically or mentally in Vraja and following in the footsteps of devotees who possess deep love for Kṛṣṇa and who are adept at relishing the devotional mellows of Vraja (*vraja-rasa*), one should constantly engage his tongue and mind in chanting and remembering Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names (*nāma*), form (*rūpa*), qualities (*guṇa*) and pastimes (*līlā*). Just as Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the most dear to Kṛṣṇa, similarly Her pond (*kuṇḍa*) is also the most dear to Him. Therefore, practitioners of *bhakti* must certainly take shelter of the embodiment of the ultimate devotional ecstasy (*mahābhāva*), Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and Her pond, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu completely preserved this topmost essence of all instructions within the verses of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*.

The Eminently Glorious Author of Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī

Who does not know the author of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī? His ancestry was a royal dynasty of *bhāradvāja-gotrī brāhmaṇas* from

Karnataka, South India, who were particularly knowledgeable in the Yajur Veda. Impelled by some special circumstances, his great-grandfather Śrī Padmanābha left his ancestral home and settled in Bengal in a village named Nāihāṭī, which is situated on the banks of the Bhāgīrathī River. Padmanābha's grandson Śrī Kumāradeva had three sons: Amara, Santoṣa and Vallabha.

Later they became famous as Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Anupama. Impressed with their extraordinary scholarship, qualifications and virtuous conduct, the Muslim ruler of Bengal at that time, Hussain Shah, gave Rūpa and Sanātana the titles Sākara Mallika and Dabīra Khāsa and made them his prime minister and personal secretary. But after some time they came into contact with the saviour of Kali-yuga, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Renouncing their colossal wealth and all worldly relationships, they became distinguished ascetics, fully dedicating themselves to serving the internal desire of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. On the order of Mahāprabhu they restored the forgotten holy places of Vraja-maṇḍala, re-established the proper methods for deity worship, composed authoritative scriptures on *bhakti* and established the codes of good conduct for devotional life.

Again manifesting the famous Śrī Govindajī deity in Vṛndāvana, constructing a massive, beautiful temple and establishing an opulent standard of worship for the deity is all accredited to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī alone. He appeared in the year 1489 and disappeared in 1564. In Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's *Laghu-Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we find the following authoritative list of the literatures he composed: (1) *Śrī Hamsadūta*, (2) *Śrī Uddhava-sandeśa*, (3) *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-janma-tithi-vidhi*, (4) *Śrī Brhat-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, (5) *Śrī Laghu-kṛṣṇa-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, (6) *Śrī Stava-mālā*, (7) *Śrī Vidagdha-mādhava-nāṭaka*, (8) *Śrī Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka*, (9) *Śrī Dāna-keli-kaumudī*, (10) *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, (11) *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, (12) *Śrī Prayuktākhyacandrikā*, (13) *Śrī Mathurā-māhātmya*, (14) *Śrī Padyāvalī*, (15) *Śrī Nāṭaka-candrika*, (16) *Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, (17) *Śrī Sāmānyavirudāvalī-lakṣaṇa* and (18) *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*.

Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa Gosvāmī,
Author of the Upadeśa-prakāśikā Commentary

Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa Gosvāmī composed a Sanskrit commentary on *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, named *Upadeśa-prakāśikā*, which is brief, yet essential. He appeared in the dynasty of the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmīs who serve Rādhā-ramaṇa, the deity who was established and served by Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. His father's name was Śrī Govardhana-lāla Gosvāmī and his grandfather's name was Śrī Jīvana-lāla Gosvāmī. Śrī Jīvana-lāla Gosvāmī was his initiating spiritual master (*dīkṣā-guru*) and also his instructing spiritual master (*śikṣā-guru*). Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa Gosvāmī was a great scholar, author and poet in Sanskrit and Hindi. His *Dīpikā-dīpanī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is highly respected among scholars. Similarly his *Upadeśa-prakāśikā* commentary is highly revered in Vaiṣṇava society.

Śrī Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura,
Author of the Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti Commentary

By composing hundreds of books on *bhakti*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura re-established in this modern era, which is degraded by excessive sensual pleasure, the flow of pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*), which had temporarily stopped. He is an intimate, eternal devotee of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Due to his having propagated in different ways the pure philosophy of divine love (*prema-dharma*) exhibited and preached by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, he is famous as the Seventh Gosvāmī. Because he manifested Mahāprabhu's holy names (*śrī gaura-nāma*), Mahāprabhu's holy land (*śrī gaura-dhāma*), Mahāprabhu's innermost desire (*śrī gaura-kāma*) and the narrations of Mahāprabhu's pastimes (*śrī gaura-līlā*), he is considered the incarnation of Vyāsa in Mahāprabhu's pastimes.

He appeared in an educated and cultured family on 2nd September, 1838, in the village of Vīranagara, which is near the place of Mahāprabhu's appearance, Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, in West Bengal. His childhood name was Śrī Kedaranātha Datta. He was a scholar and ingenious student. During his household life, he

held a high position as a government official under the rule of the British Rāja. During that time he served the innermost desire of Śrī Gaurasundara by translating the Upaniṣads, the *Brahma-sūtra*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and the commentaries of the Gosvāmīs, by composing his own devotional books, and by publishing weekly and monthly spiritual journals. In addition, he established *nāma-haṭṭa* programmes for the distribution of *harināma-saṅkīrtana* and *hari-kathā* from village to village and town to town, and he revived many forgotten holy places.

In the end he renounced his wealth and family and took up permanent residence at Śrī Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, a garden in Śrī Godruma that is situated on the banks of the divine Bhāgīrathī River within the boundary of Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. There he remained possessionless and established the ideal of the system for practising spontaneous devotional worship (*rāgānuga-bhajana*). If he had not appeared in this world, Mahāprabhu's birthplace, the places where Mahāprabhu performed pastimes and Mahāprabhu's instructions would still be concealed. Today, in all corners of the world, *harināma-saṅkīrtana* is being joyously celebrated and the very high waves of *śrī gaura-kṛṣṇa bhakti* are inundating the entire world. Thousands of educated Western youths are drinking the mellows of devotion (*bhakti-rasa*) and dancing, being overcome with spiritual joy. It is none other than Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura who again inaugurated this flow of *bhakti*.

He composed approximately one hundred books in Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, English, Oriya and other languages. The names of a few of them are as follows: commentaries on ancient scriptures such as the *Brahma-sūtra*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, some of the Upaniṣads, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*; and his own compositions such as *Jaiva-dharma*, *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, *Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhura Śikṣā*, *Datta-kaustubha*, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*, *Tattva-viveka*, *Śrī Bhajana-rahasya*, *Daśa-mūla-śikṣā*, *Śaraṅgati*, *Gītāmālā*, *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru*, *Harināma-cintamaṇi*, *Prema-pradīpa* and *Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu – His Life and Precepts*. He disappeared from this world on 23rd June, 1914.

Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda,
Author of the Anuvṛtti Commentary

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda appeared in Jagannātha Purī on Friday, 3rd February, 1874, the day of *kṛṣṇa-pañcamī* in the month of Māgha. His father and *śikṣā-guru* was the famous eternal devotee of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. His childhood name was Śrī Vimalā Prasāda. From childhood he was an extraordinary scholar, a spiritual genius and righteous in his conduct. At the age of fifteen, due to his expertise in all branches of knowledge, the community of elevated Vaiṣṇavas of that time adorned him with the title “Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī”, which means he who personifies the wisdom of all established truths.

In 1918, he accepted the renounced order (*sannyāsa*) and became known as *parivrājakācārya* Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. His *dikṣā-guru* was the supremely worshipful Śrīmad Gaura-kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja. In Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s birthplace of Śrīdhāma Māyāpura he established his original monastery (*maṭha*), the Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. He went on to establish approximately sixty-four *maṭhas* in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Madras, Mumbai, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and throughout the whole of India, as well as in Western and Eastern countries. In these he taught educated and cultured youths the *premamayi* (saturated with divine love) instructions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Attracting them by his heart-touching instructions and his ideal devotional character, he initiated them into the renounced order (*tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa*), sent them to preach both domestically and internationally, and inspired them to publish spiritual journals in various languages.

He also established the Vaiṣṇava system of occupational duties known as *daiva-varṇāśrama*. Travelling throughout India, with profound enthusiasm he preached *suddha-bhakti* and inspired others to do the same. By publishing his own devotional books and periodicals as well as the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, the *Brahma-sūtra*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, the books of the Gosvāmīs and authoritative books of the four *sampradāyas*, he further expanded the enormous storehouse of Śrī Gauḍīya devotional literature. The world will remain forever indebted to this great personality.

Mysupremely worshipful Śrī Gurudeva, the crest-jewel of topmost swan-like (*paramahansa*) Vaiṣṇavas, Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, is his devoted disciple, a guardian of the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya* and founding preceptor (*ācārya*) of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and all the *maṭhas* throughout India under its jurisdiction. Besides publishing his own books, he re-published many of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's writings. By his special mercy and inspiration, devotional literatures are steadily being published by the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

Lastly, I am especially obliged to the present day head and *ācārya* of the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, *parivrājakācārya* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja. It is only by his special enthusiasm and inspiration that this Hindi edition of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* is now being published, and I am most indebted to him for this. May he kindly deliver this edition into the lotus hands of our revered *śrī gurudeva* and thus fulfil his innermost desire. This is my fervent prayer at his respected feet.

I am fully confident that by reading this book, faithful persons who are desirous of *bhakti* will become qualified to obtain the *prema-dharma* taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and that venerable devotees will be greatly delighted. May Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-Vinoda-bihārīji bestow Their plentiful, merciful blessings upon us. At Their lotus feet I offer this humble prayer (from Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's *Śrī Mukṭā-caritra*, Concluding Prayers 1):

*ādāḍanas tṛṇam dantair
idaṁ yāce punaḥ punaḥ
śrīmad-rūpa-padāmbhoja-
dhūliḥ syāṁ janma-janmani*

Clasping a straw between my teeth, repeatedly I beg to obtain the dust of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's lotus feet birth after birth.

A servant of the servant of the Vaiṣṇavas,
Tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

the holy day of Akṣaya-tṛtīyā, 1984
Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha
Mathurā, Uttar Pradesh, India

Editors' Preface

We are delighted to present the third English edition of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, a translation of the Hindi edition of *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja* (Śrīla Gurudeva).

In Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja's later Hindi editions of this book, he included an abridgement of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's twelve essays on Verses Two and Three. Therein, he wrote a separate preface, as follows:

In the addendum of this book, we have included twelve articles by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that were first published in the magazine *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī* [Volume 10, Numbers 9–11; Volume 11, Numbers 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7]. They were later translated into Hindi, India's national language, for the magazine *Śrī Bhāgavata-patrikā*. This supplement has greatly increased the value of this book.

Following suit, this current English edition contains the abridgement of those important essays.

The word-for-word synonyms for the verses of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* are presented in *anvaya* format, meaning the natural order of the words in an English sentence. The Sanskrit word *anvaya* literally means "the natural order or connection of words in a sentence".

We pray that Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and the authors of the commentaries within are pleased with this presentation. We beg the respected reader to please forgive us for any errors.

Aspiring to serve Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas
The Publication team
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Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī

Śrī Upadeśāmṛta

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ŚRĪ UPADEŚĀMṚTA

THE AMBROSIAL ADVICE OF
ŚRĪ RŪPA GOSVĀMĪ

VERSE ONE

Six Urges Unfavourable to Bhakti and Worthy of Rejection

*vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmām pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt*

Anvaya

dhīraḥ – a wise and self-controlled person, free from desires for material enjoyment, liberation and mystic perfection; *yaḥ* – who; *viśaheta* – can subdue; *etān* – all these; *vegān* – overwhelming passions; *vācaḥ vegam* – the impetus of speech; *manasaḥ vegam* – the agitation of the mind; *krodha vegam* – the onset of anger; *jihvā-vegam* – the vehemence of the tongue; *udara-upastha-vegam* – the urge of the belly and the agitation of the genitals; *saḥ* – he; *śiṣyāt* – can instruct; *imām* – this; *sarvām* – entire; *pṛthivīm* – world; *api* – even.

Translation

A wise and self-composed person who can subdue the impetus to speak, the agitation of the mind, the onset of anger, the vehemence of the tongue, the urge of the belly and the agitation of the genitals can instruct the entire world. In other words, all persons may become disciples of such a self-controlled person.

Maṅgalācaraṇa

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

I first of all offer repeated obeisances (*praṇāmas*) unto my most worshipful *śrī-gurudeva*, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī*, unto my

parama-gurudeva, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who wrote the *Anuvṛtti* commentary, unto my *parātpara-gurudeva*, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who wrote the *Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī* commentary, unto Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa Gosvāmī, the servant of the Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa deity, who wrote the *Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā*, unto Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who wrote this *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* and whose only wealth is the amorous mellow of devotion (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*), and to his worshipful deity, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is decorated with the inner sentiment and bodily complexion of Śrī Rādhā. Falling at their feet again and again, I am beginning this translation of the *Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā*.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā
by Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa Gosvāmī

Let there be all victory for Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa. I offer prayers unto Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is accompanied by the unfettered ascetic (*avadhūta*) Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, the identical manifestation of Śrī Baladeva, by Śrī Advaita Ācārya, the incarnation of Mahā-Viṣṇu, by His potencies such as Śrī Gadādhara and by His associates like Śrīvāsa. I take shelter of that Mahāprabhu, who is the fountainhead of all potencies of the world. I offer prayers with great respect and affection unto Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, whose entire wealth is *śṛṅgāra-rasa*. This means that the sole purpose of his life is to describe *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, also known as *unnatojjvala-prema-rasa*, the highest and most radiant divine love of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. He is always immersed in the service of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. He has purified all the living entities of this world by giving instructions on the methodology by which this type of *prema* may be obtained. I offer *praṇāma* unto Śrī Gopāla-bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, who is very merciful to the destitute and wretched living entities, who are enamoured with the external energy. I offer *praṇāma* once more unto the ocean of mercy Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation who sanctifies this Kali-yuga, who distributes *śrī-harināma* and love of God (*bhagavat-prema*) and who delivers the souls (*jīvas*) of this Earth. I offer prayers unto Śrī Gopinātha dāsa,

a disciple of Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa and servant of Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa, who has benedicted innumerable living entities by bestowing *śrī gaura-bhakti*. I offer *praṇāma* unto my *gurudeva*, Śrī Jīvana-lāla, of whom I am the grandson and servant. Offering *praṇāma* unto all of them, I am beginning this brief explanation of the verses of Śrī *Upadeśāmṛta*, written by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī for the benefit of the *sādhakas*.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has defined *uttama-bhakti* as the cultivation of activities for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed with a favourable mood, which is devoid of all other desires and which is not covered by knowledge aiming at the oneness of the *jīvas* with the Lord (*jñāna*) or by activity not meant exclusively for the Lord's pleasure (*karma*). How can such *uttama-bhakti* manifest in persons whose hearts are filled with shortcomings such as lust and anger? In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said:

*śokāmarśādibhir bhāvair
ākṛāntaṁ yasya mānasam
kathaṁ tatra mukundasya
sphūrti-sambhāvanā bhavet*

How can Śrī Mukunda ever be manifest to a person whose heart is invaded by lamentation, anger and other agitations?

The purport of this statement is that when contaminations such as lust, anger and greed arise within the mind, the six overwhelming passions mentioned in the original verse cause the mind to become thoroughly engrossed in fleeting objects of sensual gratification. The cultivation of unalloyed *bhakti* is never possible in such a contaminated heart. Therefore, the instruction is given here to subdue these passions, which impede the development of *bhakti*. The *sādhaka* who can tolerate these passions can instruct the entire world. The conclusion is that a *sādhaka* who has conquered his senses and subdued these passions can purify all the *jīvas* of the world by his resolute and pure *uttama-bhakti*. Everyone may become the disciple of such a great personality.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.24) it is said:

*vāg gadgadā dravate yasya cittam
rudaty abhīkṣnam hasati kvacic ca
vilajja udgāyati nṛtyate ca
mad-bhakti-yukto bhuvanam punāti*

My dear Uddhava, My devotee whose voice becomes choked up with *prema*, whose heart softens and begins to flow with spiritual emotion, who cannot cease from crying even for an instant, who sometimes bursts into laughter, sometimes begins to sing very loudly, abandoning all shyness, and sometimes dances, purifies not only himself but the entire world.

It is essential to note here that by subduing the six passions described already, what is obtained is merely the qualification to enter the realm of *bhakti*. These are not direct limbs of devotional practice (*sādhana-bhakti*) but, rather, the doorway through which one may enter the realm of *bhakti*. Because *bhakti* is the self-manifest function of the Lord's internal potency (*svarūpa-śakti*), when it makes its appearance these six passions automatically become pacified.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

(Commentary in the form of a nectarean shower)

by Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

śrī godruma-candrāya namaḥ

Obeisance unto Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the moon of Śrī Godruma.

*yat kṛpā-sāgarodbhūtam
upadeśāmṛtam bhuvi
śrī-rūpena samānītam
gauracandram bhajāmi tam*

I worship Śrī Gauracandra, the ocean of mercy from which arose a stream of nectar collected by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and brought forth in this world as *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*.

*natvā grantha-praṇetāraṁ
 ṭikā-kāraṁ praṇamya ca
 mayā viracyate vṛttiḥ
 pīyūṣa-pariveśanī*

Bowing down with great humility, I offer *praṇāma* unto the author of Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and unto the commentator, Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa Gosvāmī. Thus I begin this commentary, which is an offering of nectar.

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam
 jñāna-karmādy anāvṛtam
 ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
 śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.11)

The cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or in other words the uninterrupted flow of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed through all endeavours of the body, mind and speech, and through the expression of various spiritual sentiments (*bhāvas*), which is not covered by knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation (*jñāna*) or by reward-seeking activity (*karma*), and which is devoid of all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is called *uttama-bhakti*, pure devotional service.

Adopting all those things mentioned in the above verse as favourable and renouncing all that is unfavourable, one adopts the cultivation of activities meant exclusively for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is this cultivation, or *bhagavad-anuśīlana*, which is the primary objective of persons intent on *bhajana*. The acceptance of that which is favourable and the rejection of that which is unfavourable are not direct limbs (*aṅgas*) of *śuddha-bhakti*. Rather, they are aspects of that faith which is characterized by surrender (*śaraṇāgati*), which in turn bestows qualification for *bhakti*. This is expressed as follows in the *Vaiṣṇava-tantra* (quoted in *Bhakti-sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 236):

*ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ
prātikūlyasya varjanam
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso
gopṭṛtve varaṇam tathā
ātma-nikṣepa-kārpaṇye
ṣad-vidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ*

There are six symptoms of self-surrender: (1) *Ānukūlyasya saṅkalpa* – fully surrendered *sādhakas* should accept only those things that are favourable for *prema-bhakti*. (2) *Prātikūlyavivarjana* – they should completely reject those things that are unfavourable for *prema-bhakti*. (3) *Rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso* – they have firm faith that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is their only protector, that there is no protector other than Kṛṣṇa, and that one cannot obtain protection by any other activity. (4) *Gopṭṛtve varaṇa* – surrendered devotees have absolutely no doubt that Kṛṣṇa is their only guardian and maintainer. (5) *Ātma-nikṣepa* – offering the self to the Lord is expressed in this attitude: “I am incapable of doing anything independently. Unless Kṛṣṇa desires, no one can do anything.” Devotees who have no other resort (*ātma-nikṣepa*) have this kind of faith. (6) *Kārpaṇya* – humility is expressed as follows: “I am very fallen and insignificant.” Unalloyed devotees are possessed of this very firm and simple faith. To possess all these attitudes is called *śaraṇāgati*.

In this verse the instruction is given to abandon that which is unfavourable. One who is able to tolerate the overwhelming passions of speech, mind, anger, tongue, belly and genitals can instruct the entire world. In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said:

*śokāmarṣādibhir bhāvair
ākrāntam yasya mānasam
katham tatra mukundasya
sphūrṭi-sambhāvanā bhavet*

How can Śrī Mukunda ever be manifest to a person whose heart is invaded by lamentation, anger and other agitations?

The purport of this verse is that lust, anger, greed, illusion, intoxication, envy and other irritations always arise within the mind

and thus attract the mind toward material sense objects. This is effected through six agencies: (1) by the urge to speak or the use of words that create distress for others; (2) by the agitation of the mind or the innumerable desires and plans fabricated within the mind; (3) by anger or the use of harsh words; (4) by the vehemence of the tongue or the greed to relish six kinds of taste, namely sweet, sour, bitter, pungent, salty and astringent; (5) by the urge of the belly or the drive to eat more than necessary; and (6) by the agitation of the genitals or the desire for the cohabitation of men and women. Thus agitated, the cultivation of *śuddha-bhakti* is not possible. In order to make the heart of those who are pursuing the path of *bhajana* intent on *bhakti*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has composed this verse first.

The attempt to restrain these six urges does not constitute *bhakti-sādhana*, rather it is a staircase to ascend to the platform of eligibility through which one may enter the temple of *bhakti*. On the paths of fruitive activity (*karma*) and the cultivation of knowledge (*jñāna*), one is instructed to curb these six urges. These instructions, however, are not applicable for pure devotees. In the scriptures, hearing, chanting and remembrance of the names, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are described as actual *bhakti*.

These six urges present various types of obstacles in the immature stage for the practitioner entering the path of *bhakti*. At that time the devotee, by taking shelter of the mood of exclusive *śaraṇāgati* and by avoiding the ten kinds of offences to the holy name (*nāma-aparādha*), becomes fit to dispel these obstacles through the power of *harināma-kīrtana* and so on. The association of spotless saints (*sādhus*) plays a very significant role in this matter. The *Padma Purāṇa* says:

*śrutvāpi nāma-māhātmyam
yaḥ prīti-rahito 'dhamah
aham mamādi paramo
nāmni so 'py aparādha-kṛt*

Those who, in spite of hearing the astonishing glories of the holy name, maintain the conception that “I am this material body” and that “worldly objects are ‘mine’ ” and who display no persistence in or love for the utterance of the holy name are also offenders to the holy name.

The devotees are intent on practical renunciation (*yukta-vairāgya*) and thus they remain aloof from dry renunciation. Therefore, the regulation to abandon all contact with the sense objects does not pertain to them. When the agitation of the mind is withdrawn or, in other words, when one is devoid of thirst for material enjoyment, the impetuosity of the eyes, the life air, the hearing propensity and all other drives become pacified.

Therefore, persons who have gained victory over these six overwhelming passions can conquer the entire world. The instruction to tolerate these urges is given only for householder devotees, because before giving up householder life one must first have abandoned all types of urges.

Anuvṛtti

by Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda

The supremely compassionate Śrī Śācinadana Gaurahari, who purifies the fallen souls, displayed unlimited mercy toward the *jīvas*, who are ravaged by the influence of Kali and averted from the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by manifesting the instructions known as *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*. In these verses He has very succinctly propounded in the form of codes all the instructions regarding the truths of *sambandha*¹, *abhidheya*² and *prayojana*³ for the living entities. His most beloved Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī heard all these extremely confidential truths of devotional tenets (*bhakti-tattva*) from His lotus mouth at Jagannātha Purī and Prayāga. Not only did he hear these teachings, but the all-powerful embodiment of *prema*, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, invested his heart with the potency by which he could realize these confidential truths of *bhakti*. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī revealed these instructions in simple and straightforward Sanskrit language in his books such as *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, *Lalita-mādhava*, *Vidagdha-mādhava*, *Stava-mālā*

1 *Sambandha* is the principle regarding the mutual relationship between the Lord, the living entities and the material energy. –Ed.

2 *Abhidheya* is the means by which the ultimate goal is achieved, in other words, the practices of *sādhana-bhakti*. –Ed.

3 *Prayojana* is the ultimate goal of devotional life, *kṛṣṇa-prema*. –Ed.

and others. These sacred jewels of literature are a mine of good fortune filled with the priceless gems of *prema*. *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* is one such invaluable jewel of *prema*. It is a necklace for the devotees of Mahāprabhu (*gaura-bhaktas*). Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī collected the essence of all the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and offered it as a gift to the genuine *sādhakas*.

In *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* two kinds of instruction are given. The first is to give up things that are unfavourable to *bhakti*, and the second is to adopt things that are favourable to *bhakti*. As long as the *sādhaka* fails to apply these two kinds of instruction in his life, there is no possibility that *bhāva-bhakti*⁴ will manifest in his heart, what to speak of *prema-bhakti*⁵. At present, there are many persons who adhere to various types of fabricated views, to doctrines that display only an external veneer of religion but are actually opposed to *bhakti*, to ideas that are contrary to the Vedas, to opportunistic views, and to the doctrines of imitationism (*sahajiyā*), impersonalism (Māyāvāda) and other diverse and contrary opinions. All such persons fear the instructions given in the form of this *Upadeśāmṛta*, considering them to be the personification of Yamarāja, he who administers punishment to the deceased. But faithful persons who study and recite this *Upadeśāmṛta* with great love and apply it in their lives will become free from all kinds of doubt in regard to *bhakti* and will easily attain first *bhāva-bhakti* and finally the most rare *prema-bhakti*. Therefore, holding the dust of the lotus feet of the *gurus* following in the line of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī upon my head, this Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-dayita dāsa, the servant of the Lord of the life (*prāṇanātha*) of Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrīmatī Rādhikā, is setting down this commentary of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*

4 In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.3.1), *bhāva* is defined as follows: “*Bhāva-bhakti* is a special manifestation of the potency of unalloyed goodness (*śuddha-sattva*). In other words, the constitutional characteristic of *bhāva-bhakti* is that it is a phenomenon entirely constituted of *śuddha-sattva*. It is like a ray (*kiraṇa*) of the sun of *prema* and it softens the heart by various tastes (*ruci*).” –Ed.

5 In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.1), *prema* is defined as follows: “*Bhāva-bhakti* which melts the heart much more so than in its initial stage, which greatly augments the feeling of transcendental bliss, and which bestows a deep sense of possessiveness (*mamatā*) in relationship to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called *prema* by the learned.” –Ed.

named *Anuvṛtti*. The purpose of doing so is to immerse the *jīvas* in Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which was revealed by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and which was practised and preached by the Vaiṣṇava preceptors who follow Śrī Rūpa (*rūpānuga-vaiṣṇava-ācāryas*), such as Śrī Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī and Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

There are three kinds of overwhelming passions observed in worldly living entities attached to material sense enjoyment: the urges of speech, mind and body. When one falls into the powerful current of these three impetuous demands, it is very difficult to gain deliverance. Falling into the stream of repeated birth and death, such living entities are deprived of their spiritual well-being. But self-controlled persons who tolerate these demands are not overwhelmed by material sense enjoyment. They are competent to vanquish this material world.

The demands of speech refer to the speculations of the followers of impersonalism (*nirviśeṣa-vādīs*), which are opposed to *bhakti*; to the logical deliberations of the result-oriented workers ensnared in material activities, which stress the fruits of action; and to all talk not related to the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa but related to varieties of desire for material enjoyment. The demands of speech do not refer to those words that apply to the service of the Lord. On the contrary, such talks should be considered as the fruit of tolerating the demands of speech. Sometimes, although one adopts a vow of silence, he expresses desires for material enjoyment and so on simply by his bearing or by writing. These are also included within the demands of speech.

The agitations of the mind are of two types: (1) *avirodha-prīti* – unimpeded attachment and (2) *virodha-yukta-krodha* – anger arising from impediments. Attachment for the faith of the Māyāvādīs, veneration for the adherence to result-oriented activity and belief in the ideas of those who have many desires not related to the service of Kṛṣṇa, are three kinds of *avirodha-prīti*. Mere indifference to the activities of the *jñānīs*, *karmīs* and persons possessing other desires is but the unmanifest or undeveloped stage of unimpeded attachment. When there is an impediment to the fulfilment of material desires, when one fails to obtain the cherished

fruit of one's work, and when in spite of all endeavour one does not obtain liberation (*mukti*), anger comes about. To meditate upon the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not a form of mental agitation, rather it is the means by which all mental agitation becomes pacified.

The demands of the body are also of three types: the urges of the tongue, belly and genitals. Anxiousness to relish any of the six kinds of taste⁶ and greed to enjoy animal flesh, fish, eggs, wine, excessive ghee, milk, *rabaḍī* (a condensed milk-sweet), cream and so on is known as the impetuosity of the tongue. *Sādhus* also avoid eating foods that are overly bitter or spiced with hot chilli. Consumption of betel nut, the mixture of betel with various spices (*pāna*), cigarettes, marijuana, hemp, opium and other intoxicating substances, as well as onions and garlic, are also counted as impetuous demands of the tongue. *Sādhakas* of *bhakti* must never indulge in these intoxicants. One should very carefully save oneself from the vehemence of the tongue by honouring the food remnants (*mahā-prasāda*) of Bhagavān and His devotees. Although *mahā-prasāda* may be very tasteful, it is not included within the demands of the tongue. By honouring it with great faith one can conquer the demands of the tongue. But if on the pretext of accepting *prasāda* one desires one's own enjoyment and cunningly relishes its taste, that is also included as the passion of the tongue. To eat very costly and delicious food items such as *rabaḍī* and cream offered to the demigods (*devatās*) at the houses of wealthy persons is detrimental for renounced (*niskāñcana*) Vaiṣṇavas. In order to satisfy the lust of the tongue one may become ensnared in various types of reprehensible behaviour and bad association. In Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 6.227, 236) it is said:

jihvāra lālase jei iti-uti dhāya
śiśnodara-parāyaṇa kṛṣṇa nāhi pāya

bhālo na khāibe āra bhālo nā paribe

Persons who are prone to carnal pleasure and eating too much and who run here and there to satisfy the greed of the tongue never obtain Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

.....
6 The six kinds of taste are sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter and astringent.

One should not wear elegant and expensive clothes, nor should one eat delicious food.

Sādhakas should very carefully avoid these things. Gluttonous persons usually suffer from different types of diseases. By eating too much, many difficulties ensue. Persons who eat excessively generally become subservient to the demands of the genitals and thus become debauchees. By accepting *bhagavat-prasāda* in a suitable manner, by observing *Ekādaśī* in accordance with the regulations and by serving *Kṛṣṇa*, the demands of the belly are mitigated.

The demands of the genitals are of two types: in accordance with scripture and not sanctioned by scripture. When a person who has attained maturity marries in accordance with scriptural regulations and observes the prescribed *dharma* for a householder (*grhastha*) by following the proper behavioural codes for begetting good progeny, he regulates the demand of the genitals. This is classified as sex indulgence in accordance with scripture. There are many different types of illicit sexual indulgence, such as transgressing scriptural and social codes and accepting another man's wife, lusting after eight types of conjugal exchanges and enjoying the senses by artificial and licentious means contrary to scriptural codes. Both householders and renunciants who are *sādhakas* of *bhakti* should always remain aloof from the demands of the tongue, belly and genitals.

In his book *Prema-vivarta* (7.3.1–4), the associate of Śrī Caitanyadeva, Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, has said:

*vairāgī bhāi! grāmya-kathā nā śunibe kāne
grāmya-vārtā nā kahibe jabe milibe āne*

*svapne o nā karo bhāi! strī sambhāṣaṇa
grhe strī chāḍiyā bhāi! āsiyācho vana*

*jadi cāho praṇay rākhite gaurāṅger sane
choṭa haridāser kathā thāke jeno mane*

*bhālo nā khāibe āra bhālo nā paribe
hṛdayete rādhā-kṛṣṇa sarvadā sevibe*

O Vaiṣṇava mendicant, O brother, whomever you should meet, do not hear from him or speak with him about mundane subjects. Do not speak intimately with a woman even in your dreams. O brother, you should give up your wife and household and retire to the forest. If you wish to develop love for the lotus feet of Śrī Śacīnadana Gaurahari, then you should always remember the example of Choṭa Haridāsa. If you desire *bhagavad-bhakti*, then you should not eat delicious food or dress yourself very luxuriously. In this way you should always serve Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa within your heart.

Only one who is fully able to tolerate the six urges of the body, mind and words that have already been described is fit to be addressed by the title of “Gosvāmī”, or one who is the master of his senses. Such Gosvāmīs are the true servants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Those who, on the contrary, are controlled by these six demands should be called *go-dāsa*, servant, or slave, of the senses, and not Gosvāmī.

Those who are *go-dāsa*, servants of the senses, are actually servants of the illusory energy (*māyā*). If, therefore, they desire to become servants of Kṛṣṇa, they should follow in the footsteps of those who are truly Gosvāmīs. There is no means other than this. Those whose senses are not controlled can never become devotees of Śrī Hari. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.30) Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja has said:

*matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā
mitho 'bhipadyeta gr̥ha-vratānām
adānta-gobhir viśatām tamisram
punaḥ punaś carvita-carvaṇānām*

O Father, materialistic persons are simply milling over that which has already been milled and chewing that which has already been chewed. Because their senses are not controlled they are proceeding toward the dreadful hell of this material existence, repeatedly trying to enjoy that which has already been consumed. The intelligence of such materially attached persons cannot be turned toward Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa either by their own endeavour, by the instruction of others or by the association of similar materialistic persons.

VERSE TWO

Six Impediments to Bhakti

*atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca
prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ
jana-saṅgaś ca laulyam ca
ṣaḍbhir bhaktir vinaśyati*

Anvaya

atyāhāraḥ – eating too much or accumulating more than necessary; *prayāsaḥ* – endeavours opposed to *bhakti*; *ca* – and; *prajalpaḥ* – unessential and mundane talks; *niyamāgrahaḥ* – abandoning the rules prescribed for one’s eligibility or adopting those rules that are meant for others; *ca* – and; *jana-saṅgaḥ* – association with worldly and sensualistic persons, association with women or men who are attached to women, association with *māyāvādīs*, atheists and other non-devotees; *ca* – and; *laulyam* – greed, or the restlessness of the mind to adopt worthless opinions; *ṣaḍbhiḥ* – by these six faults; *bhaktiḥ* – pure devotion; *vinaśyati* – is destroyed.

Translation

Bhakti is destroyed by the following six kinds of faults: (1) eating too much or collecting more than necessary, (2) endeavours that are opposed to *bhakti*, (3) useless mundane talks, (4) failure to adopt essential regulations or fanatical adherence to regulations, (5) association with persons who are opposed to *bhakti* and (6) greed, or the restlessness of the mind to adopt worthless opinions.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā

In the beginning stage of the practice of *bhakti* the material proclivity is prominent in the hearts of the *sādhakas*. Therefore,

they are unable to subdue the six overwhelming passions described in the first verse. Consequently, in this condition, many tendencies that are very harmful to *bhakti* develop in the hearts of the *sādhakas*. In this verse those injurious tendencies are being described for the benefit of the *sādhakas*. The word *atyāhāra* means to eat more than required or to accumulate material objects. The word *prayāsa* means to endeavour for worldly objects or to be engaged in activities that are opposed to *bhakti*. The word *prajalpa* means to uselessly criticize and gossip about others, which is a gross misuse of time. The word *niyamāgraha*, when broken into its constituent parts, has two meanings: (1) *niyama + āgraha* – over-zealousness in following rules and (2) *niyama + agraha* – failure to accept rules. When the first meaning is applied, it refers to enthusiasm for those rules that yield an inferior result, such as promotion to the heavenly planets, leaving aside the endeavour for the superior attainment of the service of the Lord. When the second meaning is applied, it refers to indifference toward those rules that nourish *bhakti*. The words *jana-saṅga* mean to give up the association of pure devotees and keep company with others. In the conversation between Devahūti and Kardama Muni in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.23.55), there is a very nice instruction about giving up worldly association:

*saṅgo yaḥ saṁsṛter hetur
asatsu vihito 'dhiyā
sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto
niḥsaṅgatvāya kalpate*

O Deva, association is the cause of both material bondage and liberation from material existence. When due to ignorance one keeps company with worldly-minded persons who are diverted from the path of *bhakti*, that association brings about one's material entanglement. When, however, one keeps company with pure devotees of the Lord, that association liberates one from material existence and causes one to obtain the lotus feet of the Lord.

Furthermore, Bhagavān Kapiladeva gives the following instructions to Devahūti:

saṅgam na kuryāt pramadāsu jātu
yogasya pāram param ārurukṣuḥ
mat-sevayā pratilabhātma-lābho
vadanti yā niraya-dvāram asya
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.31.39)

Those who desire to obtain *kṛṣṇa-prema*, which is the ultimate fruit of *bhakti-yoga*, should never indulge in illicit association with women. Learned sages who know the Absolute Truth say that for those who desire liberation from material existence and attainment of the lotus feet of the Lord, illicit connection with women opens wide the door to hell.

teṣv aśānteṣu mūḍheṣu
khaṇḍitātmasv asādhuṣu
saṅgam na kuryāc chocyeṣu
yoṣit-kṛīḍā-mṛgeṣu ca
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.31.34)

One should never associate with foolish, agitated, materialistic men, who identify the body as the self, who are most deplorable and who are dancing dogs in the hands of women.

Having pointed out the defects of material association, the revealed scriptures (*śāstra*) forbid it. The agitation of the mind for compatible objects and the unsteadiness of the mind that results from associating with persons of many different opinions is known as *laulya*. Such unsteadiness of the mind is like an unchaste woman, wandering sometimes upon the path of *karma*, sometimes on the path of *yoga*, sometimes on the path of *jñāna* and sometimes upon the path of *bhakti*. By this, the predilection for *bhakti* is destroyed.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

Atyāhāra, *prayāsa*, *prajalpa*, *niyamāgraha*, *jana-saṅga* and *laulya* are six faults that are directly opposed to *bhakti*. (1) The word *atyāhāra* is a compound word formed by combination of the prefix *ati*, which means “too much” or “excessively”, with the word *āhāra*,

which means “to seize, grasp or consume for one’s own enjoyment”. Excessive enjoyment of sense objects through any one of the senses and the endeavour to accumulate in excess of one’s requirements are known as *atyāhāra*. Devotees who have renounced householder life are forbidden to accumulate material goods. *Gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇavas must acquire goods sufficient for their maintenance, but if they accumulate beyond their needs it is known as *atyāhāra*. Those who are eager to perform *bhajana* should not accumulate worldly goods like materialistic sense enjoyers. (2) The word *prayāsa* refers to activities that are opposed to *bhakti* or performed for the enjoyment of the senses. (3) To waste time in useless, mundane talks is called *prajalpa*. (4) The word *niyamāgraha* has two meanings. When one has obtained a progressively higher qualification but remains overzealous to adhere to the rules pertaining to a lower qualification, it is known as *niyama-agraha*. Failure to observe the rules that nourish *bhakti* or, in other words, an absence of firm faith is known as *niyama-āgraha*. (5) To associate with persons other than Bhagavān’s devotees is known as *jana-saṅga*. (6) The word *laulya* means both unsteadiness and greediness. In the first sense it refers to the fickleness of the mind to accept many different kinds of false doctrines or uncertain conclusions. In the second sense it refers to attachment to worthless material sense enjoyment. By *prajalpa* one indulges in criticizing *sādhus*, and by *laulya* one awakens a taste for many different temporary, uncertain conclusions. Both of these lead to *nāma-aparādha*. Therefore, one is to very carefully give them up.

Anuvṛtti

Excessive acquisition of knowledge, which is the preoccupation of the *jñānīs*; accumulation of the fruits of work, which is undertaken by the fruitive workers; and amassing too many material objects, which is the business of those who are plagued with many desires, are all known as *atyāhāra*. The cultivation of knowledge, which is taken up by *jñānīs*, the austerities and vows undertaken by *karmīs* and the hard labour of those possessed of many desires to obtain wife, children and wealth, are called *prayāsa*. The dry

scholarship of the *jñānīs*, which amounts to nothing more than useless scriptural argumentation; praise of the benefits of pious deeds, which generates fondness for religious rituals in the *karmīs*; and the talks pleasing to the senses of those who are possessed of many desires, are called *prajalpa*. To accept the rules of the *jñāna-sāstras* in order to obtain liberation is called *āgraha*, overzealousness. Attachment to the rules outlined in the scriptures promoting pragmatism (practical as opposed to idealistic results) with a desire for sensual enjoyment both in this world and the next is known as *niyama-āgraha*. Establishment of certain rules of conduct appropriate for one's own status in order to achieve immediate happiness as advocated by the utilitarians, or those who promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number, is also known as *niyama-āgraha*. To remain indifferent to the rules that are prescribed for the attainment of *bhakti* is known as *niyama-āgraha*. Such persons are so audacious that they try to pass off even their detestable wantonness and depravity as the most sacred and elevated path of spontaneous devotion (*rāga-mārga*). In *Brahmayāmala* (quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.101) the disposition of such persons has been explained in the following words:

*śruti-smṛti-purānādi
pañcarātra-vidhiṃ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir
utpātāyaiva kalpate*

Although engaged in single-minded devotion to Lord Hari, if one transgresses the regulations mentioned in the Śruti, Smṛti, Purānas and the *Nārada-pañcarātra*, great misgivings (*anarthas*) are produced.

In the *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru* also, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has said, “My dear mind, what have you done? Being in a very immature stage you have cheated yourself unknowingly by perpetrating the fault of narrow-mindedness upon the pure Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. You have supposed the pure conceptions and validity of the *sampradāya* to be hypocrisy and thus abandoned them. You have

given up wearing the Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* markings and neck beads (*tulasī-mālā*) and put aside your chanting beads (*bhajana-mālā*). You think, ‘What is the use of wearing *tilaka*? I can chant within my mind, so what need is there of beads? One’s diet has nothing to do at all with *bhajana*. So don’t think that you have to give up eating meat, fish or eggs. Don’t think that you must stop drinking wine or tea and taking intoxicants such as *pāna*, tobacco, marijuana, hemp or opium.’ You have cast aside the need for taking initiation (*dikṣā*). You have begun to refer to yourself as an incarnation. You have begun to propagate your new theories very powerfully through different agents. You are criticizing the opinions of the previous great personalities (*mahājanas*) and *ācāryas* of the path of *bhakti*, considering them to be mistaken. Some cunning persons put on *tilaka* and *tulasī-mālā* and cheat others. Therefore, you avoid the association of anyone who wears *tilaka* and *mālā*, considering them all to be cheaters. But, my dear brother mind, please consider, what have you gained by this? You have given up gold for ashes. Your present life and the next have both been utterly ruined. You address everyone as a hypocrite, knave and cheater. But you have failed to attain *bhagavad-bhakti*. What will be your fate at the time of death?

“O mind, what should I tell you? You utter the words ‘*prema, prema*’ but what good will it avail? *Prema* is a rare and priceless jewel. You will have to undertake arduous *sādhana* to attain it. By deceitful practice you make a show of tears, trembling, horripilation and fainting at the time of *kīrtana* or hearing spiritual discourses, yet your real business is simply to accumulate wealth, women and prestige. When you have not even a trace of attachment to pure *sādhana-bhakti*, which is essential for the acquisition of *prema*, then how will you obtain such pure *bhagavat-prema*? You will have to first give up the ten offences to the holy name and chant *harināma* continuously. You should hear *hari-kathā* in the association of pure Vaiṣṇavas. Then, by the mercy of Śrī Nāma Prabhu, unalloyed *prema* will arise automatically in your heart.

“You have not performed *bhajana* in a regulated manner; you have not performed *saṅkīrtana* in the association of pure devotees. You have not withdrawn your mind from sense objects and engaged

it in remembering the Lord in a secluded place. Without first climbing the tree, your attempt to pluck the fruit with your own hand has simply gone in vain. The most sacred and pure *kṛṣṇa-prema* is extremely rare. By misleading others you will simply cheat yourself. First make yourself fit by performing *sādhana*. Then *prema* will become easily accessible to you.

“O brother, although lust (*kāma*) and love (*prema*) appear identical by external indications, they are not at all the same. *Kāma* is like rusted iron, whereas *prema* is like pure gold. You have seized *kāma*, imagining it to be gold. Can anyone obtain *prema* by such absurd means?

“O foolish mind, you have become intoxicated by uselessly considering *kāma* to be *prema*. The lust for bones and flesh appears alluring for the time being. That lust chases endlessly after the objects of the senses. But unalloyed love is the natural disposition of the *jīva*. That *prema* is fully sentient and spiritual by nature. The object of that *prema* is Śrī Hari alone – not a dressed-up doll of bones and flesh. At present *prema* is in a dormant condition being covered by *kāma*. Therefore, you must endeavour to dispel this lust and to initiate the awakening of love.

“First, by good fortune due to the devotional pious credits (*sukṛti*) accumulated over many previous lifetimes, pure faith (*śraddhā*) arises. Then, by hearing *hari-kathā* and performing *harināma-kīrtana* in the association of pure devotees, *śraddhā* is matured and evolves successively into steadfastness (*niṣṭhā*), taste (*ruci*) and deep attachment (*āsakti*). From *āsakti*, *bhāva* makes its appearance, and from *bhāva*, *prema* is manifested. This is the order of development by which *prema* is awakened. *Prema* may be obtained only by taking support of this progressive evolution and never by any other means.

“O wicked mind, why do you fear to take up this step-by-step method of *sādhana*? By mere imitation of *prema* you will not obtain anything. By such an imitative display you will attain only the temporary happiness of sense enjoyment, which will also result in misery in the end. With this understanding, you should give up all offences and impediments (*anarthas*) and engage yourself in pure *sādhana-bhakti*. In this lies your good fortune.”

The association of *jñānīs*, whose aim is voidism or liberation; of fruitive workers, who covet the fruits of their work; and of hedonistic enjoyers, who are attached to sensual enjoyment, which is momentarily pleasing but ultimately culminates in distress, is known as *jana-saṅga*. When one obtains the association of Bhagavān's pure devotees, detrimental materialistic association automatically disappears.

The word *laulya* literally means “greed”, or “restlessness”. This restlessness refers to the tendency of the mind to run after various pursuits with greed to taste their fruits. With a desire to enjoy worldly sense enjoyment or to attain liberation, the mind sometimes runs in the direction of the eightfold *yoga* system, sometimes toward the process of meditation, sometimes toward the performance of sacrifices, and sometimes toward the practice by which one can attain impersonal Brahman. This is known as *laulya*.

Thus one should give up the six kinds of faults – *atyāhāra*, *prayāsa*, *prajalpa*, *niyamāgraha*, *jana-saṅga* and *laulya* – and engage in pure *sādhana-bhakti*. If one fails to do so, then the power to understand that *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* bestows the highest good for all living entities will be lost and one will be forever deviated from the path of *bhakti*.

VERSE THREE

Six Vows Favourable for Bhakti

*utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt
tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt
saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ
ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati*

Anvaya

utsāhāt – enthusiasm to carry out the rules which enhance *bhakti*; *niścayāt* – firm faith in the statements of *śāstra* and the *guru*, whose words are fully in line with *śāstra*; *dhairyāt* – fortitude in the practice of *bhakti*, even in the midst of obstacles, or patience during the practice stage of *bhakti* even when there is delay in attaining one's desired goal; *tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt* – following the limbs of *bhakti* such as hearing and chanting and giving up one's material sense enjoyment for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *saṅga-tyāgāt* – giving up illicit association with women, the association of those who are overly attached to women and the association of Māyāvādīs, atheists and pseudo-religionists; *sato vṛtteḥ* – adopting the good behaviour and character of pure devotees; *ṣaḍbhiḥ* – by these six types of practice; *bhaktiḥ* – pure devotion; *prasidhyati* – is effected.

Translation

Progress in *bhakti* may be obtained by the following six practices: (1) enthusiasm to carry out the rules that enhance *bhakti*, (2) firm faith in the statements of *śāstra* and the *guru*, whose words are fully in line with *śāstra*, (3) fortitude in the practice of *bhakti*, even in the midst of obstacles, or patience during the practice stage of *bhakti*, even when there is delay in attaining one's desired goal, (4) following the limbs of *bhakti* such as hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*)

and giving up one's material sense enjoyment for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, (5) giving up illicit connection with women, the association of those who are overly attached to women and the association of Māyāvādīs, atheists and pseudo-religionists, and (6) adopting the good behaviour and character of pure devotees.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā

The word *utsāha*, “enthusiasm”, refers to eagerness to perform the limbs of *sādhana*, which enhance *bhakti*. The word *nīścaya*, “conviction”, signifies firm faith. *Dhairya* means “not slackening one's execution of the limbs of *bhakti*, even when there is delay in obtaining the desired goal”. The meaning of *tat-tat-karma-pravartana* is to fully renounce one's material enjoyment while endeavouring exclusively for the attainment of Bhagavān. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.24) Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava:

*evam dharmair manuṣyānām
uddhavātma-nivedinām
mayi sañjayate bhaktiḥ
ko 'nyo 'rtho 'syāvaśiṣyate*

Devotion that is saturated with love for Me arises in the hearts of those who offer their very souls unto Me and who follow the religious principles favourable for *bhakti*. What other object remains to be obtained for those who have attained *bhakti* for Me?

The meaning of *sato-vṛtti* is to adopt the exalted conduct of devotees.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

Maintaining one's existence by appropriate means and cultivating *bhakti* are two essential activities for devotees. The first half of this verse indicates attitudes that are favourable for the cultivation of *bhakti*, and the second half describes how a devotee should conduct his life. Enthusiasm, optimism, patience, executing activities that nourish *bhakti*, renouncing bad association and adopting the good behaviour of devotees are the means of obtaining success in *bhakti*.

Utsāha – Eagerness to follow the rules and regulations of *bhakti* is called *utsāha*. Without this enthusiasm, one’s *bhakti* will vanish.

Following the limbs of *bhakti* with great respect is real *utsāha*.

Niścaya – The meaning of *niścaya* is firm faith.

Dhairya – Not slackening one’s execution of the limbs of *bhakti*, even when there is delay in obtaining the desired goal, is called *dhairya*, patience.

Bhakti-poṣaka-karma – There are two types of activities that nourish *bhakti*: regulations (*vidhi*) and prohibitions (*niṣedha*). Performing the limbs of *bhakti*, headed by *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, is the prescribed regulation. Renouncing one’s personal enjoyment for the purpose of giving pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the primary prohibition.

Saṅga-tyāga – One should renounce the association of non-devotees, women and those attached to women. “Non-devotees” here means sense enjoyers, *māyāvādīs* and those who make a pretentious display of religiosity.

Sad-vṛtti – One should adopt the virtuous conduct of pure devotees and thereby maintain one’s life in a suitable manner. Renunciant devotees should beg alms, preferably by performing *mādhukarī*. This is a process of begging where, like a bee (*madhukara*) taking nectar from many different flowers, they accept very little alms from many different households. Householder devotees should sustain their lives by means that are favourable to the regulations pertaining to the Vedic system of social order (*varṇāśrama*).

Anuvṛtti

Utsāha means to remain indifferent to the cultivation of *jñāna*, the activities of *karma*, spiritual practices that have any aim other than to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and one’s preferred variety of material enjoyment, while resolutely executing the limbs of *sādhana-bhakti*. “*Bhagavad-bhakti* alone is the ultimate objective of all living beings” – such firm faith is called *niścaya*. Sometimes wandering on to the paths of *karma*, *jñāna* and so forth makes one’s mind restless, and following their *sādhana*s will only produce suffering in the end. “Therefore,

the path of *bhakti* is the sole constitutional path for all *jīvas*” – such firm conviction is called *dhairya*, fortitude. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32–3) describes those *jñānīs* who commit offence at Bhagavān’s lotus feet by falsely considering themselves liberated, and also the steadfastness of loving (*premi*) devotees upon the path of *bhakti*:

*ye ’nye ’ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param̐ padam̐ tataḥ
patanty adho ’nādṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*

O lotus-eyed Lord, those who do not take shelter of Your lotus feet vainly consider themselves to be liberated. Because they are devoid of affection and devotion for You, their intelligence is impure. Even though such persons approach the platform of liberation by undergoing severe austerities and following spiritual practices, they fall from that position due to neglecting Your lotus feet.

*tathā na te mādḥava tāvakāḥ kvacid
bhraśyanti mārgāt tvayi baddha-sauhr̥dāḥ
tvayābhiguptā vicaranti nirbhayā
vināyakānīkapa-mūrdhasu prabho*

O Mādḥava, the *jñānīs* who imagine themselves to be liberated may fall from their so-called position of liberation, but Your devotees who are bound to You by a tie of intimate affection never fall from the path of *bhakti*. Because such devotees are fully protected by You, they fearlessly cross over all obstacles by placing their feet upon the heads of the predominating deities who are empowered to instigate the most severe types of impediments.

Concerning the path of *bhakti*, Haridāsa Ṭhākura took a steadfast vow to chant in the face of all obstacles. This ideal in the realm of *bhakti* is related in this verse from *Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata* (*Ādi-khaṇḍa* 16.94):

*khaṇḍa-khaṇḍa hai deha jāya jadi prāṇa
tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi harināma*

Regardless if my body is cut to pieces and the life-air exits my body, I will never abandon the chanting of *harināma*.

Such determination to remain upon the path of *bhakti* is called *dhairya*, fortitude. To execute the limbs of *bhakti*, such as hearing *hari-kathā*, performing *kīrtana* of *bhagavan-nāma* and meditating on Bhagavān's names, form and pastimes with such determination, is *tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt*.

The association of Bhagavān's devotees is very desirable. One should never associate with *karmīs*, *jñānīs* or those who are filled with extraneous desires, knowing them to be less intelligent and of an enjoying tendency. What to speak of approaching them to fulfil any type of desire for prestige, to maintain any type of relationship with them is not proper. Keeping such bad association at a safe distance, one should adopt the ways of those saintly devotees who are always immersed in chanting *harināma*. *Karma*, *jñāna*, *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and so forth, which are devoid of the desire to please Kṛṣṇa, are not steps along the path of *bhakti*. Even if one possesses all good qualities, if he is devoid of *bhakti*, those very qualities merely transform into faults. But all virtuous qualities certainly reside within one who possesses *bhakti*. Therefore, the path of *bhakti* is characterized by saintly conduct.

Enthusiasm to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, full faith and steadfastness in that service, ensuring that all endeavours are solely for Kṛṣṇa's service, renouncing the company of all others except Kṛṣṇa's devotees and following in the footsteps of Kṛṣṇa's devotees – these six practices enhance *bhakti*.

VERSE FOUR

Association That Nourishes Bhakti

*dadāti pratigrhṇāti
guhyam ākhyāti prcchati
bhunkte bhojayate caiva
ṣaḍ-vidham prīti-lakṣaṇam*

Anvaya

dadāti – offering pure devotees those objects that are in accordance with their requirements; *pratigrhṇāti* – accepting remnant items given by pure devotees; *guhyam ākhyāti* – revealing to devotees one’s confidential realizations concerning *bhajana*; *prcchati* – inquiring from devotees about their confidential realizations; *bhunkte* – eating with great love the *prasāda* remnants given by devotees; *ca*– and; *bhojayate* – lovingly serving *prasāda* to devotees; *ca* – and; *ṣaḍ-vidham eva* – are specifically of these six kinds; *prīti-lakṣaṇam* – the symptoms of loving association with devotees.

Translation

Offering pure devotees items in accordance with their requirements, accepting *prasāda* or remnant items given by pure devotees, revealing to devotees one’s confidential realizations concerning *bhajana*, inquiring from them about their confidential realizations, eating with great love the *prasāda* remnants given by devotees and lovingly feeding them *prasāda* – these are the six symptoms of loving association with devotees.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā

In this fourth verse, the extrinsic symptoms of loving exchanges with pure devotees are described. As the meaning of this verse is perfectly clear, it does not require elaboration.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

Bad association is unfavourable to *bhakti*; therefore, it is imperative to abandon such association. Those who are intent on progressing in *bhakti* should associate with pure devotees, who possess the power to free one from the tendency to fall into bad association. A description of the loving exchanges shared between devotees, which nourish one's *bhakti*, is found in this fourth verse. Lovingly giving another devotee that which he requires and lovingly accepting those items that are mercifully given by other devotees, revealing one's confidential realizations to devotees and hearing descriptions of confidential tenets (*tattva*) from pure devotees, lovingly serving devotees *prasāda* and accepting *prasāda* offered by devotees – these six kinds of exchanges constitute association with saintly persons (*sādhu-saṅga*) in its pure form. These six activities are the symptoms of love. One should serve *sādhus* by the performance of these activities.

Anuvṛtti

Bhakti appears by the association of Bhagavān's devotees, but since one may not know how to associate with Vaiṣṇavas, this topic is explained in this verse. By the negative effect of maintaining affectionate relationships with the *jñānīs*, who desire liberation from material existence, with the *karmīs*, who desire to enjoy the fruits of their actions, and with gross sense enjoyers, one's *bhakti* is harmed. One should not give these three types of persons any advice or any item. To do so would be offensive, because describing the glories of *harināma* to those devoid of faith is included within the category of *nāma-aparādha*. Also one should never accept any advice regarding the attainment of liberation or material enjoyment from such persons, because it will lead one to develop affectionate attachment to them. One should not instruct them on how to perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. One should not hear from them anything concerning the confidential aspects of *bhakti*. One should also not accept food that has been touched by them. By eating food

prepared by them, their predilection for either material enjoyment or liberation will be transmitted within one's heart.

*viṣayīra anna khāile malin haya mana
malin mana haile nahe kṛṣṇera smarāṇa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 6.279)

When one eats food offered by a materialist, one's mind becomes contaminated. When the mind is contaminated, one is unable to remember Kṛṣṇa.

Also, one should not feed these three types of persons who possess an enjoying spirit. Eating food prepared by them or feeding them increases one's affection for them. Exchanging love with devotees who are of the same aspiration as oneself and who are affectionate to oneself enhances one's *bhakti*. Offering and accepting items, revealing confidential realizations to one another, and serving and accepting food are all activities that increase affection. One should not perform these activities with those of different aspirations in life than one's own.

VERSE FIVE

Service Rendered by an Intermediate Devotee
to the Three Kinds of Vaiṣṇava

*kṛṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta
dīkṣāsti cet praṇatibhiḥ ca bhajantam īsam
śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya-
nindādi-śūnya-hṛdam īpsita-saṅga-labdhyā*

Anvaya

ādriyeta – one should respect; *manasā* – within the mind; *taṁ* – that person (a neophyte devotee); *yasya giri* – in whose speech; *iti* – thus (appears); *kṛṣṇa* – one name of Kṛṣṇa; (one should offer respect) *praṇatibhiḥ* – by offering *praṇāma*; *ca* – also; *bhajantam* – an intermediate devotee who, being endowed with the correct understanding of reality and illusion, performs *bhajana* in accordance with Vaiṣṇava conventions; *īsam* – Śrī Bhagavān; *cet* – if; *asti* – he has; *dīkṣā* – accepted initiation from a qualified *guru*; (and) *labdhyā* – having obtained; *īpsita-saṅga* – the association for which one hankers (the association of a topmost devotee whose heart is established in the particular mood of service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for which one aspires and who is affectionately disposed toward oneself); *śuśrūṣayā* – with all types of service (such as offering *daṇḍavat-praṇāma*, making relevant inquiry and rendering service); (one should respect) *bhajana-vijñam* – a self-realized, expert *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇava who performs *bhajana* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's eightfold daily pastimes by rendering service mentally; *ananyam* – who is an exclusive devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *anya-nindādi-śūnya-hṛdam* – and whose heart, due to his undeviating absorption in Kṛṣṇa, is free from faults such as the tendency to criticize others.

Translation

One who chants *kṛṣṇa-nāma* just once by calling out “O Kṛṣṇa!” is a neophyte devotee (*kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*). One should consider him to be his family member and silently respect him. One who, fully understanding the principle of *dikṣā*, has accepted initiation from a qualified *guru* and performs *bhajana* of Bhagavān in accordance with Vaiṣṇava conventions is an intermediate devotee (*madhyama-adhikārī*). One should respect such a devotee who is endowed with the correct understanding of reality and illusion by offering *praṇāma* unto him and so forth. One who is conversant with the science of *bhajana* as described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vaiṣṇava scriptures and who performs exclusive *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee. Due to his undeviating absorption in Kṛṣṇa, the pure heart of such a devotee is free from faults such as the tendency to criticize others. He is expert in *bhajana*, meaning that he mentally renders service (*mānasa-sevā*) to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes that take place during the eight segments of the day (*aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*). Knowing him to be a topmost devotee whose heart is established in the particular mood of service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for which one aspires and who is also affectionately disposed toward oneself, one should honour him by offering *danḍavat-praṇāma* (*praṇipāta*), making relevant inquiry (*paripraśna*) and rendering service (*sevā*) with great love.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭīkā

This verse gives instruction on *svarūpa-siddha-bhakti*¹. We should respectfully offer *praṇāma* to those who have accepted initiation from a qualified *guru*. In all ways we should lovingly serve those

1 All favourable endeavours (*ceṣṭā*) such as *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, *smaraṇa* and so on, as well as the manifestation of the spiritual sentiments which occur beginning from the stage of *bhāva*, which are completely devoid of all desires separate from Śrī Kṛṣṇa and which are freed from the coverings of *jñāna* and *karma*, are known as *svarūpa-siddha-bhakti*. In other words all endeavours of the body, mind and words that are related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that are performed exclusively and directly for His pleasure without any intervention are known as *svarūpa-siddha-bhakti*. –Ed.

who perform exclusive *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by *mānasa-sevā* and who are expert in the procedure of worshipping Kṛṣṇa's *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*, knowing them to be the most desirable association. The meaning of "exclusive *bhajana*" is to be solely devoted to the worship of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, without attachment for Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa or other incarnations of Bhagavān. It says in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that among the exclusive devotees of the many different incarnations of Bhagavān, those whose hearts have been stolen by Śrī Nanda-nandana are the best because even the favour of the master of Lakṣmī, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, cannot attract their minds. Because such exclusive devotees are forever alert to cultivate *bhakti* in the company of those topmost devotees who are expert in relishing devotional mellows (*rasika*), as well as being like-minded and affectionate, their hearts are always free from contaminations such as the tendency to criticize others. Knowing these topmost devotees to be the most desirable association, one should respect them mentally, offer *praṇāma* unto them and render service to them with great love.

Another meaning of this verse can be given. One should respect within the mind those who have accepted initiation from a qualified *guru* and chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. One should respect those who have accepted initiation from a bona fide spiritual master (*sad-guru*), who have developed an understanding of *sambandha-jñāna*² and who perform *bhajana* purely, by offering *praṇāma* to them and so forth. The best devotees are those who are devoid of the tendency to blaspheme others and who, being exclusively devoted to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, are forever alert to render service mentally to Their *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*. Knowing such devotees to be established in the particular mood of service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for which one aspires,

2 *Sambandha-jñāna* is knowledge regarding *sambandha-tattva*, the mutual relationship between the Lord, the living entities and the material energy. The word *sambandha* means connection, relationship or binding. The living entities are eternally and inseparably connected to the Supreme Lord. Therefore, He is the true object of relationship. The general relationship between the living entities and the Supreme Lord is one of servant and served. However, in the perfectional stage of *bhakti*, one becomes established in a specific relationship with the Lord either as a servant, friend, parent or lover. –Ed.

affectionately disposed toward oneself and the topmost association, one should honour them in all respects by offering prostrated obeisance (*praṇipāta*), making relevant inquiry (*paripraśna*) and rendering service (*sevā*) with great affection. One should understand the eminence of Vaiṣṇavas according to this gradation.

In the original verse by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, the word *ādi*, meaning “and so forth”, has been used after the word *ninda*, which means “to criticize”. We should understand this to indicate envy, aggression and other faults that generally accompany the tendency to criticize others. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.24) Kapiladeva says:

ta ete sādhaḥ sādhi
sarva-saṅga-vivarjitāḥ
saṅgas teṣv atha te prārthyāḥ
saṅga-doṣa-harā hi te

O Sādhi (virtuous lady), the only desirable association is that of pure-hearted *sādhus* who always remain aloof from all varieties of bad association. By the influence of their association, the contaminations accrued through bad company can be eradicated.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

According to the instruction given in this verse, as long as a *sādha* remains within the *madhyama-adhikārī* stage, he is obliged to render service to devotees. The topmost devotee (*uttama-bhakta*) sees all living entities with equal vision. Therefore, he does not discriminate between devotees and non-devotees. The intermediate devotee (*madhyama-bhakta*) is one who sincerely endeavours to perform *bhajana*. This fifth verse indicates how *madhyama* devotees should behave toward the topmost class of devotees. If someone remains aloof from the association of non-devotees, sense enjoyers, and men who are attached to women, their faults will not come within him. Still, understanding neophyte devotees (*kaniṣṭha-bhaktas*) to be ignorant due to their lack of knowledge of *sambandha-tattva*, the *madhyama* devotee should be merciful to them. Hearing such neophyte devotees uttering *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, a *madhyama* devotee will

respect them within his mind. If a *kaniṣṭha* devotee accepts initiation and engages in *hari-bhajana*, a *madhyama* devotee will show him respect by offering *praṇāma* to him. Understanding the association of *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas, who are free from the tendency to criticize others, to be most beneficial, one should honour them by rendering service to them. This service alone is the root cause of all spiritual perfections.

Anuvṛtti

In *Bhakti-sandarbha* (868) Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī defines the procedure known as *vaiṣṇava-dīkṣā* in the following statement:

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

That process which bestows transcendental knowledge (*divya-jñāna*) and destroys sinful desires for material sense enjoyment is called *dīkṣā* by learned authorities in the Absolute Truth.

One should silently respect a devotee who, knowing that Śrī Kṛṣṇa and *śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma* are non-different and transcendental and that the holy name alone is the supreme object of worship, takes exclusive shelter of *kṛṣṇa-nāma* and is devoted to chanting. The *mantras* that the disciple receives at the time of *dīkṣā* consist entirely of *śrī nāma*, and the names that form the basis of those *mantras* are endowed with specific knowledge of the disciple's relationship with the Lord. Without taking shelter of *harināma*, one cannot become *hari-jana*, a member of Kṛṣṇa's family. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu determined the gradations in Vaiṣṇavas through showing the gradations in their faith in *harināma*. One who has chanted the holy name just once is a (*kaniṣṭha*) Vaiṣṇava. One who constantly chants the holy name is a superior (*madhyama*) Vaiṣṇava. The topmost Vaiṣṇava (*uttama* or *mahā-bhāgavata*) is he at the mere sight of whom others automatically begin chanting the holy name. One should respect the *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇava within

one's mind. One should respect the *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava by offering *praṇāma* to him and so forth. Knowing the *uttama* Vaiṣṇava to be the topmost devotee who is established in the particular mood of service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for which one aspires and to be affectionately disposed toward oneself, one should serve him with great love.

Because the *mahā-bhāgavata* devotees see everything as being related to Kṛṣṇa, they see all living entities with equal vision. Like *madhyama-adhikārī* devotees, they are intent on performing *bhajana*, and like *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* devotees, they are devoted to chanting *harināma*.

Madhyama-adhikārīs possess *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and they respect the three levels of Vaiṣṇavas – *uttama*, *madhyama* and *kaniṣṭha* – by rendering service, offering *praṇāma* and offering respect within the mind, respectively. They always endeavour to turn the living entities who are averse to Kṛṣṇa toward Him. They are indifferent to those who are inimical to Him. They do not see all living entities with equal vision as the *uttama-adhikārī mahā-bhāgavata* devotees do. If they fraudulently imitate the *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee, they will very quickly fall down from their position.

The *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* devotees take full shelter of the chanting of *śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma*, knowing it to be supremely beneficial. But they do not realize that the position of the *madhyama-adhikārī* is above their present position and that they should strive to reach that position at sometime in the future. Sometimes the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* falls down due to considering himself a *guru*. Therefore, carefully giving appropriate respect to the *uttama* devotees, they should take full shelter of the holy name.

VERSE SIX

It is Forbidden to View the Transcendental Vaiṣṇavas with Material Vision

*dr̥ṣṭaiḥ svabhāva-janitair vapuṣaś ca doṣair
na prākṛtatvam iha bhakta-janasya paśyēt
gaṅgāmbhasām na khalu budbuda-phena-pāṅkair
brahma-dravatvam apagacchati nīra-dharmaiḥ*

Anvaya

na paśyēt – one should not consider a devotee to be an ordinary mundane person; *prākṛtatvam dr̥ṣṭaiḥ* – seeing with material vision; *svabhāva-janitaiḥ* – due to the defects stemming from his nature, such as birth in a low caste, harshness, lethargy and so forth; *ca* – and; *doṣaiḥ* – due to the faults; *vapuṣaḥ* – of the body, such as ugliness, disease, deformities and so forth; *bhakta-janasya* – the devotee of Bhagavān; *iha* – situated in this world; *brahma-dravatvam* – (just as) the nature of liquified transcendence; *gaṅgāmbhasām* – of the water of the Ganges; *na khalu apagacchati* – is never lost; *budbuda-phena-pāṅkaiḥ* – by the presence of bubbles, foam, mud and so on; *nīra-dharmaiḥ* – which exist simply due to the nature of water.

Translation

Devotees situated in this material world should not be viewed with material vision; in other words one should not consider them to be ordinary conditioned souls. The imperfections visible in their natures, such as birth in a low caste, harshness, lethargy and so forth, and the imperfections visible in their bodies, such as ugly features, disease, deformities and so on, are precisely like the appearance of bubbles, foam and mud in the Ganges. Despite such apparent pollution in the water of the Ganges, she retains

her nature as liquefied transcendence. Similarly the self-realized Vaiṣṇavas always exist on the transcendental plane and one should not attribute material defects to them.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā

Due to their residing within the material world, pure devotees seem to have some apparent defects from the mundane perspective. Nevertheless, we should not consider such devotees to be material or, in other words, to be ordinary conditioned souls. If one notices imperfections in their natures, such as harshness, anger, greed and so forth, or imperfections in their bodies, such as lack of cleanliness, ugliness, aging and so on, one should never assign mundane attributes to them. It is impossible for these mundane imperfections to exist within devotees' spiritually perfected bodies. Therefore, to perceive these mundane defects in elevated devotees is offensive. This point has been made clear by the example of Ganges water.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

The instruction of this sixth verse is that it is improper to perceive mundane defects in pure devotees and to consider such devotees to be mere conditioned souls. It is impossible for pure devotees to fall into bad association or to commit offences to the holy name. Perhaps there can be some imperfections in their bodies and in their natures. Lack of cleanliness, deformity, ugliness, old age and so forth are bodily imperfections. Birth in a low caste, harshness, lethargy and so forth are imperfections in one's character. The water of the Ganges is considered to be pure despite the natural appearance of bubbles, foam, mud and so on within it, and its nature as liquefied transcendence is not lost. Similarly, Vaiṣṇavas who have realized their eternal identities are not contaminated by the natural transformations of the physical body such as birth, aging, death and so on. Therefore, even upon observing imperfections in a pure Vaiṣṇava, one intent on performing *bhajana* should never disrespect him. By disrespecting such a personality, one becomes an offender (*aparādhī*).

Anuvṛtti

One should not perceive the apparent defects in the bodies or characters of pure devotees by viewing such devotees with mundane vision. Just as the water of the Ganges forever remains transcendental though it is mixed with bubbles, foam and mud, similarly, pure devotees are always transcendental. To view them on the basis of mundane considerations is offensive. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30–31), has also warned us to beware of this:

*api cet sudurācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

*kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā
śāśvac chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*

If even the most ill-behaved person intently engages in exclusive devotional service to Me, he is worthy of being considered a saintly person due to his intelligence being fixed on that devotion. He quickly becomes righteous and attains eternal peace. O son of Kuntī, attest that My devotee never perishes.

Even though a devotee of Kṛṣṇa may not be born in a *brāhmaṇa* family or a *gosvāmī* line, to not refer to him as “Gosvāmī” or “Prabhu” is considered viewing him with mundane vision. Devotees born in Gosvāmī lines and those born in any other caste should be treated equally. Regardless of the caste in which a devotee has taken birth, to assign material attributes to him is offensive. But if any person who has made any degree of progress along the path of *bhakti* considers himself a devotee and begins engaging in material misconduct, he will certainly fall from the path of *bhakti*. By coming into contact with such persons, one’s *bhakti* is destroyed.

Some people, being proud of their birth in a *brāhmaṇa* family or similarly high lineage, are unable to grasp either the impeccable

conduct or the elevated spiritual thought of perfected devotees (*siddha-bhaktas*). Due to this, they disrespect Vaiṣṇavas in varieties of ways and become offenders at the feet of Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇava-aparādhīs*). Therefore, in this matter, *sādhakas* should remain very careful.

VERSE SEVEN

The Process of Performing Bhajana of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Names and Pastimes

*syāt kṛṣṇa-nāma-caritādi-sitāpy avidyā-
pittopatapta-rasanasya na rocikā nu
kintv ādarād anudinam khalu saiva juṣṭā
svādvī kramād bhavati tad-gada-mūla-hantrī*

Anvaya

nu – *aho!*; *sitā api* – even the delightfully sweet sugar-candy; *kṛṣṇa-nāma-caritādi* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes; *na syāt* – is not; *rocikā* – tasteful; *rasanasya* – to the tongue; *upatapta* – that is afflicted; *pitta* – by the jaundice; *avidyā* – of ignorance (or, in other words, he who is afflicted by the ignorance born of being indifferent to Kṛṣṇa from a time without beginning); *kintu* – but; *khalu* – certainly; *sā eva* – that very sugar-candy of Kṛṣṇa's names, activities and so forth; *juṣṭā* – when taken therapeutically; *anudinam* – constantly; *ādarāt* – with respect or faith; *kramāt* – then gradually; *bhavati* – it becomes; *svādvī* – very tasteful; *hantrī* – and destroys; *mūla* – to the root; *tad-gada* – that disease of indifference to Kṛṣṇa, which is expressed in the form of absorption in mundane sense enjoyment.

Translation

Aho! Those whose tongues are afflicted by the jaundice of *avidyā* (or, in other words, those who are afflicted by the ignorance born of being indifferent to Śrī Kṛṣṇa from a time without beginning) cannot relish the nectarean names, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which are compared to the sweetest sugar-candy. Instead, these attributes taste bitter to them. But if with great faith

one regularly takes this sugar-candy of chanting and hearing the transcendental names, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it gradually becomes relishable to him and destroys at the root his disease, the jaundice of *avidyā*, or indifference to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In other words, he becomes spontaneously attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā

When *sādhakas* are still affected by the obstacles that impede progress in devotional life (*anarthas*), their minds are restless and disturbed. For this reason it is not easy for them to develop a taste for Bhagavān's name and so forth. Still, they should not relent even a little in their determination to continue performing *nāma-bhajana*. Being indifferent to Śrī Kṛṣṇa since beginningless time is called *avidyā*, ignorance. In this verse such *avidyā* is compared to the disease of jaundice. When one is afflicted with this disease, one's tongue's sense of taste is warped. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes are like the sweetest sugar-candy, a person afflicted by ignorance does not find them tasteful. By regular consumption of sugar-candy, a person's jaundice is gradually mitigated and the candy also begins to become tasteful to him. Similarly, by daily cultivating in a regulated manner the limbs of *bhakti*, headed by performing *kīrtana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names and hearing narrations of His pastimes, a *sādhaka's anarthas*, beginning with the tendency to commit offences, are eradicated and natural love for *śrī nāma* and *hari-kathā* awakens within him.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

In the third verse of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, qualities and activities that nourish *bhakti* were given. In addition to those qualities and activities, this verse describes the procedure for the cultivation of chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma* and so forth with *sambandha-jñāna*. The tongue afflicted with the jaundice of *avidyā* cannot narrate Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes or chant His name. But regularly taking the sugar-candy of hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa's *nāma*, *rūpa*, *guṇa* and *līlā* with great respect is capable of eradicating the disease of

ignorance. Each and every *jīva*, like a minute conscious particle within a ray of the complete conscious Kṛṣṇa-sun, is by nature an eternal servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When the *jīva* forgets this fact, he is seized by the disease of ignorance. Due to this, he is devoid of taste for devotional activities, headed by the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's name. But by taking good association and by the resultant mercy received from the *sādhu*, *guru* and *Vaiṣṇava*, he becomes capable of remembering Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes and he gradually obtains realization of his eternal self. As realization of his eternal nature gradually expands, his taste for devotional activities like chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma* increases accordingly. Simultaneously his ignorance is dispelled step by step. This is the basis for the comparison to sugar-candy. The tongue of one afflicted with jaundice will not find sugar-candy tasteful. But by taking this candy regularly, his jaundice is gradually cured and that sugar-candy will begin to become tasteful to him. Therefore, with enthusiasm, firm faith and patience, one should always continue to hear and chant Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes.

Anuvṛtti

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes are compared to sugar-candy, and ignorance is compared to jaundice. Just as delectably sweet sugar-candy does not appeal to the tongue that is afflicted by jaundice, the delightful and delicious sugar-candy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes does not appeal to the *jīva* who is engulfed by ignorance, due to his indifference to Kṛṣṇa, which has no beginning in time.

If, however, one continuously takes the medicine of this sugar-candy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes with great honour and faith, the sweet taste of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name will gradually increase and the disease of material enjoyment, which is rooted in the desire to be aloof from Kṛṣṇa, will be dissipated.

In the *Padma Purāṇa* (*Svarga-khaṇḍa* 48.56) it is confirmed that the principal effect of the holy name will not be immediately experienced when taken by those who are materially engrossed:

*tac-cad deha-draviṇa-janatā-lobha-pāṣaṇḍa-madhye
nikṣiptam syān na phala-janakam śīghram evātra vipra*

O *brāhmaṇa*, if the Lord's holy name is cast among the atheists, who are lustful toward the body, material possessions and family members, it will not quickly produce the fruit of love for Him.

Due to the influence of ignorance, the *jīva* thinks highly of his material body, family members and material attachments. He mistakenly considers the illusory energy, which is active only where there is an absence of awareness of the Lord, as the supreme controlling entity, Bhagavān. Thus he is unable to understand his true spiritual identity. By the power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, the false egoism arising from the *jīva*'s ignorance is dispelled like fog. At that time the *jīva* acquires a taste for performing *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*.

VERSE EIGHT

The Process of Bhajana and the Best Place for Performing Bhajana

*tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi-janānugāmī
kālam nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram*

Anvaya

tiṣṭhan vraje – living in Vraja; *anugāmī* – as a follower; *anurāgi-jana* – of the eternal residents of Vraja, who possess inherent spontaneous love; *tat* – for Him (Śrī Kṛṣṇa); *kālam nayed* – one should utilize all his time; *niyojya* – by engaging; *rasanā* – the tongue; *manasī* – and the mind; *krameṇa* – sequentially; *sukīrtana-anu-smṛtyoḥ* – in meticulous chanting and remembrance; *nāma-rūpa-caritādi* – of the names, form, qualities and pastimes; *tad* – of Him (Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa); *iti* – this only; *sāram* – is the essence; *akhilam* – of all; *upadeśa* – instruction.

Translation

While living in Vraja as a follower of the eternal residents of Vraja, who possess inherent spontaneous love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one should utilize all one’s time by sequentially engaging the tongue and the mind in meticulous chanting and remembrance of Kṛṣṇa’s names, form, qualities and pastimes. This is the essence of all instruction.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭīkā

At this point, these questions may arise in the mind of a new *sādhaka*: “Where should one reside to cultivate the devotional

activities, headed by the chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, and how should one go about it?" This verse, which constitutes the essence of all instruction, has been composed to answer these questions. The conventional meaning of the name of Kṛṣṇa is drawn from the verbal root *kṛṣ*, which means to attract, or draw, toward oneself. Thus Kṛṣṇa is famed as the attractor of the hearts of all living entities in the entire world. In Vraja He is known also as Yaśodā-nandana, the darling son of Yaśodā. Therefore, all devotees should utilize the entirety of their time in engaging their tongues in performing *kīrtana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes and their mind in remembrance of Him. They should reside only in Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala and follow elevated devotees.

How should one follow devotees? By two types of devotion: *vaidhī* (devotion performed in conjunction with the rules and regulations of the scriptures) and *rāgānugā* (spontaneous devotion). Accordingly, there are also two types of *sādhakas*: those who follow the path of *vaidhī* and those who follow the path of *rāgānugā*. Among these two, it is especially desirable to follow a *rāgānuga-bhakta*. The meaning of *tad-anurāgi-janānugāmī* is to follow the intimate, eternal devotees in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *vraja-līlā*. One should cultivate *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* under the guidance of those *rasika-gurus* who are themselves followers of the intimate eternal devotees of Śrī Vrajendra-nandana, the enactor of human-like pastimes.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

This verse describes the method of *bhajana* as well as the topmost place for performing *bhajana*. With the intention of incessantly executing the gradual process of *sādhana*, one should utilize every moment of his life by engaging the tongue in nicely performing *kīrtana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes and then the mind in *smaraṇa*, or remembrance, upon them. This process should be executed while residing in Vraja and under the guidance of devotees who are immersed in *vraja-rasa*. The performance of this *mānasa-sevā*, service rendered within the mind, is dependent solely upon residing mentally in Vraja.

Anuvṛtti

By following the rules and regulations prescribed in the previous verses, a *sādhaka* should draw his mind away from everything unrelated to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and engage his tongue in performing *kīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa's *nāma*, *rūpa*, *guṇa* and *līlā*. Then, eventually, his mind will be able to enter into constant remembrance (*smaraṇa*) of Kṛṣṇa. While residing in Vraja, he should utilize all his time executing these activities under the guidance of devotees who are adept at relishing *vraja-rasa*. This is the essence of all instruction.

In the devotional life of a *sādhaka*, *śravaṇa-daśā*, or the stage of hearing, comes first. In this stage, he hears *kṛṣṇa-nāma* and narrations of Kṛṣṇa's form, qualities and pastimes. By doing this more and more, he gradually becomes more mature, then the stage of *varaṇa-daśā* begins. In this stage he begins performing *kīrtana* of those topics he was hearing. By performing *kīrtana* with the specific devotional mood one is cultivating, he enters *smaraṇa-daśā*, the stage of remembrance. Within the category of *smaraṇa* there are five stages: *smaraṇa*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, *anusmṛti* and *samādhi*. Meditation where the mind sometimes becomes distracted is called *smaraṇa*. *Smaraṇa* that is devoid of such distraction is called *dhāraṇā*. Unbroken contemplation upon the object of meditation is called *dhyāna*. When *dhyāna* is performed constantly, it is called *anusmṛti*. When one's meditation becomes entirely free from impediments and wholly uninterrupted, it is called *samādhi*. After *smaraṇa-daśā*, one enters the stage known as *āpana-daśā*. In this stage the *sādhaka* achieves realization of his pure spiritual identity. After this, in the stage known as *sampatti-daśā*, he attains *vastu-siddhi*. At this time he finally obtains a spiritual form and is appointed to his eternal service in the spiritual realm.

When a devotee following the path of *vaidhī-bhakti* abandons his many varieties of material desires and performs *bhajana* in accordance with the instructions of *śāstra*, *sad-guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, *ruci* (taste) arises in his *bhajana*. Upon the appearance of this *ruci*, he abandons the path of *vaidhī-bhakti* and enters the path of *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

*rāgātmikā-bhakti—‘mukhyā’ vraja-vāsī-jane
tāra anugata-bhaktir ‘rāgānugā’-nāme*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.149)

That devotion whose very essence is constituted of eternal spontaneous attachment (*rāga*) is known as *rāgātmikā-bhakti*. That devotion is pre-eminent among all forms of *bhakti* and is splendidly manifest in the residents of Vraja. Devotion that follows in the wake of this *rāgātmikā-bhakti* is known as *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

*iṣṭe svārasikī rāgaḥ
paramāviṣṭatā bhavet
tan-mayī yā bhaved bhaktiḥ
sātra rāgātmikoditā*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.272)

An unquenchable loving thirst (*premamayī-trṣṇā*) for the object of one’s affection (Śrī Kṛṣṇa) that gives rise to spontaneous and intense absorption (*svārasikī paramāviṣṭatā*) in that object is called *rāga*. Such *rāgamayī-bhakti*, or the performance of services – such as stringing garlands – with intense *rāga*, is called *rāgātmikā-bhakti*.

*rāgamayī-bhaktir haya ‘rāgātmikā’ nāma
tāhā śuni’ lubdha haya kona bhāgyavān*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.152)

Bhakti that consists of *rāga* is called *rāgātmikā*. If, upon hearing of this, a devotee becomes intensely anxious to obtain such devotion, he is considered to be most fortunate.

*lobhe vraja-vāsīr bhāve kare anugati
śāstra-yukti nāhi mane—rāgānugār prakṛti*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.153)

When one follows in the footsteps of the residents of Vraja by cultivating their devotional moods with intense hankering, he does not care for the injunctions of the scriptures or for logical arguments. This is the nature of spontaneous devotion.

bāhya, antara—ihāra dui to' sādhana
'bāhya' sādhabaka-dehe kare śravaṇa-kīrtana

'mane' nija-siddha-deha koriyā bhāvana
rātri-dine kare vraje kṛṣṇera sevana

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.156–57)

The *sādhana* of *rāgānuga-bhakti* is of two types: external (*bāhya*) and internal (*antara*). Externally one performs hearing and chanting in the *sādhabaka-deha*, the outer feature of a practitioner of *bhakti*. Internally, while contemplating one's own perfected spiritual form, one renders service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja day and night.

sevā sādhabaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.295)

A *sādhabaka* who has greed (*lobha*) for *rāgānuga-bhakti* should serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa both in the *sādhabaka-rūpa* and the *siddha-rūpa* in accordance with the *bhāva* of the eternal devotees residing in Vraja (*vraja-parikaras*) who possess the same mood for which he aspires. The *sādhabaka-rūpa* refers to the physical body in which one is presently situated, and the *siddha-rūpa* refers to the internally contemplated spiritual form that is suitable to serve Kṛṣṇa according to one's cherished desire.

nijābhīṣṭa kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha pācheta' lāgiyā
nirantara sevā kare antarmanā haiyā

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.159)

The eternal residents of Vraja are known as *kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha*, very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Among Kṛṣṇa's various devotees, those who possess the mood of service toward Him for which one intensely hankers are known as *nijābhīṣṭa-kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha*. Following in the footsteps of those beloved devotees of Kṛṣṇa for whose mood of service one hankers, one should constantly serve Kṛṣṇa within the mind through one's internally conceived spiritual form.

*kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāsyā
preṣṭhaṁ nija-samihitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.294)

The essential meaning of this verse is that in accordance with one's own specific *bhāva*, the *sādhaka* should remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa and a particular eternal devotee of Kṛṣṇa who possesses the serving mood for which he aspires. He should be immersed in chanting the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that are related to His pastimes in Vraja and in hearing narrations of those pastimes. Also, those names and pastimes should be favourable to the *sādhaka*'s specific service aspirations. Finally, these activities should be performed while residing in Vraja.

*dāsa-sakhā-pitrādi-preyasīra gaṇa
rāga-mārga nija-nija-bhāvera gaṇana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.161)

There are four moods of service included in the path of spontaneous devotion: those of the servants, friends, parents and conjugal lovers.

Those desiring to serve in the devotional mellow of neutrality (*śānta-rasa*) should aspire to be like the cows, sticks, buffalo horns, the flute, *kadamba* trees and so forth. Those aspiring to serve in the mellow of servitude (*dāsyā-rasa*) should follow servants in Vraja such as Raktaka and Patraka. Devotees aspiring to serve in the mellow of fraternity (*sakhya-rasa*) should follow Śrī Baladeva, Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā and so forth. Devotees aspiring to serve in the mellow of parenthood (*vātsalya-rasa*) should follow Śrī Nanda and Yaśodā, and those aspiring to serve in the amorous mellow (*madhura-rasa*) should follow cowherd girls (*gopīs*) like Lalitā and Viśākhā. While residing in Vraja, one should immerse oneself in hearing narrations of the eternal devotees who serve in the mood for which one aspires.

There is no greater place than Vraja-maṇḍala to perform *bhajana* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, even such exalted devotees as Brahmā and Uddhava pray to take birth there as a blade of grass or a shrub.

VERSE NINE

What is the Topmost Holy Place?

*vaikuṅṭhāj janito varā madhu-purī tatrāpi rāsotsavād
vṛndāraṇyam udāra-pāṇi-ramaṇāt tatrāpi govardhanaḥ
rādhā-kuṇḍam ihāpi gokula-pateḥ premāmṛtāplāvanāt
kuryād asya virājato giri-taṭe sevām vivekī na kaḥ*

Anvaya

janitaḥ – due to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s having taken birth there; *madhu-purī* – the abode of Mathurā; *varā* – is superior; *vaikuṅṭhāt* – than Vaikuṅṭha, the realm of spiritual opulence; *vṛndāraṇyam* – the forest of Vṛndāvana; (is superior) *tatra api* – even than that (the abode of Mathurā); *rāsa-utsavāt* – because the festival of the *rāsa* dance took place there; *govardhanaḥ* – Govardhana Hill; (is superior) *tatra api* – even than that (Vṛndāvana forest); *ramaṇāt* – because of the playful pastimes (because Śrī Kṛṣṇa raised it with His lotus hand and performed many pastimes there with His devotees); *udāra-pāṇi* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose hand is mercifully disposed to bestow *prema* upon His beloved devotees; *rādhā-kuṇḍam* – Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa; (is superior) *iha api* – even than this (Govardhana); *āplāvanāt* – due to immersing those (who bathe in its waters); *premāmṛta* – in the nectar of divine love; *gokula-pateḥ* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of Gokula; *kaḥ* – what; *vivekī* – intelligent person; *na kuryāt* – would not render; *sevām* – service; *asya* – to this magnificent pond; *virājitaḥ* – splendidly situated; *taṭe* – at the base; *giri* – of the hill known as Govardhana.

Translation

Due to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s having taken birth there, the abode of Mathurā is superior even to Vaikuṅṭha, the realm of spiritual opulence. Superior to Mathurā is the forest of Vṛndāvana because there the festival

of the *rāsa* dance took place. Superior to the Vṛndāvana forest is Govardhana Hill because Śrī Kṛṣṇa raised it with His lotus hand and performed many pastimes there with His devotees. Yet superior even to Govardhana Hill is Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa because it immerses one in the nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine love. What intelligent person would not desire to render service to this magnificent pond, which is splendidly situated at the base of Govardhana Hill?

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā

The previous verse instructed us to perform *bhajana* while residing in Vraja. This verse very clearly answers precisely where one should reside within Vraja. Due to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's having taken birth there, the abode of Mathurā is superior even to Vaikuṅṭha, the realm of great spiritual opulence. Superior even to the abode of Mathurā is the forest of Vṛndāvana because there the festival of the *rāsa* dance took place. Superior to the Vṛndāvana forest is Govardhana Hill because it playfully rested on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus hand, and because there Kṛṣṇa freely enjoyed many pastimes with His devotees. Yet superior even to this Govardhana Hill is the super-excellent Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa because it immerses one in the nectarean divine love that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the moon of Gokula, feels for Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The scriptures declare that Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is as dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja, Śrīmatī Rādhikā Herself.

All the above-mentioned spiritual realms or locations where Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed pastimes manifest from His internal potency (*svarūpa-śakti*) and are therefore purely spiritual. However, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is superior to them all because it manifests the highest display of the inherent variegated pastimes of the *svarūpa-śakti*.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

This ninth verse informs us that Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the best among all worshipful places. Because Śrī Kṛṣṇa took birth in the city of Mathurā, it is superior to Vaikuṅṭha, the realm of immense opulence in the spiritual sky. Within the district of Mathurā, the

Vṛndāvana forest is the best location. Govardhana Hill is the best place within the entire area of Vraja due to Udāra-pāni Śrī Kṛṣṇa having performed various pastimes there. Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is splendidly situated just near Śrī Govardhana. It is the best place of all due to being the special storehouse of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's nectarean divine love (*premāmṛta*). Is there any person intent upon performing *bhajana* who would not desire to render service to Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa? In other words, the devotees of Bhagavān most certainly render service to Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Either in their material bodies or in their spiritually perfected forms, devotees should execute the aforementioned process of *bhajana* while constantly residing at Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Anuvṛtti

Among all holy places, the Vaikuṅṭha realm situated in the spiritual sky is the best. Superior even to Vaikuṅṭha is the district of Mathurā, because Bhagavān took birth there. Within Mathurā-maṇḍala, the forest of Vṛndāvana is the best because there the *rāsa* dance took place. Of all places within Vṛndāvana, Govardhana Hill is greater still due to being the site where Śrī Kṛṣṇa freely enjoyed various pastimes. Superior even to Govardhana Hill is Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Because it overflows with the nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's divine love, it is the best place of all. There is no place greater than Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Therefore, what intelligent person would not render service to Rādhā-kuṇḍa, which is so splendidly situated at the base of Govardhana? In other words, anyone endowed with true spiritual intelligence serves Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's eternal devotee Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, being fully conversant with the most elevated devotional sentiments within Gaurahari's heart, has described service to Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa as the topmost. The glories of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa are incomprehensible and inaccessible even for loving devotees who may have taken shelter of *madhura-rasa*, yet are devoid of devotion to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

VERSE TEN

Who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Dear Most Beloved?

*karmibhyaḥ parito hareḥ priyatayā vyaktim yayur jñāninas
tebhyo jñāna-vimukta-bhakti-paramāḥ premaika-niṣṭhās tataḥ
tebhyas tāḥ paśu-pāla-pankaja-dṛśas tābhyo 'pi sā rādhikā
preṣṭhā tadvad iyam tadīya-sarasī tam nāśrayet kaḥ kṛtī*

Anvaya

jñāninaḥ – the *brahma-jñānīs*, who by dint of their spiritual knowledge are transcendental to the three modes of material nature; *yayur* – have attained; *vyaktim* – distinction (have been ascertained in the scriptures); *priyatayā* – as being more dear; *paritaḥ* – in all respects; *hareḥ* – to Śrī Hari; *karmibhyaḥ* – than the pious followers of the path of *karma*, who are forever occupied in performing virtuous deeds; *jñāna-vimukta* – those who have abandoned the pursuit of knowledge, like Sanaka; *bhakti-paramāḥ* – and who are dear devotees of Kṛṣṇa, considering *bhakti* alone to be the best path; (have attained distinction as being more dear to Śrī Hari) *tebhyaḥ* – than them (the *jñānīs*); *prema eka-niṣṭhāḥ* – pure devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa such as Nārada who are resolutely fixed in *prema* for Him; (have attained distinction as being more dear to Śrī Hari) *tataḥ* – than them (those dear devotees); *tāḥ* – those; *paśu-pāla* – maintainers of the cows (the *gopīs*); *dṛśaḥ* – whose eyes; *pankaja* – are like the fully blossomed petals of a lotus flower; (have attained distinction as being more dear to Śrī Hari) *tebhyaḥ* – than them (those loving devotees); *sā* – that; *rādhikā* – Śrīmatī Rādhikā; (has attained distinction as being more dear to Śrī Hari) *api* – even; *tābhyaḥ* – than them (the *gopīs*); *iyam* – this; *sarasī* – pond (Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa); *tadīya* – of Hers (Śrīmatī Rādhikā's); *preṣṭhā* – is more dear (to Śrī Kṛṣṇa); *tad-vat* – just as She is; (therefore) *kaḥ* – what; *kṛtī* – highly fortunate, spiritually

intelligent person; *na āśrayet* – would not take shelter (would not reside on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in a state of transcendental consciousness, performing *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eightfold daily pastimes); *tām* – of that Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Translation

One who selflessly performs virtuous acts in accordance with the path of *karma-yoga* is superior to those who merely seek to fulfil their selfish desires. The *brahma-jñānīs*, who by dint of their spiritual knowledge are transcendental to the three modes of material nature, are more dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than those pious followers of the *karma* path, who are forever occupied in performing virtuous deeds. More dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than the *brahma-jñānīs* are His devotees like Sanaka, who have abandoned the pursuit of knowledge and who consider *bhakti* alone to be the best path. In doing so, they have followed the statement in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.3): “*jñāne prayāsam udapāsya* – one should abandon the endeavour for knowledge.” Pure devotees like Nārada, who are resolutely fixed in *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, are even more dear to Him than all such devotees. The *vraja-gopīs*, whose very lives belong solely to Kṛṣṇa, are even more beloved to Him than all such loving (*premi*) devotees. Amongst all those beloved *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is more dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than His own life; in precisely the same way, He dearly loves Her pond, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Therefore, what highly fortunate, spiritually intelligent person would not reside on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in a state of transcendental consciousness, performing *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eightfold daily pastimes?

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭīkā

In this tenth verse, yet another reason for taking shelter of and worshipping Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is being shown. A follower of the path of *karma-kāṇḍa*, who is interested solely in enjoying the fruits of his actions, is actually indifferent to Bhagavān. More dear to Bhagavān are *jñānīs*, who are inclined towards *nirviśeṣa-brahma*, His impersonal aspect, which is merely a non-specific manifestation of

undifferentiated spirit. More dear to Bhagavān than such *jñānīs* are His devotees such as the four Kumāras, who are devoid of *nirviśeṣa-jñāna*, inclination toward His impersonal aspect, yet possess *aīśvarya-jñāna*, awareness of His supreme majesty. Devotees such as Śrī Nārada who possess *prema-niṣṭhā*, a resolute and exclusive fixation in love for Him, are even more dear to Śrī Hari than such *jñāni-bhaktas*. Superior to such loving devotees are the *vraja-gopīs*, who possess an indescribable and unprecedented love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and are therefore exceedingly dear to Him.

In the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said:

*yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇos
tasyāḥ kuṇḍam priyam thatā
sarva-gopīṣu saivaikā
viṣṇor atyanta-vallabhā*

Just as Śrīmatī Rādhikā is most dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Her pond, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, is equally dear to Him. Among all the beloved *gopīs*, none is as dear as Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

This verse, quoted in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (4.5), proves that, among all the *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā alone is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear most beloved. In precisely the same way Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Her pond – which is actually non-different from Her – is exceedingly dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and is also the topmost place of residence for devotees. Therefore, what spiritually insightful person desirous of performing *bhajana* would not take shelter of that pond? Certainly, any such person would take shelter of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

Among the many varieties of *sādhakas* found in this world, the devotee of Bhagavān who performs *bhajana* while residing on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is the best and the most dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is described in this tenth verse. More dear to Kṛṣṇa than the followers of the path of *karma* are the *jñānīs*, who search after the impersonal aspect of the Absolute Truth. More dear to Kṛṣṇa than all the varieties of *jñānīs* is a pure devotee, who has abandoned the

attempt to understand the Absolute Truth through the cultivation of knowledge. Amongst all varieties of pure devotees, the *premī-bhakta*, or one who dearly loves Kṛṣṇa, is the most dear to Him. Amongst all varieties of such loving pure devotees, the *vraja-gopīs* are the most dear to Kṛṣṇa. Of all the *vraja-gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Kṛṣṇa's dear most, and Her pond, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, is similarly dear to Him. Therefore, the intelligent person who possesses sufficient accumulated devotional merit (*sukṛti*) will most certainly reside on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa and within the mind render service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eightfold daily pastimes.

Anuvṛtti

More dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than those who simply act to fulfil their selfish desires is one who is firmly established in the mode of goodness and is therefore dedicated to performing virtuous deeds. Even more dear to Kṛṣṇa than all such *sat-karmīs* is a *brahma-jñānī*, who is transcendental to the modes of nature altogether. More dear to Kṛṣṇa than all such *jñānīs* is a pure devotee. More dear to Kṛṣṇa than all such pure devotees is a *premī-bhakta*, who loves Him dearly. Even more dear to Kṛṣṇa than all such *premī-bhaktas* are the *vraja-gopīs*. Amongst all the *vraja-gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Kṛṣṇa's dear most. In the same way that Kṛṣṇa loves Her, He loves Her pond, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa's devotees, who are the most fortunate people, take shelter of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

VERSE ELEVEN

The Glories of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa

*kṛṣṇasyoccaiḥ praṇaya-vasatiḥ preyasibhyo 'pi rādhā-
kuṇḍam cāsyā munibhir abhitaḥ tādṛg eva vyadhāyi
yat preṣṭhair apy alam asulabham kim punar bhakti-bhājām
tat premedam sakṛd api saraḥ snātur āviṣkaroti*

Anvaya

rādhā – Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *preyasibhyaḥ api* – even more than the other beloved *gopīs*; *uccaiḥ* – is the foremost; *vasati* – object; *praṇaya* – of love; *kṛṣṇasya* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *asyāḥ* – Her (Śrīmatī Rādhikā's); *kuṇḍam* – pond; *ca* – also; *abhitaḥ* – in every respect; *tādṛk eva* – is just so (the topmost object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's love); *vyadhāyi* – this has been established (in the scriptures); *munibhiḥ* – by the sages; *idam* – this; *saraḥ* – pond (Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa); *āviṣkaroti* – bestows; *tat* – that; *prema* – *gopī-prema*; *yat* – which; *alam* – is immensely; *asulabham* – difficult to attain; *preṣṭhaiḥ api* – even for such dear devotees of Bhagavān as Nārada; *kim punar* – what to speak of; *bhakti-bhājām* – other reservoirs of *bhakti* (the *sādhaka-bhaktas*); *snātuḥ* – upon one who simply bathes in its waters with great devotion; *sakṛt api* – only once.

Translation

After thorough deliberation on the matter, the sages have unanimously declared (in the *Padma Purāṇa*) that just as among all the *gopīs* Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the foremost object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's great love, in precisely the same way this pond of Hers is also the topmost object of His love. Upon one who simply bathes in its waters just once with great devotion, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa bestows that rare treasure of *gopī-prema* which is so immensely difficult to attain

even for such dear devotees of Bhagavān as Nārada – not to speak of ordinary *sādhakas*.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā

It is only natural at this point to become eager to learn what special commodity can be attained by taking exclusive shelter of the limitlessly glorious Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. “The fruit of such exclusive devotion is the topmost variety of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.” Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī is concluding his composition by affirming this philosophical principle (*siddhānta*). The *prema* being spoken of here is extremely difficult to achieve even for such exalted and dear devotees of Bhagavān as Nārada. In other words this most elevated, radiant divine love (*unnatojjvala-prema*) that the *vraja-gopīs* possess for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not only difficult for such dear devotees to attain, it is actually impossible. Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa bestows this very *prema* upon one who bathes in her waters with a mood of special love and devotion. Here, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is both the *svayam-kartā*, the one who directly bestows that *prema* upon the devotees, and also the *viṣaya*, the object of the devotees’ love. Who would not take shelter of this Rādhā-kuṇḍa? In other words, any devotee skilled in the art of performing *bhajana* and sincerely desirous of achieving the topmost *prema* would certainly do so.

Relying upon a particle of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mercy, I have composed this commentary as far as my intelligence allows in order to increase the transcendental pleasure of His devotees. This servant of the Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa deity and son of Śrī Govardhana-lāla, named Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa, hereby concludes his commentary named *Upadeśa-prakāśikā* on Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*.

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

Having described the natural glory of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in the previous verse, this eleventh verse has been composed with the intention of making steadfast faith in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa arise within the hearts of *sādhakas*. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s dear most beloved and in all respects more exalted than all His other beloveds. In the scriptures, the sages (*munis*) have described Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa’s eminence in the same way. Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa easily bestows

upon one who bathes in her waters that rare *prema* which is not only immensely difficult for *sādhakas* to attain, but also difficult for *premi-bhaktas* like Nārada to achieve.

Therefore, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa alone is the most suitable place of residence for those endeavouring for perfection in their *bhajana*. The *jīva* who has overcome the influence of matter and who has attained his inner perfected spiritual form as a *gopī* (*aprākṛta-gopī-deha*) should reside, in the mood of a maidservant (*pālya-dāsī*) of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, on the banks of transcendental Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in the divine land of Vraja (*aprākṛta-vraja*) in the resplendent grove (*kuñja*) of the spiritual master, who is situated in his eternal form as a female friend (*guru-rūpā-sakhī*) of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Living there, the pure spirit soul (*aprākṛta-jīva*) should externally take constant shelter of chanting *harināma*. Internally, in his spiritually perfected eternal form as a *gopī*, he should render service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā while deeply meditating on Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eightfold daily pastimes (*aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*). This is the culmination of *bhajana* for the devotees who have taken shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's feet.

Anuvṛtti

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dear most beloved and the crest-jewel of those who are dear to Him. In the scriptures, devotee sages have described Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa as being Śrī Kṛṣṇa's foremost beloved object, as dear to Him as Śrīmatī Rādhikā Herself. The topmost love for Bhagavān, *gopī-prema*, is exceedingly difficult even for dearly beloved devotees of Bhagavān such as Nārada to attain, not to speak of how difficult it is for devotees still in the practitioner stage (*sādhaka-bhaktas*) to achieve that rare *prema*! But very easily Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa bestows this *prema* upon one who bathes in her waters just once.

Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa is full of *prema* and, indeed, is actually comprised of waters of nectarean *prema*. By transcendently residing (*aprākṛta-vāsa*) on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa and by transcendently bathing (*aprākṛta-snāna*) in her waters, one will obtain the topmost *prema*. What is meant by *aprākṛta-vāsa* and *aprākṛta-snāna*? Remaining thoroughly aloof from all desires for material sense enjoyment, one should constantly perform deep

meditational worship (*mānasa-bhajana*) in strict devotion to Śrīmatī Rādhikā for the duration of one's life. After shedding this material body, one will attain an eternal spiritual body and be intently engaged in direct, eternal service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Only one who bathes in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in this way attains the topmost *prema*.

Obtaining such good fortune is exceedingly difficult even for such exalted *premī* devotees as Nārada. It is extremely difficult even for the perfected devotees who eternally serve Kṛṣṇa in the devotional mellows (*rasas*) of servitude (*dāsyā*), friendship (*sakhya*) and parenthood (*vātsalya*) to bathe in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, what to speak of worldly-minded persons. What more can possibly be said of the glories of taking *aprākṛta-snāna* in Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa? Those who bathe there obtain good fortune that extends all the way up to becoming maidservants of Śrī Vārṣabhānavī (Śrīmatī Rādhikā).

Śrī Govinda dāsa was Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's dear servant. Always accompanying Mahāprabhu as if he were His shadow, he served Mahāprabhu with great love. Simultaneously, he would also record, in his own words, descriptions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's especially significant pastimes. The collection of verses he wrote became famous by the name of *Govinda-kaḍacā*. Having heard these verses directly from Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explained them in his own words in his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Through the medium of those verses, light was shed upon Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's transcendental character.

The following is a narration from the time when Śrīman Mahāprabhu was residing in Jagannātha Purī: Mahāprabhu had already fulfilled the objectives for which He descended upon this Earth. Now He desired to wind up His pastimes. One day He took His intimate devotees and went to the shore of the ocean. Seeing the blue ocean, remembrance of Śyāmasundara immediately arose within Him. Becoming overwhelmed in devotional ecstasy (*bhāva*), He was oblivious to all else. With great difficulty His devotees gradually brought Him back to external consciousness. At that very time Śrī Gaurasundara slowly began instructing those devotees. In that assembly Mahāprabhu's very dear disciple Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī was also present. Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote those instructions down in

verse form, and these verses became famous as *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, nectarean instructions. For spiritual practitioners, this *Upadeśāmṛta* is like their very lives and a necklace to be worn at all times.

A servant of the famous *Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa* deity in *Vṛndāvana*, named *Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa Gosvāmī*, composed a beautiful commentary entitled *Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭīkā* on the eleven verses of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*. After some time, the condition of the residents of this world became critical, because the doctrine of *prema-bhakti* had been substantially covered by the frightful influence of the present age of *Kali-yuga*. Seeing this, *Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu* sent His dear, eternal devotee *Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura* to this world. In simple and comprehensible language, he composed a brief yet essential commentary on the verses of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*. This commentary is famous as *Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti*.

Śrī Gaurasundara is the personification of *apṛākṛta vipralambha-rasa*, the mellow constituted of sentiments of divine separation from *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*. To nourish the *rasa* of *sambhoga*, which is when the devotee is meeting together with *Kṛṣṇa*, He tasted that *vipralambha-rasa*, and for the benefit of human society He taught how it can be attained. It is compulsory for sincere *sādhakas* to accept these instructions; otherwise it will be impossible for them to ever achieve *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

In modern times, *Kali Mahārāja*, the personification of the present degraded age, has assumed the bogus dress of a devotee of *Śrī Gaura*. Sometimes he adopts the name of imitationist (*sahajiyā*) cults such as *Āula*, *Bāula*, *Neḍā* or *Neḍī*. With great intensity he propagates these false philosophies, as well as other doctrines such as *Māyāvāda* and *gaura-nāgarī*¹, which are opposed to the path of *bhakti*. Aho! Just see the influence of *Kali Mahārāja*! Some say, "I am

1 In the transcendental loving affairs of *Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa*, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* is *nāgara*, the predominating hero in the position of the enjoyer, and *Śrī Rādhā* and Her bodily manifestations, the *sakhīs*, are *nāgarīs*, the predominated heroines in the position of the enjoyed. Although *Śrī Gaura* is *Kṛṣṇa* Himself, He adopts the mood of the *nāgarī*, *Śrīmatī Rādhikā*, in order to experience the nature of Her love for *Kṛṣṇa*. Therefore, *Śrī Gauraṅga* is not in the mood of a *nāgara*. The *gaura-nāgarīs* conceive of *Śrīman Mahāprabhu* as a *nāgara* and themselves as *nāgarīs*. This is completely opposed to both the mood of *Mahāprabhu* and the cultivation of *suddha-bhakti*. —Ed.

Gaurahari Himself,” some declare themselves to be glorious spiritual masters, some consider themselves to be the Creator, and others say that they are Śīva. Very enthusiastically they cheat human society by propagating their bogus philosophies that they were taught by Kali Mahārāja. Being pleased with their preaching, Kali Mahārāja blesses them and bestows upon them abundant wealth (*kanaka*), women (*kāminī*) and notoriety (*pratiṣṭhā*). Being bewildered by their propaganda, most people ignore *śuddha-bhakti* and *bhagavad-bhajana* and instead advance along the path of these new, depraved philosophies that are based on material enjoyment. They become so intoxicated in this mundane enjoyment that they are completely unaware of just how they are ascending the peak of thorough self-destruction.

O faithful devotees, do not move in that direction. Become steadfastly situated upon the path of *bhakti* that was shown by great personalities such as Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura. This devotional path enables one to relish the pure *kṛṣṇa-prema* that was practised and preached by Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda. Reside in Vraja and always perform *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s *nāma*, *rūpa*, *guṇa* and *līlā*. The doctrine of *gaura-nāgarī* is a bogus philosophy that is opposed to *bhakti*. Remain aloof from such bogus philosophies. The embodiments of *prema-bhakti*, Śrī Viṣṇupriyā and Śrī Lakṣmīpriyā, as well as the embodiment of the holy *dhāma*, Śrī Nīlā-devī, perpetually serve Śrī Gaurasundara, who is the combined form of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Knowing this to be true, take shelter of Him and, following in the footsteps of the *vraja-gopīs*, day and night render devotional service within the mind. By doing so, even that *prema-sevā* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, which is extremely difficult to obtain, will become easily attainable.

Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura revealed the holy *dhāma* of Māyāpura. There he established the regular worship of deities, including Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda, Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara, Śrī Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā and Śrī Gaura-Lakṣmīpriyā. Everywhere he preached the holy names of Śrī Gaura and Śrī Kṛṣṇa as well as the doctrine of *śuddha-bhakti*. Besides composing many of his own books on

śuddha-bhakti, he translated many ancient devotional scriptures and wrote numerous commentaries, essays and articles.

Toward the end of his life, upon seeing the dearth of *bhakti* in society, he deprived the people by ceasing his attempts to deliver them. On the pretext of old age, he adopted a vow of silence and remained immersed in *mānasa-sevā*, devotional service performed within meditation. Overwhelmed with compassion for the souls suffering in this world, with tearful eyes he looked toward me and ordered me to preach the doctrine of *śuddha-bhakti* that was revealed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His eternal devotees. He also instructed me to compose this *Anuvṛtti* commentary illuminating his *Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti* commentary on *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*. Taking the dust of his divine feet upon my head, I have followed his command. But just when I had completed commenting on eight verses of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, he departed this world from Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja at Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa and entered into Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes.

O Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, intimate devotee of Śrīmatī Rādhikā! On this day of completing my *Anuvṛtti* commentary on the verses of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, this destitute servant of yours offers it into your lotus hands. May you be pleased. All glories unto you!

Remembering Śrī Gauracandra, on this twenty-second day of the lunar month of Bhādrapada in the year 1914, at Candrasēkhara-bhavana in Māyāpura, I have completed this *Anuvṛtti* commentary.

SIX ESSAYS BY
ŚRĪLA BHAKTIVINODA ṬHĀKURA
ON

**The Six Faults
Obstructive to Bhakti**

UPADEŚĀMṚTA VERSE 2



ĀTYĀHĀRA

Overeating or Over-collecting

In his *Śrī Updeśāmṛta* (2), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca
prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ
jana-saṅgaś ca laulyaṁ ca
ṣaḍbhir bhaktir vinaśyati*

Bhakti is destroyed by the following six kinds of faults: (1) eating too much or collecting more than necessary, (2) endeavouring for that which is opposed to *bhakti*, (3) engaging in useless mundane talk, (4) failing to adopt essential regulations or being fanatically attached to regulations, (5) associating with persons who are opposed to *bhakti* and (6) possessing a greed, or restlessness of mind, to adopt worthless opinions.

It is highly necessary to consider the deep meaning of this verse. For those who desire to engage themselves in the practice of supremely pure *bhakti*, it is essential to strictly follow this verse's instructions. For devotees who are lax in following these instructions, *hari-bhakti* is rarely attained. It is only for sincere practitioners, whose hearts are eager to attain *bhagavad-bhakti*, that we are explaining the purport of this verse, in which the following six impediments on the path of *bhakti* are mentioned: (1) *atyāhāra*, (2) *prayāsa*, (3) *prajalpa*, (4) *niyamāgraha*, (5) *jana-saṅga*, and (6) *laulya*.

We will sequentially describe each of the above-mentioned impediments. In the following short essay, we will describe the meaning of *atyāhāra*.

The word *atyāhāra* does not mean only “eating too much”

The word *atyāhāra* (“overeating”) does not mean only “eating too much”. The first verse of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* mentions:

*vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apimām pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt*

He who can tolerate the urge to speak, the urge of the mind, the urge of anger, the urge of the tongue, the urge of the belly and the urge of the genitals and does not deviate – that is, remains steady – is a sober person and can instruct the entire world.

Here, the urge of the tongue (*jihvā-vega*) indicates the desire to taste palatable foods, and the urge of the belly (*udara-vega*) indicates the desire to overeat. If we also understand the word *atyāhāra* to mean “the desire to overeat”, then, because *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* is presented as a concise compilation of the essence [of the principles of *bhakti*], such a definition would possess the fault of repetition, or redundancy. In this situation, it is incumbent on the readers to correctly investigate any additional purports of the word *atyāhāra* that the exceedingly profound personality Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has given.

There is no doubt that the primary meaning of the word *āhāra* is “food”, but the word “food” also implies the enjoyment of the five senses. For example, form is food for the eyes, sound is food for the ears, fragrance is food for the nose, taste is food for the tongue, and the tactile sensations of smoothness, roughness, coolness, warmth and other sensations are food for the skin. Embodied souls will invariably enjoy these sense objects. Without doing so, it is impossible for them to sustain their lives. If the [conditioned] living entities were to completely abandon sense enjoyment, they would surely leave their body. Therefore, total renunciation of sense objects is simply an imaginary concept. In reality, it is not possible. What, then, are we to do in such a situation?

It is our duty to maintain our lives in a way that is favourable for bhakti

Śrī Kṛṣṇa has instructed Arjuna as follows:

*na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api
jātu tiṣṭhaty akarma-kṛt
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma
sarvaḥ prakṛti-jair guṇaiḥ*

*karmendriyāṇi saṁyamya
ya āste manasā smaran
indriyārthān vimūḍhātṁ
mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate*

Bhagavad-gītā (3.5–6)

No one can remain inactive, not even for a moment. Everyone is impelled to act under the influence of such qualities as attachment and hate, which are born of one's nature. A deluded person who forcibly restrains his working senses while internally meditating on sense objects is to be known as a hypocrite.

No person can, at any time, exist without performing some action. In other words, although a person with an impure consciousness may renounce the pious action (*karma*) prescribed in *śāstra*, he is induced to continue performing activities related to practical life due to his being subject to the modes of material nature. Therefore, he is not to renounce those actions that *śāstra* prescribes as a means to purify the consciousness. How will a person whose consciousness has not been purified benefit by externally, or forcefully, controlling his working senses [such as his arms, legs and speech]? He will continue to meditate on the objects of his active senses and thus be known as a foolish hypocrite.

No one can live for a moment without performing action. Therefore, it is essential to perform action that is beneficial. If that action is performed with indifference to *bhagavad-bhakti*, however, it will be the cause of material bondage. For this reason, the action

required to sustain one's life should be favourable for *bhagavad-bhakti*; only then is it *bhakti-yoga*.

The procedure for accepting sense objects

Śrī Kṛṣṇa further mentions in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

nāty-aśnatas tu yogo 'sti
na caikāntam anaśnataḥ
na cāti-svapna-śīlasya
jāgrato naiva cārjuna

yuktāhāra-vihārasya
yukta-ceṣṭasya karmasu
yukta-svapnāvabodhasya
yogo bhavati duḥkha-hā

Bhagavad-gītā (6.16–17)

This *yoga* cannot be perfected by those who eat excessively, eat too little, sleep excessively or sleep too little. Rather, this *yoga*, which destroys suffering, is perfected by those who regulate their eating and enjoyment, as well as their sleep and wakefulness.

naiva kiñcit karomīti
yukto manyeta tattva-vit
paśyañ śṛṇvan sprśaṅ jighraṇn
aśnan gacchan svapaṅ śvasan

pralapan viśṛjan grhṇann
unmiṣan nimiṣann api
indriyāṅindriyārtheṣu
vartanta iti dhārayan

Bhagavad-gītā (5.8–9)

A *karma-yogī* sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, walks, sleeps, breathes, talks, renounces, accepts and opens and shuts his eyes. But because of his knowledge of the Absolute Truth (*tattva-jñāna*), he believes, "I am not doing anything. It is only this body in which I am situated that is doing everything. Being bound by ignorance,

I only assess and reflect on these actions.” After self-realization is attained, the mentality of being the doer and enjoyer is removed.

Those who eat too much or too little, and those who sleep too much or too little do not attain perfection in *yoga*, whereas a person who eats, enjoys and sleeps moderately, according to his needs, does. The *sādhaka* should reflect in this way: “All my senses are wandering after the objects of the senses, but I am a pure soul and therefore beyond such things.” One should accept the objects of the senses with such discrimination.

The renunciation of karma and jñāna leads to perfection in bhakti-yoga

Although this instruction [to accept the objects of the senses with discrimination] seems more relevant to *jñāna*, it can also be favourable for *bhakti*. The concluding verse of *Bhagavad-gītā* instructs complete surrender (*śaraṇāgati*), indicating that the processes of fruitive action (*karma*) and acquiring knowledge of the impersonal *brahma* (*jñāna*) are to be completely given up, and that all sense objects are to be accepted with the understanding that they are the mercy of Bhagavān. In this way, perfection in *bhakti-yoga* is attained.

Implementing yukta-vairāgya in one’s life

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī mentions in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.125–126):

*anāsaktasya viṣayān
yathārham upayuñjataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe
yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate*

*prāpañcikatayā buddhyā
hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ
mumuṣubhiḥ parityāgo
vairāgyam phalgu kathyate*

Appropriate renunciation (*yukta-vairāgya*) is to accept objects favourable for one's service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, while being detached from that which is unrelated to Him and ardently attached to that which is related to Him.

Persons who desire liberation renounce the scriptures, the deity, the holy name, *mahā-prasāda*, *śrī guru* and anything else that is related to Hari, considering them to be worldly. This is called false renunciation (*phalgu-vairāgya*).

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has revealed the purport of the above-mentioned two verses by advising *sādhakas* to abandon over collecting (*atyāhāra*). The purport here is that accepting the objects of the senses with the inclination to enjoy them falls in the category of *atyāhāra*.

But if we accept in moderate quantities those things that are favourable for *bhakti*, understanding them to be Bhagavān's mercy (*bhagavat-prasāda*), then it is not *atyāhāra*. When the objects of the senses are received with simplicity and regarded as Bhagavān's mercy, they become *yuktāhāra*, or appropriate objects of consumption on the path of *bhakti*.

Yukta-vairāgya is easily achieved in this way. Śrīman Mahāprabhu instructed, "Accept the objects of the senses with detachment and constantly chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Do not endeavour for opulent food or clothing. Accept whatever pure *bhagavat-prasāda* is attained through little effort." This regulation is to be carried out by a devotee throughout the course of his life.

One should accumulate objects in accordance with one's objective. By collecting more than necessary, the *sādhaka*, being subjugated by fondness for the objects he has collected, will not attain his highest goal (*paramārtha*). And by accepting less than is necessary, he will be unable to maintain his body, which is useful for performing *bhajana*.

The first verse of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* gives the instruction to control the urges of the tongue and the belly. The purport is that a worldly person, or one bound by *māyā*, being either distressed by hunger pains or extremely agitated upon seeing palatable foodstuffs in front of him, runs to eat them. This is one type of material urge.

When such an urge is strongly present in the heart of a *sādhaka*, he must immediately subdue that urge by devotional contemplation. The second verse of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* gives the instruction to renounce *atyāhāra*, which is an eternal principle of *bhakti-sādhana*.

The *atyāhāra* of householders and that of renunciants are categorically different

There is one more point in this regard: there are different considerations for householders (*grhasthas*) and for renunciants (*tyāgīs*) in regard to *atyāhāra*. In accordance with his religious duty (*dharma*), a householder can earn and collect whatever is necessary for the maintenance of his family. With those assets, he can serve Bhagavān and His devotees, maintain his family, welcome guests and manage his life.

Although householders may earn and collect, if they endeavour to collect more than necessary, it becomes an obstacle to their practice of *bhakti* and to receiving Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Both earning and collecting more than required are *atyāhāra*. Of this there is no doubt.

Renunciants, however, should never accumulate anything. They incur the fault of *atyāhāra* by being dissatisfied with their daily collection of alms. To eat excessively upon receiving palatable foodstuffs is also *atyāhāra*. Therefore, both householder and renunciant Vaiṣṇava practitioners should carefully deliberate on *atyāhāra* in regard to their respective positions and perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* while remaining far from this fault. In this way, they will very soon attain the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.



PRAYĀSA

Over-endeavouring

Bhakti does not appear unless one first renounces *prayāsa*. The word *prayāsa* [in the second verse of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*] indicates exertion or effort. The ultimate attainment is pure devotion to Bhagavān, and nothing else. Surrender (*śaraṇāgati*) and being under guidance (*ānugatya*) are symptoms of devotion to the lotus feet of Bhagavān, and both comprise the perfected nature and eternal occupation of the living entity. Therefore, *bhakti* is the living entity's natural function, or innate activity. Although an innate activity does not require endeavour, performing *bhakti-sādhana* requires a slight amount of endeavour when the living entity is in a conditioned state. All other types of endeavours aside from this slight endeavour are unfavourable for *bhakti*.

There are two types of *prayāsa*: *jñāna-prayāsa* and *karma-prayāsa*. The result of *jñāna-prayāsa* is realization of complete non-duality, or in other words, merging into the featureless aspect of *brahma* (*sāyuja-mukti*). This is also called *brahma-nirvāṇa*.

The endeavour for jñāna is opposed to bhakti

Jñāna-prayāsa (endeavouring for impersonal knowledge) is an impediment to the ultimate goal of life. There is much evidence of this in the Vedas. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (3.2.3) has clarified:

*nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanūm svām*

One cannot attain *parabrahma* Paramātmā by lecturing, by intellect or by the study of various *śāstras*. He only reveals His transcendental form by His own mercy to one whom He Himself accepts.

The use of the word *ātmā* indicates both the soul and the Supersoul (Paramātmā). The *ātmā* cannot be realized by exhaustively studying or explaining the Vedas, nor on the strength of an intellectual understanding of scriptures, nor by hearing the scriptures extensively. A learned person who desires to attain Paramātmā can do so only by the desire or mercy of Paramātmā. In other words, He reveals His form only to those who choose to worship Him as their Lord. Because He is eternally perfect, He cannot be attained by any other method.

Bhakti, therefore, is the only medium through which one can attain Bhagavān. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* also prescribes the complete renunciation of all endeavour to acquire impersonal knowledge (*jñāna*), which is absolutely worthless and an impediment to attaining the supreme goal:

*jñāne prayāsam udapāsya namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadiya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vān-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.3)

O Prabhu, those persons who do not endeavour for impersonal knowledge but remain fixed in their position perform no activity other than associating with saintly persons. While remaining in the association of saints who possess pure love for You, they naturally receive the opportunity to hear them sing the narrations of Your pastimes. They then humbly offer their body, mind and words to honouring those narrations and do so to such an extent that it becomes their very life; they cannot live without it. O Prabhu, although You cannot be conquered by anyone within the three worlds, You are conquered by such devotees and become subordinate to their *prema*.

Furthermore, while pointing out the futility of endeavouring for impersonal knowledge, the author of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has made a very beautiful comparison:

*śreyah-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliṣyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhave
teṣāṁ asau kleśala eva śiṣyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.4)

O Bhagavān, *bhakti* to You is the main source of all kinds of auspiciousness. Those who give up this path just to cultivate impersonal knowledge simply undergo hard work, suffer pain and achieve difficulty, just as the only gain of a person who beats empty husks is hard work, not rice.

Knowledge of one's relationship with Bhagavān (sambandha-jñāna) is different from and purer than knowledge of the featureless aspect of the Absolute (advaita-jñāna)

Absolute non-duality (*kevala-advaitavāda*), which is a form of impersonal knowledge, is not rooted in reality. This non-dual form of *jñāna* is wicked and is simply a method to delude the demons.

The *jñāna* that the scriptures glorify as *sambandha-jñāna*, or knowledge of one's relationship with Bhagavān, is completely different from non-dual *jñāna*. *Sambandha-jñāna* is extremely pure and natural, and therefore, no purificatory endeavours are necessary to attain it. The *jñāna* mentioned in the four seed verses (*catuḥ-slokī*) of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, refers to *sambandha-jñāna*, or knowledge that the living entity is inconceivably one with and different from Bhagavān, and it is contained in the heart of all living entities. Bhagavān is like a transcendental sun, and the living entity is like a minute ray of that sun. Without acting in accordance with Bhagavān, the living entity (*jīva*) cannot be situated in his original [transcendental] form. Therefore, the constitutional nature of the *jīvas* is to be a servant of Bhagavān.

Bhakti-sādhana is not in the category of over-endeavour (prayāsa)

Although the constitutional nature of the *jīvas* – servitude to Bhagavān – is dormant in the conditioned stage and must be revived through *sādhana*, *bhakti* does not necessitate as much effort as *jñāna* and *karma*. By taking exclusive shelter of *harināma* with full faith, the covering of ignorance is quickly removed and the bliss of one's constitutional nature manifests. But a person who gives [the desire for] *jñāna-prayāsa*, or endeavours for impersonal knowledge, a place in his heart must undergo great suffering. Then, when he is delivered from *jñāna-prayāsa* by the effect of associating with saintly persons, [the desire to perform] endeavours related to *bhakti* manifest in the heart of a *sādhaka*.

The result of endeavouring for monistic knowledge (jñāna-prayāsa)

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (12.2–5), Śrī Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna as follows:

*mayy āveśya mano ye mām
nitya-yuktā upāsate
śraddhayā parayopetās
te me yukta-tamā matāḥ*

*ye tv akṣaram anirdeśyam
avyaktam paryupāsate
sarvatra-gam acintyaṁ ca
kūṭa-stham acalam dhruvam*

*sanniyamyendriya-grāmaṁ
sarvatra sama-buddhayaḥ
te prāpnuvanti mām eva
sarva-bhūta-hite ratāḥ*

*kleśo 'dhika-taras teṣām
avyaktāsakta-cetasām
avyaktā hi gatir duḥkham
dehavadbhir avāpyate*

In essence, this means, “Those who are fully endowed with the symptoms of surrender and worship Me with immense faith are the best of *yogīs*. But those who have fully controlled their senses see everything as equal, worshipping the indestructible, all-pervading, unmanifest, immutable, immovable, inconceivable, formless, and featureless aspect of the impersonal effulgence, which is beyond intellectual understanding, are *jñāna-prayāsīs*. If in their hearts they feel mercy for all living entities, then, after great effort and struggle, they obtain the mercy of My devotees, and at last they attain Me.”

In the latter method of worship, one must undergo great difficulty, and moreover, experience a delay [in obtaining one’s desired goal]. This is the result of performing *jñāna-prayāsa*. We will now discuss the result of *karma-prayāsa*.

The result of endeavouring for the fruit of one’s action (*karma-prayāsa*)

The result of *karma-prayāsa* (the endeavour to perform the fruitive activities prescribed in the Vedas) is the same as *jñāna-prayāsa*: it, also, cannot cause auspiciousness. The perspective of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.8) is as follows:

*dharmah svanuṣṭhitah puṁsām
viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratim
śrama eva hi kevalam*

Any spiritual practices and occupational duties that do not inspire attraction for *hari-kathā* (the narrations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa) are simply a waste of time.

Here, *dharmā* indicates one’s function within *varṇāśrama* according to the division of the scriptures describing fruitive action (*karma-kāṇḍa*).

If deep attachment to discussions about Bhagavān does not appear in a person’s heart, even after perfectly abiding by one’s function within *varṇāśrama*, then it is merely useless labour (*prayāsa*). Therefore, like *jñāna-prayāsa*, *karma-prayāsa* is opposed to *bhakti*.

Activities (*karma*) favourable for *bhakti* are not over-endeavour

The conclusion is that the endeavour for the fruits of one's actions (*karma*) and the pursuit of monistic knowledge (*jñāna*) are extremely harmful. If, however, a devotee performs the activities of *varṇāśrama-dharma* in order to maintain his life in a noble manner, then those activities, being favourable for *bhakti*, are considered *bhakti*, not *karma*. *Svaniṣṭha-bhaktas*¹ make those prescribed duties and the fruit of those duties obedient to *bhakti*. *Pariniṣṭhita-bhaktas*² perform activities that are not unfavourable for *bhakti* merely for the welfare of common people. *Nirapekṣa-bhaktas*³ reject popular opinion and perform only those activities that are favourable for *bhakti*. Endeavours for *jñāna*, including those for *sāyujya-mukti*, are greatly opposed to the endeavour to attain the ultimate goal of life. If *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* is practised to attain mystic opulences and to merge into the existence of the Lord, then it, also, is opposed to *bhakti*. The regulations of *bhakti-sādhana* and knowledge that one's relationship with Bhagavān consists of an inconceivable oneness with and simultaneous difference from Him are innate in the living entities. Such knowledge is therefore known as *prayāsa-śūnya*, or devoid of endeavour. In this way, although *karma* and *jñāna* are respectable methodologies, they are completely unworthy goals. This will be elaborated on further in the chapter titled "Niyamāgraha".

Pilgrimage to holy places, serving Vaiṣṇavas, and performing deity worship, saṅkīrtana, etc. are not useless endeavours when their aim is to attain the association of saintly persons

The laborious effort of pilgrimage to holy places is purely toil, and it is also an endeavour opposed to *bhakti*. But if that same pilgrimage to Kṛṣṇa's pastime places is performed with eagerness to obtain the association of saintly persons and with a greed to kindle feelings for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then it is a limb of *bhakti* and not a useless endeavour.

1 Devotees who follow the rules and prohibitions of *varṇāśrama*. – Ed.

2 Devotees who follow Vaiṣṇava standards, disregarding *varṇāśrama* rules. – Ed.

3 Renunciant devotees. – Ed.

This being the case, vows taken in relation to the limbs of *bhakti* are also not useless endeavours, nor are endeavours to serve Vaiṣṇavas, because greed for the association of *sādhus*, or saintly personalities, rectifies the fault of greed for the association of immoral persons. Endeavours made to worship the deity are natural, just as the outpouring of heartfelt emotion is natural. The spontaneous, heartfelt uttering of the names of the Lord are alone *saṅkīrtana-prayāsa*. Consequently, because these activities are performed naturally, they cannot be called *prayāsa*.

Endeavours for renunciation (*vairāgya-prayāsa*) are absolutely unnecessary

Any slight endeavour for *vairāgya* (renunciation) is unnecessary, because after *bhakti* awakens, an aversion to anything unrelated to Kṛṣṇa arises naturally within the *sādhaka*. This is the teaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.7):

*vāsudeve bhagavati
bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ
janayaty āśu vairāgyam
jñānam yad brahma-darśanam*

The meaning is that by performing *bhakti-yoga* to Bhagavān Vāsudeva the following arises: detachment from the material world, or detachment devoid of endeavour, and unmotivated knowledge, or knowledge that one is an eternally realized servant of Bhagavān. Therefore, *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and *vairāgya*, which are impediments to *bhakti*, do not degrade a person engaged in the practice of *bhakti* to Bhagavān, because he has given up endeavouring for them.

The absence of over-endeavour in *bhakti*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.42) mentions:

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālaḥ
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam*

With each mouthful of food a hungry person takes, three effects are simultaneously accomplished: he obtains satisfaction, he is nourished and his hunger ceases. Similarly, surrendered souls who are engaged in the performance of *bhajana* simultaneously experience three effects: the awakening of *bhakti* that ultimately develops into *prema*, the direct manifestation of Bhagavān's beloved form and detachment from anything opposed to *bhakti*.

This verse establishes that *bhakti* and *sambandha-jñāna* simultaneously appear in the heart of a person who one-pointedly worships Bhagavān, along with the renunciation of anything unrelated to Bhagavān. When a devotee feels himself extremely fallen and destitute and chants and remembers Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names with sincerity, the following sentiments naturally arise in his heart: "I am a minute particle of the Supreme Consciousness. I am an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is our eternal master. My inherent nature is to be exclusively surrendered at His lotus feet. This temporary material world is merely a boarding house, and it is very harmful for me to be attached to anything in it." As a result of thinking in this way, the *sādhaka* quickly attains perfection.

A list of various types of over-endeavour

For a practitioner who has taken shelter of the names of Śrī Hari, the following are *virodhī-tattva*, or averse to *bhakti*: endeavours for impersonal knowledge (*jñāna*), endeavours for fruitive acts (*karma*), endeavours for mystic opulences (*yoga*), endeavours for liberation (*mukti*), endeavours to improve one's material existence (*saṁsāra*) and endeavours to obtain the association of non-devotees (*asat-saṅga*). These endeavours destroy one's *bhajana*. The endeavour for recognition and prestige (*pratiṣṭhā*), is even more dangerous than these. Although this type of *prayāsa* is extremely abominable, many cannot avoid it. It is vital, in all respects, to eradicate such endeavour through *bhakti* free from duplicity. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī has written:

sarva tyāge 'py aheyāyāḥ
sarvānartha bhuvāś ca te

*kuryuḥ pratiṣṭhā-viṣṭhāyāḥ
yatnam asparśane varam*

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (20.370)

Even if one has given up everything else, the desire for name and fame (*pratiṣṭhā*), which is the root cause of all *anarthas*, remains. The prime duty is to give up this *pratiṣṭhā*, which is compared to stool. What to speak of touching this *pratiṣṭhā*, do not see it, even from a distance!

This instruction is extremely grave. Devotees should observe this practice (the chanting of *harināma*) with care; no other practice is required.

How householder Vaiṣṇavas perform bhajana devoid of prayāsa

While maintaining their life by performing simple activities that are favourable for *bhakti*, *sādhakas* should perform *harināma-sankīrtana* and *smaraṇa* (remembrance) within the context of their relationship with Bhagavān. There are two ways of performing worship that is free from over-endeavour: as householders do and as renunciants do.

A householder is to maintain his life by performing *varnāśrama* in a way that is favourable for devotion, and thus perform *bhajana* free from over-endeavour. He ought to earn and collect in such a way that he can maintain his family without difficulty.

We must never forget that worshipping Śrī Hari is our life's only goal, for then there is no possibility of falling down. Whether sleeping or awake, moving here and there, or feeling happy or sad, we will remain engaged in *bhajana* at all times, and consequently we will obtain perfection in our worship within a short period of time.

How renunciant Vaiṣṇavas perform bhajana devoid of prayāsa

Renunciant devotees should never accumulate anything. They should remain satisfied with whatever daily alms they collect, and, while maintaining their life in this way, practise *bhakti*. Beginning any other kind of endeavour gives rise to faults. To the degree that the practitioner performs his worship with humility and sincerity, *kṛṣṇa-*

tattva (the ontological truth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa) will be revealed to him, by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.8), Lord Brahmā says:

*tat te ’nukampāṁ su-samīkṣamāṇo
bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam
hṛd-vāg vapurbhir vidadhan namas te
jīveta yo mukti-pade sa dāya-bhāk*

This means, “O Kṛṣṇa, that person who at every moment and with great eagerness knowingly experiences Your mercy and accepts with an unwavering mind whatever happiness and misery come as the result of actions performed in his previous births and, with a heart full of love, a choked voice and horripilation, offers himself at Your lotus feet, becomes eligible to attain residence in Your spiritual abode, just as a son becomes eligible to inherit his father’s wealth. All the various types of *prayāsa* (efforts), headed by *jñāna-prayāsa*, hold no benefit. Only by Your mercy can You be understood completely.”

Lord Brahmā further says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.29):

*athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya-
prasāda-leśānugrhīta eva hi
jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavan mahimno
na cānya eko ’pi ciraṁ vicinvan*

O Lord, one who attains even a little of the mercy of Your two lotus feet can comprehend the essence of Your transcendental glories. Others cannot realize the essential truth of Your Self, even though they may keep searching for You for many years through *jñāna* and *vairāgya*.

Hence, without any endeavour, by the mercy of Bhagavān, the science of devotion to Him easily manifests in the heart of a *sādhaka* who considers himself fallen and destitute and who chants *harināma*. One cannot realize this science by independently endeavouring for knowledge, even after many lifetimes.



PRAJALPA

Mundane Talk

What is prajalpa?

The term *jalpanā*, or *prajalpa*, means “an exchange of dialogue”. Presently, aversion to Bhagavān exists to such an extent in this world that conversations with others, also, generally end up being averse to Him. Hence, for *bhakti-sādhakas*, such talks are most harmful. There are, however, various types of *jalpanā* that are acceptable in the practice of *bhakti*. Such discussions are auspicious for *sādhakas*.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*tathāpy asmin kadācid vam
adhiśau nāma-jalpani
avadya-vṛnda-nistāri-
nāmbhāsau prasīdatam*

Kāraṇya-panjikā (16)

O King and Queen of Vṛndāvana, when sinful persons chant even a semblance of Your holy names, that semblance results in Your causing their deliverance from multitudes of unspeakable acts. Therefore, I implore You: if I happen to chant Your name, then, by virtue of that pious act, be pleased with me.

The purport is that if one happens to chant even a semblance of Bhagavān’s names (*nāmābhāsa*), then such *prajalpa* of those names destroys all kinds of *anarthas* (unwanted desires in the heart that create obstacles on the path of devotion).

Performing *kīrtana*, reciting prayers and deliberating on the scriptures are all considered *jalpanā*, but when they are devoid of desires

other than those directed toward the service of Bhagavān and are done in a way that is favorable for *bhakti*, they become limbs of *bhakti*.

The conclusion, therefore, is that all types of *jalpanā* that are unfavourable for devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa are opposed to *bhakti*. Practitioners of devotion must be extremely careful to remain far away from such *prajalpa*.

The prajalpa of saintly persons is worthy of honour

The conduct of saints and *mahājanas* is completely free of fault. Therefore, we should honour the *prajalpa* they practise, and practise it ourselves. Some *atibhaktas* (those who make a show of excessive devotion), teach that one should give up every type of *prajalpa*. It is the duty of *śrī rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇavas (the followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī), however, to always follow the path of *sādhana-bhakti* as he taught it:

*sa mṛgyaḥ śreyasāṃ hetuḥ
panthāḥ santāpa varjitaḥ
anavāpta-śramam purve
yena santaḥ prata sthira*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.100)

We should inquire about that path of *sādhana* that is auspicious and free of anguish: the path effortlessly traversed by our previous saints and *mahājanas*.

Only the path determined by Śrī Vyāsa, Śuka, Prahlāda and Śrīman Mahāprabhu and His devotee associates is, for us, the path of the *mahājanas*. We must not leave this path aside and hear instructions from the neophyte *atibhaktas*. All *mahājanas* respect talks that are favourable for devotion to Śrī Hari. We will give examples of this in appropriate places in the text.

Different types of averse prajalpa

Talk that is averse to *bhakti* is certainly an obstacle on the path of devotion to Śrī Hari. There are many such types of *prajalpa*: (1) useless talks – *vṛthā-galpa*, (2) logic and argument – *vitarka*, (3) talking about

others—*paracarcā*, (4) debate—*vādānuvāda*, (5) fault-finding—*para-doṣa-anusandhāna*, (6) speaking dishonestly—*mithyā-jalpnā*, (7) criticizing saintly persons—*sādhu-nindā* and (8) gossip—*grāmya-kathā*. All these are included within *prajalpa*.

(1) Useless talks

Useless talks are extremely damaging. Practitioners of devotion should refrain from them. Instead, they should always hear and speak *hari-kathā* in the association of saintly persons and remember the holy name in solitude. *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.8–9 and 9.14) has confirmed this in the following verses:

*aham sarvasya prabhavo
mattaḥ sarvaṁ pravartate
iti matvā bhajante mām
budhā bhāva-samanvitāḥ*

*mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā
bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca mām nityam
tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca*

I am the source of both mundane and spiritual worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this well engage in worshipping Me, with transcendental emotion in their heart. Those whose minds are absorbed in Me and whose lives are wholeheartedly devoted to My service derive great satisfaction and bliss from constantly enlightening one another with the fundamental truth about Me and performing *kīrtana* of My names, form, qualities and pastimes.

*satatam kīrtayanto mām
yatantaś ca dr̥ḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā
nitya-yuktā upāsate*

Constantly chanting the glories of My names, qualities, form and pastimes, endeavouring with determined vows, and offering obeisances with devotion, they engage in My worship, remaining always connected with Me.

It is essential for practitioners of *bhakti* to practise exclusive devotion according to the above-mentioned regulations. If we spend day and night in useless talks with persons who are averse to Kṛṣṇa, then how can we possibly follow Bhagavān's instruction to always perform *kīrtana* of His names? It is most injurious for *sādhakas* to read newspapers. If there is an article about a pure devotee in a newspaper, then yes, one can read it. Village folk often get together after meals to smoke and indulge in various types of useless talk with people who are averse to Kṛṣṇa. It is difficult for such people to become *rūpānuga-sādhus*. Reading novels is also considered *vr̥thā-galpa*. Of course, the histories within *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, like the narrative about King *Purāñjana*, are not obstacles to devotion; rather, they are most beneficial.

(2) Logic and argument

Argument (*vitarka*) is also a type of useless talk that obstructs devotion. The reasoning of logicians and philosophers is actually opposed to Bhagavān and merely a cause of dispute. Such reasoning can yield no good result; it only increases weakness and unsteadiness of mind. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.9) states: “*naiśā tarkeṇa matirāpaneyā* – O Naciketa, whatever intelligence you have gained regarding *ātma-tattva* should not be destroyed by logic (*tarka*).”

Eternally present in the innate intelligence of the *jīva* is a transcendental disposition to be naturally devoted to the lotus feet of Bhagavān. But those who constantly involve themselves in arguing and debating sequence, space, doubt and error (the rules, or factors, of debate) become so hard-hearted that one's transcendental, natural proclivity for devotion quickly vanishes. One's intelligence will not be contaminated, however, if one engages in deliberations while keeping the ten-fold teachings of the Vedic scriptures (*daśa-mūla-śikṣā*)¹, as the basis of those deliberations. Argument that seeks the verdict of the Vedas about what is beneficial and what is detrimental are not categorized as *prajalpa*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has therefore instructed, “*ataeva bhāgavata karaho vicāra* – Thus,

1 Ten ontological principles that describe the *jīva*'s relationship with Bhagavān, the means one must adopt to obtain Him, and the ultimate goal of life. –Ed.

carefully deliberate on the words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 25.153).

Discussions that ascertain knowledge of one’s relationship with Bhagavān (*sambandha-jñāna*) are not *prajalpa*. Those who indulge in exhibiting useless logic and argument in order to obtain victory over an assembly of men have no meaningful principles to which they adhere. It is therefore our duty to completely avoid the association of such logicians. Vāsudeva Sarvabhauma was a great and celebrated *Māyāvādī* scholar of his time. His only occupation was defeating *paṇḍitas* in debates and discussions. But upon attaining the association of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he became completely transformed. His intoxication with debate and discussion was totally eradicated. He said, “Previously, in the association of these dry logicians, I simply wasted my life’s precious time in using my mouth to blabber and blather. Today, with that same mouth, I am chanting ‘Kṛṣṇa’, ‘Hari’ and other remarkably sweet names of Bhagavān.”

Those who engage in spiritual thoughts should always remember the heartfelt expression of the respected *sannyāsī* from Vārāṇasī:

*paramārtha-vicār gelo, kori mātra ‘vāda’
kāhā mukti pābo, kāhā kṛṣṇera prasāda
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 25.43)*

Having been engaged in unnecessary talk, my spiritual perspective has vanished. How will I attain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa now?

Envy, pride, egotism and self-prestige give rise to useless logic. Those who delight in quarrel are maddened by useless arguments. Practitioners of devotion should be cautious to not become involved in the troubles of useless argument when reflecting on the ontological truths and pastimes of Bhagavān.

(3) Talking about others

Talking about others (*paracarcā*) without reason is highly opposed to devotion. Many people indulge in such talk in order to establish their own prestige, and it is the nature of some to discuss the character of others out of envy. In this way, the mind of those who

remain enraptured in useless talk about others can never even touch the lotus feet of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, what to speak of being fixed on them. Therefore, it is the foremost duty of every practitioner of devotion to renounce *paracarcā*.

Certain types of *paracarcā*, however, are favourable for *bhakti* and not harmful. It is only possible to completely renounce talking about others when one stays alone in the forest. There are two kinds of practitioners of devotion: householders (*grhasthas*) and renunciants (*tyāgīs*). It is possible for renunciants to completely give up talking about others, because renunciants have no contact with sense objects. Householders, on the other hand, are unable to do so, because they are engaged in activities related to earning, accumulating, preserving, maintaining their family and so on. The only solution for them is to live a Kṛṣṇa-centred existence. Upon having connected the activities of the senses to Kṛṣṇa, householders can do as much *paracarcā* as is necessary.

Otherwise, one should remain far from talks about others, which are useless. There is one thing to consider: when *śrī guru* instructs his disciple in knowledge pertaining to the true position of sense objects, then, due to the nature of the subject matter, some *paracarcā* is required, because instructions are clearly understood by it. There is absolutely no fault in how our previous *mahājanas* have engaged in *paracarcā*. For example, the fault of *paracarcā* does not touch Śrī Śukadeva, even though he has criticized the character of materialistic persons:

*nidrayā hriyate naktam
vyavāyena ca vā vayah
divā cārthehayā rājan
kuṭumba-bharaṇena vā*

*dehāpatya-kalatrādiṣv
ātma-sainyeṣv asatsv api
teṣāṃ pramatto nidhanam
paśyann api na paśyati*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.1.3–4)

O King, householders who are entangled in their household chores do not know their real identity. In this way, they pass their entire lives. They spend their nights either in the association of a woman or sleeping, and their days either struggling for money or maintaining their family members. In this material world, those who we consider intimately related to us – our body, sons and so on – are nothing; they are temporary. Although the *jīva* becomes as if mad under their spell, still, even after witnessing them being swallowed by death day and night, he remains unaware of their illusory nature.

Whatever Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī has spoken about materialistic people while instructing his disciples is not *prajalpa*. Such discussions benefit the world. While instructing His disciples, Śrīman Mahāprabhu described the character of false renunciants:

*prabhu kahe, vairāgī kare prakṛti-sambhāṣaṇa
dekhite nā pāṛō āmi tāhāra vadana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 2.117)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “I cannot look at the face of a renunciant who converses with women.

*kṣudra-jīva saba markāṭa-vairāgya koriyā
indriya carāiṇya bule ‘prakṛti’ sambhāṣiyā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 2.120)

“The insignificant living entity, adopting show-bottle renunciation, leads his senses astray by conversing with women in secret.

*prabhu kahe, mora vaśa nahe mora mana
prakṛti-sambhāṣī vairāgī nā kare sparśana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 2.124)

“My mind is not under My control. I do not want to have any connection with renunciants who talk intimately with women.”

While deliberating upon the instructions and conclusions of a particular subject, it will benefit neither men nor society to neglect

the words mentioned above. If our exalted *gurus* practised this type of *paracarcā* with the aim of instructing the whole world, then how can we attain auspiciousness by acting in a way that opposes their teachings? It cannot be considered *prajalpa* to criticize, in the above-mentioned way, the current misconceptions accepted by a spiritual society, an assembly or common people. For instance, sometimes it is not considered a fault to criticize certain persons. The great devotee Maitreya Ṛṣi has spoken in such a way about King Veṅa:

*itthaṁ viparyaya-matiḥ
pāpīyān utpathaṁ gataḥ
anunīyamānas tad-yācñām
na cakre bhraṣṭa-maṅgalaḥ*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.14.29)

In this way, due to contaminated intelligence, King Veṅa became extremely sinful and traversed the wrong path. His piety had been destroyed, so he did not pay any attention to the prayers of the *munis*, even though they had humbly supplicated him again and again.

Here, Mahārṣi Maitreya was obliged to engage in the above type of *paracarcā*, and he therefore did so in front of his listeners. His talking about others in this way does not fall in the category of useless *prajalpa*. Descriptions of ancient histories have been given for the benefit of the practitioners of devotion. The conduct of villains and ungodly persons has been criticized time and again in these histories. Such criticisms are beneficial and favourable for *bhakti*. But those who are influenced by envy, jealousy, pride, honour and other tendencies and engage in *paracarcā* are offenders at the lotus feet of Bhakti-devī.

(4) Debate

Debate (*vāda-vivāda*) arises from a desire for victory. It is most despicable.

(5) Fault-finding

Fault-finding (*para-doṣa-anusandhāna*) is solely due to one's own bad tendency. It is one's duty to completely give this up.

(6) Speaking dishonestly

Speaking dishonestly (*mithyā-jalpanā*) is simply another form of useless talk.

(7) Criticizing saintly persons

Criticizing a *sādhu* (*sādhu-nindā*) is extremely detrimental. If a person hopes to attain *bhakti*, he must vow to not criticize saintly persons ever in his life. Only Bhagavān's devotees are *sādhus*. Criticizing them destroys all of one's good fortune. Dakṣa Prajāpati was a great ascetic, but he suffered considerable misfortune when he criticized the extremely pure Śrī Mahādeva (Śiva). *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.4.46) gives evidence of this and illustrates the terrible result of disobeying great personalities:

*āyuh śriyaṁ yaśo dharmam
lokān āśiṣa eva ca
hanti śreyāṁsi sarvāṇi
pumso mahad-atikramah*

O Parikṣit, the longevity, beauty, fame, religiosity, sense gratification, promotion to higher planets, and all the auspiciousness of those who disrespect great, saintly persons are destroyed.

(8) Village talk, or gossip

Renunciants should give up *grāmya-kathā*, or gossip, in all respects. Householders can accept some *grāmya-kathā* in a way that is favourable for *bhakti*. History, animal science, astrology, geography and other such areas of study, if opposed to *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, are worthy of rejection. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī instructs:

*mṛṣā giras tā hy asatīr asat-kathā
na kathyate yad bhagavān adhokṣajah
tad eva satyaṁ tad u haiva maṅgalam
tad eva punyaṁ bhagavad-guṇodayam*

*tad eva ramyaṁ ruciraṁ navam navam
tad eva śāśvan manaso mahotsavam*

*tad eva śokārṇava-śoṣaṇam nṛṇām
yad uttamaḥśloka-yaśo 'nugīyate*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.12.49–50)

Speech that does not glorify the names, form, qualities and pastimes of the all-pervading, indestructible Bhagavān lacks substance and is devoid of meaning, even when full of *bhāva* (emotion). Although such speech may appear beautiful, it lacks true beauty and is false, even if high-class topics are discussed. Only speech and words that are replete with the qualities of Bhagavān are most purifying, imbued with auspiciousness, and completely truthful. Words in which the extremely pure glories of Bhagavān are sung are known to be pleasing, interesting and ever-fresh. The mind experiences the highest bliss for all eternity through such words. No matter how vast and deep a person's ocean of lamentation, it is completely dried up by such words.

In summary, practitioners of devotion should endeavour to give up all kinds of *prajalpa*, for to do so is favourable for *bhakti*. Through the words *vāco-vegam*, the first verse of *Upadeśāmṛta* gives the instruction to tolerate the urge to speak. This urge refers only to the occasional (*naimittika*) urge to speak. After renouncing *prajalpa*, the practitioner's speech is automatically controlled for all time. In order to live in a way that is free of sin, one should try to speak as little as possible. Talking about others is meaningless conversation. For this reason, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has instructed Uddhava:

*para-svabhāva-karmāṇi
yaḥ praśamsati nindati
sa āśu bhraśyate svārthād
asaty abhiniveśataḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.28.2)

Those who praise and criticize the nature and activities of others become absorbed in material topics. As a result, they soon deviate from spiritual practices.



NIYAMĀGRAHA

Adherence to Rules Below or Above One's Qualification & Non-adherence to Rules

Regulations, or *niyamas*, are of two types: (1) those that are prescribed [by *śāstra*] – *vidhi-lakṣaṇa-niyama* and (2) those that are prohibited – *niṣedha-lakṣaṇa-niyama*. Both types of regulations bring about the living entities' auspiciousness.

Conditioned souls are eligible to attain a highly exalted stage even when they are in an extremely wretched condition. In between, the many other stages are like successive steps. These steps are resting places for the living entities. Various regulations, in the form of rules and prohibitions, have been prescribed for each step. The living entity attains the eligibility to climb to the next step by properly observing the rules and prohibitions prescribed for the step upon which he currently rests. If he is unable to attain the qualification for the next step, he is deposed to a lower step. This is called *durgati* (“regression”), and attaining a higher step is called *sadgati* (“progression”).

Firm faith in one's qualification is a virtue, and rejection of it is a fault

To properly follow the regulations for the step one is currently standing on is called *svadharma*, or *svādhikāra-niṣṭhā*. To act in faithful accordance with one's own qualification alone is a virtue (*guṇa*), and to act in transgression of it is a fault (*doṣa*). There is no other definition for “virtue” and “fault”. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has instructed Uddhava:

*sve sve 'dhikāre yā niṣṭhā
sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ
viparyayas tu doṣaḥ syād
ubhayor eṣa niścayaḥ*

*deśa-kālādi-bhāvānām
vastūnām mama sattama
guṇa-doṣau vidhīyete
niyamārthaṁ hi karmaṇām*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.21.2, 7)

To be firmly established in the duties one is authorized to perform is a good quality, whereas failure to do so is a fault. Good qualities and faults are ascertained in this way. In order to curb materialistic activities, O saintly Uddhava, I have established all that is virtuous and immoral among time, place and all existing objects.

To maintain firm faith in duties according to one's own qualification is a virtue, and inversely, to endeavour for that for which one is unqualified is a fault. The purport is that the states of virtue and fault are determined according to one's qualification, not anything else. The virtues and faults of time, place and existing objects have therefore been ordained in order to prevent people from developing the inclination to abandon their prescribed duties and to prevent transgressions of convention. These regulations, which are comprised of rules and prohibitions, can be further divided in two categories: eternal regulations (*nitya-niyama*) and occasional regulations (*naimittika-niyama*).

Eternal rules and prohibitions

The living entity is a completely pure spiritual being. The regulations comprising rules and prohibitions ordained for the completely pure soul situated in his eternal nature are known as *nitya-niyama*. But after attaining this worldly condition, which *māyā* has given him through the agency of material designations, he attains a state other than his perfected state. This other condition is

comprised of material designations. This conditioned state, based on material designations, is of various different types. The eternal stage, however, is non-dual and one.

In his eternal state, *prema* is the only rule for the living entity, and envy is the only prohibition. This one regulation, made up of this rule and prohibition, is part of the eternal nature of *jīva*. That living entity who is free from envy and full of *prema* is the shelter of eternal *rasa* (*bhagavad-bhakti-rasa*). Despite its being of five types, *rasa* is one uninterrupted and transcendental principle. We are not currently discussing the standards of that stage [of *prema*]. Here, it is only necessary to know that in that stage, the living entities are eternally situated.

Occasional rules and prohibitions

Although there are various types of occasional regulations, the steps within them have been divided into three categories, based on their external characteristics. All the Śrutis, Smṛtis and Purāṇas describe the gross divisions of *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*. Rules and prohibitions are designated for each division.

The following is prescribed for the *karma* division: the observance of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, including performance of the ten purificatory rites (*daśa-saṁskāras*) and those performed at specific times of the day (*āhnikā*). Its prohibitions are performance of sins, bad habits and so forth.

The following are prescribed for the *jñāna* division: *sannyāsa*, *tyāga*, *vairāgya* and deliberating on the difference between matter and spirit. Its prohibitions are activities performed in self-interest, forbidden activities and attachment to sense enjoyment.

The following are prescribed for the *bhakti* division: while cultivating *bhakti* to Bhagavān, one is to develop indifference to worldly matters, observe those rules and prohibitions of *karma* and *jñāna* that are favourable for *bhakti*, and through them, carry out the maintenance of the body. The prohibitions for *bhakti* are giving up every type of *karma* and *jñāna* that is opposed to *bhagavad-bhakti*, giving up attachment to sense objects and giving up any

conceptions and actions that are unfavourable for *bhakti*.

The first step for a conditioned soul: karma-kāṇḍa

From the moment a conditioned soul gives up his illicit habits – or in other words, his degraded character – he reaches the first step: *karma-kāṇḍa* (abiding by the prescriptions of the section of the Vedas that describes the activities of fruitive work). The only *niyama* (regulation) for the living entities situated on this step is to incessantly and virtuously follow *varṇāśrama-dharma* while aspiring for the next step, *jñāna*. As long as the living entity does not develop indifference to activities related to this world – indifference resulting from distinguishing between matter and spirit and attaining knowledge of the self – he will be a sinner if he renounces his firm faith in *varṇāśrama-dharma*. But when this type of disregard manifests, he becomes more qualified for elevation. By it, his firm faith in *karma* is eradicated. If he is still inclined to follow the rules governing *karma* at that time, then his advancement is delayed.

Second step: jñāna-kāṇḍa

In the same way, the rule for those situated on the step of the *jñāna* division is to maintain firm faith in *jñāna*. As long as they do not develop a taste for the step of *bhakti*, they must properly follow the rules prescribed for the step of *jñāna*. As soon as the qualification for *bhakti* arises, firm faith in *jñāna* should be relinquished. If this is not done, one becomes contaminated by the fault of *niyamāgraha* and will not be able to progress.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.9) instructs:

*tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta
na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā-śravaṇādau vā
śraddhā yāvan na jāyate*

This means that one should act according to the rules and prohibitions related to fruitive action (*karma*) until one develops a renunciation born of discretion for the material world, which is

pervaded with fruitive acts (*karma*) and heavenly pleasures attained through such acts. This renunciation shall remain in effect until such time that faith (*śraddhā*) in the narrations of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes does not appear. Faith is the only qualification for *bhakti*.

*tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya
yogino vai mad-ātmanaḥ
na jñānaṁ na ca vairāgyaṁ
prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.31)

For the *yogī* who is endowed with *bhakti* to Me and absorbed in thoughts of Me, there is no need for monistic knowledge or renunciation. His auspiciousness is solely attained through *bhakti* to Me.

The purport is that only after one's *niṣṭhā* in knowledge and renunciation ceases will the activities of *bhakti* clearly manifest in the heart.

Our only duty is to give up faith in karma and jñāna and develop faith in bhakti

The temple of *kṛṣṇa-prema* is situated at the very top of the spire of Śrī Goloka Vṛndāvana. To reach there, one must have ascended the fourteen steps of the material world, which teems with the activities of *karma-kānda*, and eventually rise up to Vaikuṅṭha's topmost region. Firm faith in the steps of *karma* and *jñāna* must be gradually and sequentially given up. As a result, one becomes qualified for the step of *bhakti*. The door of the temple of *prema* is revealed when one ascends the steps of *bhakti*.

Third step: bhakti and the sequence of its development

Śraddhā (faith) is the only regulation (*niyama*) for the living entity standing on the step of *bhakti*. This *śraddhā* transforms into *niṣṭhā* (firm conviction) when one's *anarthas* are removed by remaining engaged in performing *bhajana* in saintly association. The living entity ascends the staircase of *bhakti* proportionate to the extent his *anarthas* have been destroyed. His *niṣṭhā* transforms

into *ruci* (taste), *ruci* transforms into *āsakti* (strong attachment), and *āsakti* transforms into *bhāva* (transcendental sentiment that is the seed of *prema*). This *bhāva*, in the form of *rati* (spiritual affection), becomes *rasa* with the help of various ingredients. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.26) states:

*yathā yathātmā parimṛjyate 'sau
mat-puṇya-gāthā-śravaṇābhidhānaiḥ
tathā tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmaṁ
cakṣur yathāivāñjana-samprayuktam*

Just as anointing the eyes with salve gives them the power to see even subtle objects, similarly, when the living entity's heart is cleansed by hearing and chanting about My supremely purifying *līlā-kathā*, he gains the ability to realize extremely subtle principles (namely the truth about My *svarūpa* and *līlās*).

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15–16), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has mentioned this sequence very clearly:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas
tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayam premṇaḥ
prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*

There are four steps in *sādhana-bhakti*: *śraddhā*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci* and *āsakti*. Upon transcending these four steps, one reaches the step of *bhāva*, which is the doorway to *prema*. There are different regulations (*niyamas*) for each step, according to the level of one's faith. While ascending to the next step, one leaves the previous step behind. Then, being indifferent to the regulations designated for the previous step, one must sincerely follow the designated *niyamas* for the next step. For those who [disregard this sequence and] do not give up *niyamāgraha* (the zeal to perform the regulations) of the

previous step, those regulations become shackles that bind them to that step and prevent them from advancing to the next steps.

All the rules and prohibitions on the path of bhakti are included in one principal regulation

The set of *niyamas* ascribed to each step on the path of *bhakti* are included within one general, principal *niyama*, as follows:

smartavyaḥ satatam viṣṇur
vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur
etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ
Padma Purāṇa (Uttara-kāṇḍa, Chapter 42)

Always remember Viṣṇu and never forget Him. All the other prohibitions and recommendations are servitors of these two instructions.

The principal rule from which all other rules of the scriptures manifest is to constantly remember Kṛṣṇa, and the principal prohibition from which all other prohibitions manifest is to never forget Him. Remembering this principal rule, the practitioner gradually gives up faith in the previous rules and adopts the regulations of the following step. If a person neglects to follow this, he will fall due to the fault of adhering to the rules prescribed for a previous step (*niyamāgraha*), and will remain deprived of further advancement. Every practitioner of *bhakti* must always remember this. In this regard, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* gives the following instructions:

kṛtyāny etāni tu prāyo
grhiṇām dhaninām satām
likhitāni na tu tyakta-
parigraha-mahātmanām

The rites included within this book have mostly been written in for *grhasthas* and wealthy *sādhus*. There are no regulations for extremely detached and fully renounced *mahātmas*.

avasyam tani sarvāṇi

*teṣāṃ tād-ṛktva-siddhaye
prāg apekṣyāṇi bhaktir hi
sadācāraika sādhanā*

Although not even a single rule in this scripture (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*) has been written for fully renounced and extremely detached persons, still, the only proper behaviour for *sādhakas* who want to reach the stage of complete renunciation is to follow the behaviour of *sādhus* who have already attained that stage.

Types of *śaraṇāgati*

The symptom of persons who have attained *śraddhā* is that they are surrendered (*śaraṇāgata*) unto the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Śaraṇāgati* is of two types: for householders and for renunciants. *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* gives a collection of regulations to be observed by householders who have attained this stage of *śaraṇāgati*. In this same scripture, the observance of *śiva-caturdaśī* and other *vratas* are also mentioned. Of those regulations, surrendered renunciants will follow those that are applicable.

Symptoms of a devotee with unalloyed surrender

As both householders and renunciants gradually progress in their *sādhana*, they attain unalloyed surrender. At that time, the regulations they must respectively follow become somewhat different. In this stage, one gradually progresses in *sādhana*, and thus one-pointed surrender to Śrī Kṛṣṇa arises.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.18.28) offers the following perspective on this topic:

*jñāna-niṣṭho virakto vā
mad-bhakto vānapekṣakah
sa-liṅgān āśramāṃs tyaktvā
cared avidhi-gocarah*

My devotee who does not desire monistic knowledge, renunciation, liberation or anything else is not bound by the regulations of any *āśrama*. Having left his *āśrama* and its symbols, and being situated beyond the rules and prohibitions of the Vedic scriptures, he roams

freely, according to his own will.

*ekāntitām gatānāntu
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇābjayoḥ
bhaktiḥ svataḥ pravartteta
tad vighnaiḥ kiṁ vratādibhiḥ*

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (20.382)

Bhakti herself manifests within the hearts of those who have become one-pointed to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and therefore, such persons give no consideration to observing *vratas* or any other regulations. For them, such things are obstacles.

*na mayy ekānta-bhaktānām
guṇa-doṣodbhavā guṇāḥ
sādhūnām sama-cittānām
buddheḥ param upeyuṣām*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.36)

My unalloyed *premi-bhaktas* have no relation with the piety and impiety resulting from observing rules and prohibitions, because these *mahātmās*, who possess equal vision, have already attained the Absolute Truth by dint of their intelligence.

*evam ekāntinām prāyah
kīrtanaṁ smaraṇaṁ prabhoḥ
kurvatām parama-prītyā
kṛtyam anyan na rocate
vihiteṣv eva nityeṣu
pravartante svayaṁ hi te
ity ādy ekāntinām bhāti
māhātmyaṁ likhitaṁ hi tat*

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (20.382, 384)

For the most part, one-pointed and surrendered devotees engage in chanting the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*) and remembering Him (*kṛṣṇa-smaraṇa*) with great love. Consequently, they have no taste for the regulations prescribed for devotees of a

lesser qualification. Although they are sometimes seen to observe the standard daily rules by their own desire, they are not obliged to follow any regulations, nor are they considered to be engaged in *niyamāgraha*. This is mentioned in the eighth verse of *Upadeśāmṛta* and is the glory of one-pointed devotees – that is, their greatness is in no way diminished if they do not perform the duties prescribed for others.

The purport here is that whenever great personalities situated on a higher step follow the regulations prescribed for those on a lower step, it is by their own desire. By his own desire, a person who possesses the qualification to perform *jñāna* follows *varṇāśrama*, which is included within the qualification to perform *karma*. He is not obliged by any rules (*vidhi*). Similarly, by his own will, a person qualified to perform *bhakti* observes the regulations prescribed for those qualified to perform *karma* or *jñāna*. In other words, although he is not subject to such rules and prohibitions, he follows them according to his own desire. In the same way, although a one-pointed devotee situated on the highest platform of *bhakti* may follow the regulations of *karma*, *jñāna* or those prescribed for ordinary *sādhana-bhakti*, he cannot be considered a *niyamāgrahī* (one who adheres to the regulations of a lower stage), since, even while doing so, he remains engaged in one-pointed *bhajana* of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, according to his own independent mood. *Sādhakas* who give up *niyamāgraha* and begin to observe regulations very quickly traverse the path of advancement.

Instructions on *niyamāgraha*

The instruction given here is that *sādhakas* attain the qualification for a higher step while following the regulations of their current qualification. At that time, they are not so insistent about observing the regulations of the previous steps. It is advisable for every *sadhaka* to constantly remember this instruction and ascend the stairway in the proper sequence, with the goal of performing *bhajana* characterized by constant *smaraṇa* and *kīrtana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

JANA-SAṄGA

Associating with Those Averse to Bhakti

The word *jana* refers to people, both men and women. In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.91), Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has written, “*sādhau saṅgaḥ svato vare* – a *sādhaka* should associate with saintly persons who are more advanced than himself.” A *bhakti-sādhaka* is in all respects naturally more advanced than *karmīs* and *jñānīs*. *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.28) mentions:

*yeṣāṃ tv anta-gataṃ pāpaṃ
janānāṃ puṇya-karmaṇām
te dvandva-moha-nirmuktā
bhajante mām dṛḍha-vratāḥ*

Those pious persons whose sins have been eradicated become free from the bewilderment of duality, such as happiness and misery, and engage in worship of Me with firm determination.

Because devotees become freed from the delusion of the duality of sin and piety after completely surrendering to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it follows that the activities they perform are fully pure. They do not possess the tendency to perform sinful acts. Being under the shelter of the omniscient Lord, their fund of knowledge is not poor like that of the *karmīs* and *jñānīs*. Faith (*śraddhā*) in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* develops as a result of spiritual merit (*sukṛti*) accumulated over the course of many births. Devotees, therefore, perform righteous acts. What doubt can remain about this? Upon the awakening of *śraddhā*, one naturally obtains a taste for the association of saintly persons (*sat-saṅga*). What cannot be achieved through *sat-saṅga*? Bhagavān Himself glorifies its importance:

*ye me bhakta-janāḥ pārtha
na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ
mad-bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās
te me bhakta-tamā matāḥ*

Ādi Purāṇa

O Pārtha, those who claim to be My devotees are not My actual devotees. But those who are devotees of My devotees, are My true devotees.

The necessity of sat-saṅga

*darśana-sparśanālāpa-
saha-vāsādibhiḥ kṣaṇāt
bhaktaḥ punanti kṛṣṇasya
sākṣād api ca pukkaśam*

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (10.171)

A mere moment of seeing, touching, speaking to or associating with the devotees of Kṛṣṇa purifies even dog-eaters.

Also, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.32) mentions.

*naiṣām matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṃ
spṛśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ
mahīyasām pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛñīta yāvat*

The intelligence of those who do not consider the ultimate goal to be the dust of the lotus feet of great personalities who possess *prema* for Bhagavān and who are without material attachments cannot touch the lotus feet of Bhagavān, the destroyer of all *anarthas*.

Bhakti cannot be infused into the heart of fallen persons who lack the association of Bhagavān's devotees. *Sat-saṅga* is absolutely necessary for *sādhakas*. Therefore, we should understand that the word *jana-saṅga* here refers to the association of persons who are devoid of *bhakti*.

The necessity of avoiding asat-saṅga

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has ordained abandoning the association of persons who are averse to Kṛṣṇa, as one of the limbs of *bhakti*:

*saṅga-tyāgo vidurena
bhagavad-vimukhair janaiḥ
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.43)*

One should give up the association of persons who are opposed to Bhagavān.

Those who desire to attain *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* must, before all else, renounce the association of persons who are averse to Kṛṣṇa. This means they should not relate with such persons through the activities of *bhakti* mentioned in the fourth verse of *Upadeśāmṛta*, like giving or receiving gifts, speaking to or hearing from them on any confidential subject matter, feeding them or being fed by them. Conversing with such persons in the course of ordinary worldly dealings does not qualify as *saṅga*; rather, it is considered *saṅga* when such dealings are full of a binding affection.

It is essential for every practitioner of *bhakti* to know how many types of persons exist who are averse to Bhagavān. Therefore, although we do not desire to do so, we are listing them here. They are of seven types: (1) monists and atheists – Māyāvādīs and *nāstikas*, (2) materialists – *viṣayīs*, (3) those who associate with materialists – *viṣayī-saṅgīs*, (4) the opposite gender – *yoṣit*¹, (5) those who illicitly associate with the opposite gender – *yoṣit-saṅgīs*², (6) those who make a show of following religious principles – *dharma-dvajīs* and (7) uncivilized and foolish persons of atrocious conduct – *durācārī mūḍha-buddhi antyaja*.

(1) Monists and atheists

Māyāvādīs do not accept the eternal names, forms, qualities, pastimes and potencies of Bhagavān, and they believe the living entity to be

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¹ & ² Although the literal translation of the word *yoṣit* is “women”, it is apparent from the explanation below that the intended meaning is “inappropriately associating with the opposite gender”.

illusory. Therefore, according to them, the living entity's existence is not eternal. They do not even accept *bhakti* to be eternal; rather, they consider it merely a provisional medium to attain *jñāna*. The entirety of the Māyāvādīs' *siddhānta* is opposed to the principles of pure devotional service (*śuddha-bhakti-tattva*). For this reason, *bhakti* eventually vanishes by the association of Māyāvādīs. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 2.95), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is quoted as follows.

*vaiṣṇava haiyā jebā 'śārīraka-bhāṣya' śune
sevya-sevaka-bhāva chāḍī' āpanāre 'īśvara' mane*

Vaiṣṇavas who hear Śārīraka-bhāṣya, the Māyāvāda commentary on *Brahma-sūtra*, give up their mood of being a servant of their master, Bhagavān, and instead consider themselves to be Bhagavān.

Those who do not accept the truth of a Supreme Controller as described in the Vedas are atheists, and their heart is contaminated with dry logic. Associating with them thus diminishes one's *bhakti*.

(2) Materialists

The association of materialists (*viṣayīs*) is extremely dishonourable. Those who are always absorbed in sense objects (*viṣaya*) are full of criticism of others, envy and violence. Quarrelling and hankering for sense objects is their life. The more they engage in sense gratification, the more their thirst for enjoyment intensifies. They do not receive an opportunity to hear and chant about Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes. Whether they engage in pious or impious activities, they always remain far from the truth of the soul (*ātma-tattva*). *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 6.278) mentions:

*viṣayīra anna khāile malin haya mana
malin mana haile nahe kṛṣṇera smaraṇa*

The mind of a person who eats food prepared by a materialist becomes contaminated. With a contaminated mind, he cannot remember Kṛṣṇa.

Those who externally accept sense objects in order to maintain their life but remain absorbed in contemplating *ātma-tattva* are

situated in a much higher position than sense gratifiers, who are attached to the fruits of their action.

(3) People who associate with materialists

Both sense enjoyers, or materialists (*viṣayīs*) and those who associate with sense enjoyers (*viṣayī-saṅgīs*) are averse to Bhagavān. One who associates with a materialist is in fact a materialist himself, because he constantly meditates on sense objects. There are some persons who are not so much sense enjoyers themselves, but who take great pleasure in associating with sense enjoyers. One should not associate with such persons, also, because one will quickly become a sense enjoyer. There are two types of sense enjoyers and those who associate with sense enjoyers: (1) those who have made Bhagavān part of their sense gratification and (2) those whose sense gratification is for Bhagavān. The association of the second type of materialist is somewhat better than association with the first. Although materialists who enjoy pious sense gratification are better than sinful materialists, a practising devotee should not associate with them until they become favourably inclined toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Simply dressing as a renunciant does not enable one to develop a natural detachment from sense objects. Even renunciants are often seen to collect objects of sense gratification. On the other hand, there are people surrounded by sense objects who appear to be materialists but who internally adopt *yukta-vairāgya* (i.e. appropriate renunciation, accepting everything favourable for the service of Bhagavān) and are fully absorbed in *bhagavad-bhajana*. After carefully contemplating these topics, the *sādhaka* should give up the association of *viṣayīs* and *viṣayī-saṅgīs* and perform *bhajana*, either in solitude or, if he is fortunate enough, in the association of saintly persons.

(4–5) The opposite gender and those who illicitly associate with the opposite gender

Male *sādhakas* should not inappropriately associate with women and female *sādhikas* should not inappropriately associate with men. It is very harmful for those engaged in spiritual practice.

Men and women are of two types. The contact and communication between a couple married in accordance with Vedic rules and regulations is not sinful but it is considered to be pious, as it is in accordance with scriptural injunctions. But when such conduct takes place with a mutual attachment that transgresses the rules pertaining to one's duty, it is considered *yoṣit-saṅga* for men and *puruṣa-saṅga* for women. This type of association is very harmful for those who perform or desire to perform *bhagavad-bhajana*. If the spouse of a person practising *bhakti* is guilty of inappropriate association (*saṅga-doṣa*), it becomes an obstacle for that person. If a wife helps her husband in *bhakti-sādhana*, then associating with her cannot be called *yoṣit-saṅga*. But if she creates obstacles in his *bhakti-sādhana*, then he should give up her association, through sincere endeavours.

The wife of Śrī Rāmānujācārya had a very quarrelsome nature and used to create many obstacles in his practice of *bhakti*. Initially, Rāmānuja made great endeavours to correct her, but when he was unsuccessful, he left his house and her and departed for Śrī Raṅgam. For us, Śrī Rāmānujācārya's character is ideal and worthy of emulation. Although some men are not married, they illicitly converse with women. This behaviour is considered *yoṣit-saṅga*, or *strī-saṅga*, and is most abominable. One should thus attentively give up *yoṣit-saṅga* and the association of *yoṣit-saṅgīs*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.31.35) says:

*na tathāsya bhaven moho
bandhaś cānya-prasaṅgataḥ
yoṣit-saṅgād yathā puṁso
yathā tat-saṅgi-saṅgataḥ*

The illusion and bondage resulting from attachment to a woman or to the association of those who are fond of women is unlike that of attachment to any other object.

Regarding the above-mentioned situation, it is not opposed to *bhakti* for a householder *sādhaka* to touch or converse with his wife. On the other hand, a renunciant who has left his house should neither touch nor converse with women under any circumstance.

(6a) Those who make a show of adopting religious principles:
the first type

Deceitful persons who adopt the external signs of *dharma* but do not follow *dharma* themselves are called *dharma-dhvajīs* (“those waving a flag of religiosity”) and are to always be avoided. They are of two types: the deceitful and the foolish, or the cheaters and the cheated. It is considered contemptible even within the realms of *jñāna* and *karma* to make a show of following *dharma* but not actually follow it. But in the realm of *bhakti*, it is the means of utter ruin for the living entity. There is no association in this world as bad as that of *dharma-dhvajīs*. Even materialists are better. For the sake of their own interests, *dharma-dhvajīs* deceive foolish persons by outwardly bearing religious symbolism. Some of these rascals become *gurus*, and thus they make disciples and gather money (*kanaka*), women (*kāminī*) and prestige (*pratiṣṭhā*). Remaining far from the deceitful trickery of such persons, a *sādhaka* is to perform *bhagavad-bhajana* without duplicity. Such non-duplicitous *bhajana* is the only means to attain Bhagavān. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.3.38) states:

*sa veda dhātuḥ padavīm parasya
duranta-vīryasya rathāṅga-pāneh
yo 'māyayā santatayānuvṛtyā
bhajeta tat-pāda-saroja-gandham*

The strength and valour of Bhagavān, who carries the wheel of a chariot in His hand, are unlimited; no one can understand their depth. Although He is the creator of the whole world, He is completely beyond it. Only those who render uninterrupted service to His lotus feet without duplicity can understand His form and the mystery of His pastimes.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.7.42) further states:

*yeṣāṃ sa eṣa bhagavān dayayed anantaḥ
sarvātmanāśrita-pado yadi nirvyalikam
te dustarām atitaranti ca deva-māyām
naiśāṃ mamāham iti dhīḥ śva-śṛgāla-bhaksye*

The unlimited Bhagavān Himself bestows mercy upon those who surrender everything to His lotus feet without duplicity. Only the recipients of His mercy cross over insurmountable *māyā*, not those who possess the conception of “I” and “mine” in regard to the body, which is destined to be food for dogs and jackals.

(6b) Those who make a show of following religious principles:
the second type

When one internally maintains faith in Māyāvāda and externally exhibits the mood of identifying as a Vaiṣṇava, it is called duplicitous Vaiṣṇavism (*kapaṭa-vaiṣṇavatā*). In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the following verses are mentioned in relation to such a Vaiṣṇava, whose name was Rāmadāsa.

*aṣṭa-prahar rāma-nāma japen rātri-dine
sarva tyaji' calilā jagannātha-daraśane*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 13.93)

Rāmadāsa chanted for twenty-four hours, the entire day and night, and gave up everything as he journeyed for *darśana* of Śrī Jagannātha.

*rāmadāsa jadi pratham prabhure mililā
mahāprabhu adhik tã're kṛpā nā korilā*

*antare mumukṣu tēho, vidyā-garvavān
sarva-citta-jñātā prabhu—sarvajña bhagavān*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 13.109–110)

When he first met Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Mahāprabhu did not bestow extensive mercy upon him. Internally, Rāmadāsa desired liberation and was conceited due to his learning, but because Mahāprabhu is Bhagavān and all-cognizant, He knows the hearts of all.

Thus, in order to perform pure *hari-bhajana*, one must give up the association of *dharma-dhvajīs*. The majority of people in this world are in the category of *dharma-dhvajīs*. Therefore, as long one does not come into the association of those who are pure, it is more beneficial to spend one's life in seclusion and engage in *bhajana* and *sādhana*.

(7) Uncivilized and foolish persons of atrocious conduct

Associating with foolish, uncivilized persons whose views and conduct are disgraceful destroys *bhakti*. Foolish persons with an uncivilized nature kill animals and eat their meat, drink wine and do not observe *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Their character is always lacking in discipline. The association of such persons of bad character (*duracārīs*) contaminates the consciousness. But if a person born in a family that does not follow Vedic conduct displays faith in and a serious taste for *bhakti*, one should associate with him. In taking his association, one need not fear inauspiciousness. He should still be considered a *sādhu*, even if he sometimes exhibits inappropriate behaviour due to his previous nature and impressions (*saṁskāras*). Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā (9.30–31) has determined this in clear words:

*api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

*kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā
śāśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*

Even if a man of abominable character engages in exclusive devotion to Me, he is still to be considered a *sādhu*, because his intelligence is firmly fixed in *bhakti* to Me. He quickly becomes virtuous and attains eternal peace. O Kaunteya, boldly proclaim that My devotee never perishes.

The essence here is that if a person with an uncivilized nature and ill character develops faith in unalloyed devotion (*ananya-bhakti*) due to some spiritual merit (*sukṛti*), then he is worthy of being considered a *sādhu*, because he will become righteous (*dharmātmā*) in only a short time. Initially, for a few days, one may witness some ill-behaviour in him that has resulted from his previous impressions, but still, he should be considered a *sādhu*. The association of such

persons cannot be considered bad association. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.27–29) mentions their symptoms as follows:

*jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu
nirviṇṇah sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān
parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ*

*tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ
śraddhālur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
juṣamānaś ca tān kāmān
duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan*

*proktena bhakti-yogena
bhajato māsaḥ munēḥ
kāmā hṛdayā naśyanti
sarve mayi hṛdi sthite*

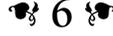
The gist of these verses is that the association of persons who are averse to Bhagavān and sinful by nature is definitely abominable, but their association would be abominable even if they were pious. On the other hand, the association of persons who are dedicated (*unmukha*) to Bhagavān but outwardly seem to be sinful is also *satsaṅga*. This does not apply to those who are averse (*vimukha*) to Bhagavān. Maharṣi Kātyāyana has mentioned:

*varam huta-vaha-jvālā-
pañjarāntar-vyavasthitih
na śauri-cintā-vimukha-
jana-saṁvāsa-vaiśasam*

*Kātyāyana-saṁhitā
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.51)*

It is better to be burned in fire or spend a lifetime imprisoned than to suffer the pain of associating with persons who are averse to Kṛṣṇa.

In the practice of *bhakti*, it is essential to perform one's actions with an impartial attitude after carefully considering all these points.



LAULYA

Restlessness, Greed & Desire

Laulya means “restlessness”, “greed” or “desire”. Restlessness is of two types: (1) the restlessness of the mind and (2) the restlessness of the intelligence.

The mind (*citta*) has the propensity to follow the dictates of the senses. The mind’s absorption in a sense object gives birth to attachment (*rāga*) or aversion (*dveṣa*) to that object. Restlessness of the mind is of two types: (1) restlessness that is dependent on attachment (*rāga*) and (2) restlessness that is dependent on aversion (*dveṣa*). *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.67) mentions:

*indriyāṇām hi caratām
yan mano ’nuvidhīyate
tad asya harati prajñām
vāyur nāvam ivāmbhasi*

In the same way that wind sweeps away a boat on the water, when the mind focuses on any one of the senses that roam after sense objects, it can carry away the intelligence of an unfit person.

Quelling the mind’s restlessness through bhakti

It is then mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.34):

*indriyasyendriyasyārthe
rāga-dveṣau vyavasthitau
taylor na vaśam āgacchet
tau hy asya paripanthinau*

Attachment (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*) are latent within each and every sense object. A *sādhaka* should not come under the

control of either, as both are great enemies that create obstacles on the path of auspiciousness.

To control greed, in the form of a restless mind, one should take shelter of Mahādevī Śrī Hari-bhakti, the goddess of service to Śrī Hari.

Sense objects are the cause of the mind's restlessness, and this restlessness is the principal obstruction to the practice of *bhakti*. Therefore, having related all sense objects to Bhagavān, the *sādhaka* should transpose his attachment from sense objects to Bhagavān. In this way, the mind accepts the shelter of attachment to Bhagavan and becomes steadfast in *bhagavad-bhakti*. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin are known as the five knowledge-acquiring senses (*jñānendriya*), and the speech, hands, legs, anus and genitals are known as the five working senses (*karmendriya*). The mind becomes steadfast in *bhagavad-bhakti* when all ten senses are graced with a devotional mood to Bhagavān. Form, taste, smell, touch and sound are the objects of the senses. One must have aversion for those objects that are unfavourable for *bhagavad-bhakti*, and attachment to those that are favourable. But the point here is this: How can the restlessness of the mind be eradicated as long as the restlessness of the intelligence has not been eliminated? It is thus necessary to first eliminate the restlessness of the intelligence. Once the intelligence is steadied and purified, it will control attachment and aversion on its own.

Intelligence (buddhi)

Intelligence is that tendency of mind that discriminates between what is spiritual (*sat*) and what is material (*asat*). It is of two types: resolute (*vyavasāyātmikā*) and irresolute, or many-branched (*bahuśākhā*). Resolute intelligence is single-pointed, or fixed, whereas irresolute intelligence is always divided and is of many types. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.41), this is explained as follows:

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir
ekeha kuru-nandana*

*bahu-śākhā hy anantāś ca
buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām*

O son of the Kuru dynasty, the resolute intelligence of those who are on this path of *bhakti* is one-pointed, but the intelligence of those who are averse to *bhakti* branches endlessly.

A person who is full of desires and who has irresolute intelligence craves many types of sense enjoyment. He becomes so absorbed in thoughts of worldly and heavenly sense gratification that he rejects the very existence of the spiritual world. *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.44) therefore states:

*bhogaiśvarya-prasaktānām
tayāpahṛta-cetasām
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ
samādhau na vidhīyate*

Those who are attached to enjoyment and opulence and whose minds have been captured by the flowery words [of the Vedas] do not attain the resolute intelligence for exclusive absorption in Śrī Bhagavān.

Their intelligence is neither fixed in knowledge of the self (*ātma-tattva*) nor is it regulated. Such intelligence is unfit for *samādhi*. Only those whose intelligence becomes fixed on Paramātma are known as *sthita-prajña* (“of fixed intelligence”) and *sthita-dhī* (“of steady mind”).

The characteristics of a person who possesses fixed intelligence and steadiness of mind

Bhagavad-gītā (2.55–56) describes the characteristics of one whose intelligence is fixed (*sthita-prajña*) and whose mind is steady (*sthita-dhī*) as follows:

*prajahāti yadā kāmān
sarvān pārtha mano-gatān
ātmany evātmanā tuṣṭah
sthita-prajñas tadocyate*

*duḥkheṣv anudvigna-manāḥ
sukheṣu vigata-sprhaḥ
vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ
sthīta-dhīr munir ucyate*

O Arjuna, a person is said to be *sthita-prajña* when he properly renounces all desires that are situated in the mind and finds satisfaction in the self alone. A person whose mind is not bewildered by anxiety upon experiencing distress, who is entirely indifferent to happiness, and whose attachment, fear and anger have been destroyed, is called a sage of steady mind (*sthita-dhī*).

The first verse of *Śrī Updeśāmṛta* has given the instruction to conquer six urges. We find these six urges echoed in the two verses of *Bhagavad-gītā* mentioned above.

Now, it is important to know that there are two types of intelligence: material (*prākṛta*) and spiritual (*aprākṛta*). The propensity to rely on the mind to discriminate between what is proper and what is improper is called material intelligence (*prākṛta-buddhi*), and the propensity to rely on the soul to discriminate between what is proper and what is improper is known as spiritual intelligence (*aprākṛta-buddhi*). Some consider these two types of intelligence to be the same, but such an understanding is erroneous.

*indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur
indriyebhyaḥ paraṁ manaḥ
manasas tu parā buddhir
buddher yaḥ paratas tu saḥ*

Bhagavad-gītā (3.42)

The senses are superior to the body, which is an inert object. The mind is superior to the senses, because it is only by the inspiration of the mind that the senses engage in action. The intelligence is superior to the mind. The intelligence is the function of the self and is therefore the controller, or master, of the mind. When subjugated by material false ego, this intelligence becomes perverted and material. When the intelligence is controlled by the living entity's pure [true] ego of being a servant of Kṛṣṇa, it remains pure, since

that is its natural form. Therefore, it is mentioned in the Śruti that a self-realized person is known as intelligent (*boddhā*). The pure intelligence is merely a function of the soul, who is a minute particle of spirit. Thus, the soul is superior to the intelligence.

The might of the transcendental ego and spiritual intelligence

When the living entity understands himself to be a pure particle of spiritual existence, then the spiritual ego – “I am Kṛṣṇa’s servant” – naturally arises within him. At that time, the intelligence, having been established in its pure form due to the living entity’s being situated in his original nature (*svarūpa*), scorns material objects and honours spiritual objects. He then desires nothing other than service to Kṛṣṇa. He rejects material lust, considering it extremely useless. It is in this stage that the living entity is known as *sthita-prajña* and *sthita-dhī*.

With the help of spiritual strength, the intelligence stabilizes itself and, after regulating the heart and mind, subjugates them. The mind then regulates the senses and brings them under its control, being commanded by the intelligence. The consciousness thus perceives the objects of the senses as being favourable for Kṛṣṇa’s service. On the path of *bhakti*, this is known as *indriya-nigraha*, or restraining the senses.

The means to restrain the senses

The paths of dry knowledge and dry renunciation cannot fully control the senses. *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.59) states:

*viṣayā vinivartante
nirāhārasya dehinah
rasa-varjam raso 'py asya
param dṛṣṭvā nivartate*

He who identifies himself with his body may restrict his enjoyment by withdrawing the senses from their objects, but his taste for sense pleasure remains. A person whose intelligence is fixed, however, has realized Paramātmā; therefore, his taste for sense objects automatically ceases.

Those who refrain from accepting objects through the senses only give up the objects themselves, but they are not free from the desire for them. But higher than the pleasure of enjoying sense objects is the transcendental pleasure of being the servant of Kṛṣṇa. Such service completely eradicates the contemptible pleasure of trying to enjoy sense objects. This is actual *indriya-nigraha*, or bringing the senses under the control of the mind and regulating the mind by bringing it under the control of the intelligence. Through this method, *lauyla*, or restlessness of the intelligence and mind, is eliminated.

The necessity of withdrawing the intelligence from karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga and other paths headed by charity, and instead fixing it in bhakti-yoga

The mind cannot be fixed if the intelligence is restless. Sometimes the mind runs toward the path of *karma*, sometimes toward the path of *yoga* and sometimes toward the path of *jñāna*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.32–34) describes *bhagavad-bhakti* as the only means to steady the intelligence:

*yat karmabhir yat tapasā
jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmeṇa
śreyobhir itarair api*

*sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena
mad-bhaktō labhate 'ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma
kathañcid yadi vāñchati*

*na kiñcit sādhave dhīrā
bhaktā hy ekāntino mama
vāñchanty api mayā dattaṁ
kaivalyam apunar-bhavam*

Whether it be the heavenly planets, liberation, My abode or anything else, everything that is attained through fruitive activities,

austerities, knowledge, renunciation, *yoga*, charity, religious duties and other auspicious methods is easily achieved by My devotee, if he so desires, by performing *bhakti-yoga* to Me. My one-pointed, loving and tolerant saintly devotees do not desire anything for themselves. Indeed, even if I desire to offer something to them, and even if I actually give them something, they do not want to accept it. By nature, their only fondness is for the happiness derived from performing service to Me.

Being mindful of all these points, a *sādhaka* should keep restlessness (*laulya*) at bay and fix his intelligence in *bhakti*.

Greed – the second meaning of *laulya*

The second meaning of the word *laulya* is “greed” (*lobha*). If we have a greed for sense objects but not for Kṛṣṇa, then how is it possible to become fixed at His lotus feet? Our primary duty, therefore, is to try to become greedy to attain the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Performing the limbs of *yoga* such as sense control does not purify the greed arising from attachment to enjoying sense objects, to the extent that service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa does.

*yamādibhir yoga-pathaiḥ
kāma-lobha-hato muhuḥ
mukunda-sevayā yadvat
tathātmāddhā na sāmyati*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.6.35)

When the *sādhaka* practises the limbs of *yoga*, the mind, which is always under the control of lust and greed, attains a certain level of happiness and peace. But this does not compare with the immediate and immense pleasure attained from service to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

By serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *sadhakā*'s consciousness, which is constantly wounded by the blows of lust and greed, experiences a real peace that is not experienced by performing the activities of *yoga-mārga*: *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā* and *samādhi*. Through service to Kṛṣṇa, the mind

becomes stable without effort or delay, because the intelligence is peaceful when it is fixed in Bhagavān: “*śamo man-niṣṭhatā buddheḥ* – equanimity is fixing the intelligence in Me” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.19.36).

Greed for inferior objects cannot remain when a greed awakens to serve Kṛṣṇa, to serve the Vaiṣṇavas and to chant the names of Bhagavān. When a fortunate person sees the Vrajavāsīs’ mood of service to Kṛṣṇa, a greed for that service awakens in his heart. By the grace of such rare greed, one attains the qualification to perform *rāgānuga-bhakti*. The *sādhaka*’s inferior greed is eradicated to the degree that he develops greed for *rāgātmikā-sevā*¹. *Bhakti* is diminished by maintaining a greed for eating palatable foods, chewing betel leaf, sleeping, smoking and drinking alcohol. Greed for wealth, women and drinking wine are diametrically opposed to *bhakti*. Those desirous of greed for pure *bhakti* should give up greed for the above-mentioned activities and objects. Greed for sense objects, whether sinful or pious, is extremely detestable. Greed for Kṛṣṇa is the only cause of auspiciousness. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.19) has given a beautiful description of the greed that great saintly personalities possess for topics concerning Bhagavān (*bhagavat-kathā*):

*vayaṁ tu na vitṛpyāma
uttama-śloka-vikrame
yac chṛṇvatām rasa-jñānām
svādu svādu pade pade*

O Sūta, our hunger for hearing the *līlā-kathā* of Bhagavān, who is glorified by auspicious hymns, is never satiated. This is because, while hearing such narrations, listeners conversant with *rasa* experience newer and newer relish at every moment.

This greed that has Kṛṣṇa as its object is known as *ādara* (“affection”). A detailed description of this will be given later.

.....
1 The service of the residents of Vraja, which is imbued with deep attachment (*rāga*). – Ed.

Desire – the third meaning of laulya

The third meaning of *laulya* is “desire”. It is of two types: the desire for enjoyment (*bhoga*) and the desire for liberation (*mokṣa*). Unless one completely renounces these two desires, one cannot perform *bhakti-sādhana*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has mentioned in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta sindhu* (1.2.22):

*bhukti-mukti-sprhā yāvat
piśāci hr̥di vartate
tāvad bhakti-sukhasyātra
katham abhyudayo bhavet*

As long as the two witches of the desires for material enjoyment and impersonal liberation remain within the heart of the *sādhaka*, how can the happiness of unalloyed devotion awaken there?”

The desire for sense gratification

The desire for sense gratification is of two types: worldly (*aihika*) and heavenly (*pāratrika*). One’s wife, children, wealth, kingdom, success, palatable foods, sleep, sexual intimacy, honour and so on are all worldly sense objects known as *aihika-bhoga*. Residence in the heavenly planets, the nectarous beverages available in such planets, sense gratification fit for demigods and other heavenly delights are known as *pāratrika-bhoga*. As long as these two types of desires for enjoyment remain in the heart, a *sādhaka* cannot selflessly perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. Therefore, desires for sense gratification should be completely uprooted and thrown from the heart, otherwise, obstacles will appear in one’s practice of *bhakti*.

Appropriate renunciation (yukta-vairāgya)

The matter to be considered here is that the above-mentioned objects of enjoyment can be accepted by householders in a non-

sinful manner only if those objects are favourable for *bhakti*. In that case, they cannot be called objects of enjoyment; rather, they are a *sādhaka's* livelihood. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.9–10) has mentioned:

*dharmasya hy āpavargyasya
nārtho 'rthāyopakalpate
nārthasya dharmaikāntasya
kāmo lābhāya hi smṛtaḥ*

*kāmasya nendriya-prītir
lābho jīveta yāvatā
jīvasya tattva-jijñāsā
nārtho yaś ceḥa karmabhiḥ*

All occupational engagements are certainly meant for ultimate liberation. They should never be performed for material gain. Furthermore, according to sages, one who is engaged in the ultimate occupational service should never use material gain to cultivate sense gratification. Life's desires should never be directed toward sense gratification. One should desire only a healthy life, or self-preservation, since a human being is meant for inquiry about the Absolute Truth. Nothing else should be the goal of one's works.*

By engaging in religious duties (*dharma*) as a means to attain material enjoyment, one obtains material wealth (*artha*). Through such wealth, one obtains sense gratification (*kāma*) and its fruit: sense pleasure in this world and the heavenly planets. However, when one engages in religious duties aimed at liberation, the resultant wealth he obtains, as well as the sense gratification that he attains through such wealth, is always favourable for one inquiring about the Absolute Truth (*tattva-jijñāsa*). This is because the fruit of religious duties (*dharma*) and wealth (*artha*) is not sense gratification, but the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa's desires. Satisfying these desires of Kṛṣṇa is known as *tattva-jijñāsa*, which is also known as *yukta-vairāgya* (appropriate renunciation).

The desire for liberation

It is absolutely essential that the *sādhaka* completely renounce the desire for liberation (*mokṣa*), also. *Mokṣa* is of five types: (1) living on the same planet as Bhagavān – *sālokya*, (2) possessing the same opulences as Bhagavān – *sārṣṭi*, (3) residing close to Bhagavān – *sāmīpya*, (4) possessing the same form as Bhagavān – *sārūpya* and (5) merging into the impersonal effulgence or body of Bhagavān – *sāyujya*. Devotees regard *sāyujya-mukti* as greatly contemptible. Although *sālokya-*, *sārṣṭi-*, *sāmīpya-* and *sārūpya-muktis* are free from the desire to enjoy sense objects, they are undesirable. By the strength of *bhakti*, the living entity obtains liberation and freedom from material, inert objects. Liberation (*mukti*) is but a secondary result of *bhakti*. The primary goal of *sādhana-bhakti* is the attainment of pure love for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prema*). At this point, one cannot conceal one's eagerness to cite the words of Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya:

*'sālokyādi' cāri jadi haya sevā-dvāra
tabu kadācit bhakta kare āṅgikāra*

*'sāyujya' sūnite bhaktera haya ghrṇā-bhaya
naraka vāñchaye, tabu sāyujya nā laya*

*brahme, īsvare sāyujya dui to' prakāra
brahma-sāyujya haite īsvara-sāyujya dhikkāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 6.267–269)

The essence of these statements is that by the desire of Bhagavān, devotees effortlessly attain *mukti* in the form of severing material relations. It is thus improper to contaminate the endeavour for *bhakti* with the desire for *mukti*.

For this reason, it is a primary duty of the *sādhaka* to be particularly careful to completely give up greed (*laulya*) that is averse to *bhakti*.

SIX ESSAYS BY
ŚRĪLA BHAKTIVINODA ṬHĀKURA
ON

**The Six Virtues
of a Practitioner of Bhakti**

UPADEŚĀMṚTA VERSE 3



UTSĀHA

Enthusiasm

The third verse of *Śrī Upadeśamṛta* describes six subjects:

*utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt
tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt
saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ
śadbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati*

Progress in *bhakti* may be obtained by the following: (1) enthusiasm, (2) firm faith, (3) fortitude, or patience, (4) performing the activities of *bhakti*, (5) giving up unfavourable association and (6) adopting the behaviour and character of pure devotees.

It is essential to deliberate on each of these six subjects individually. Therefore, we shall first discuss *utsāha* (enthusiasm).

What is utsāha?

The activities of *bhajana* become weak in the absence of enthusiasm. This weakness arises from inertness, laziness and indifference. Inactivity and laziness, which are known as *jāḍya* (inertia), are eradicated upon the appearance of *utsāha*. The word *jaḍatā* (“inertness”) pertains to the state that is the opposite of spiritual nature. How, then, is it possible to perform *bhajana* if inertness is given a place in the body or heart? In the absence of effort, apathy arises.

The practice of *bhakti-yoga* should be performed with a consciousness that is free of indifference. *Bhāgavad-gītā* (6.23) instructs:

*taṁ vidyād duḥkha-samyoga-
viyogaṁ yoga-samjñitam
sa niścayena yuktavyo
yogo 'nirviṇṇa-cetasā*

Know that state (of *samādhi*) to be devoid of any contact with the duality of mundane happiness and misery. This *yoga* should be performed with firm determination and undeviating consciousness.

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Mahāśaya has said, “*ātmanya-yogyatva-mananam nirvedas tad rahitena cetasā* – if a person considers himself unqualified to perform an activity, then he becomes disinterested in that activity.” Remaining completely free from this kind of disinterest, one should practise *bhakti-yoga* with enthusiasm. Regarding *bhakti-yoga*, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.7–8) has mentioned:

*nirviṇṇānām jñāna-yogo
nyāsinām iha karmasu
teṣv anirviṇṇa-cittānām
karma-yogas tu kāminām*

*yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau
jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān
na nirviṇṇo nāti-sakto
bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhi-daḥ*

O Uddhava! Those who have become detached from *karma* and its fruits, and who have completely renounced both, are eligible to perform *jñāna-yoga*. Inversely, persons are eligible for *karma-yoga* as long as their heart has not yet developed renunciation toward *karma* and its fruits and as long as they are desirous of the fruit of action but do not lament it.

Those who are neither too detached nor too attached and who, by the fortune of having performed auspicious acts in previous lives, have developed faith in narrations of My pastimes, are qualified to perform *bhakti-yoga*, through which they can attain perfection.

Different types of spiritual practices: *jñāna-yoga*, *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*

There are three types of spiritual practitioners in accordance with different states of consciousness: (1) those who possess a consciousness of indifference (*nirviṇṇa*), (2) those whose consciousness is devoid

of detachment (*anirviṇṇa*) and (3) those whose consciousness is free from attachments (*nirveda*). *Yoga* is also of three types: (1) *jñāna-yoga*, (2) *karma-yoga* and (3) *bhakti-yoga*.

Jñāna-yoga is beneficial for persons whose consciousness is filled with indifference (*nirviṇṇa*) – that is, those who are unattached to *karma* and its results. Persons whose consciousness is devoid of detachment (*anirviṇṇa*) – that is, those who possess many desires – are eligible to perform *karma-yoga*. Those who are not yet detached (*anirviṇṇa*) and also those whose consciousness is free from attachment (*nirveda*) become eligible for *bhakti-yoga* when, on the strength of their good fortune, faith arises in their hearts for hearing narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

The purport is this: But for dry renunciation, what else can reside in the heart of those who have become free from the desire to perform material activities but have been unable to gain any experience of transcendental activities, which are beyond materiality? The topmost attainment of such persons is knowledge of non-dual *brahma*.

For those who are neither detached from material activities nor realized in transcendental activities, which are beyond materiality, there is no other way than to perform *karma-yoga*, which purifies the consciousness.

Those who have understood the utter insignificance of material activities, having attained realization of spiritual activities, are indifferent to all kinds of material activities. Still, they accept performing a limited amount of prescribed action meant only to aid in their spiritual awakening, but they remain unattached to those activities. In *bhakti*, one becomes free from attachment to material sense objects to the extent that one deliberates on and discusses spiritual subject matters. Freedom from attachment to material sense objects is but a by-product of *bhakti*. The symptoms of *bhakti-yogis* are mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.27–28) as follows:

*jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu
nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān
parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ*

*tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ
śraddhālur dṛḍha-nīscayaḥ
juṣamāṇas ca tān kāmān
duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan*

A *sādhaka* who has developed faith in narrations about Me and who is disgusted with all kinds of fruitive activity, may still be unable to give up material enjoyment and the desire for such enjoyment. Knowing that such so-called pleasures are actually sources of misery, he should condemn himself while attempting to enjoy them. Thereafter, in due course of time, he may be able to worship Me with love, faith and fixed determination.

Kāma (desire) gives rise to *karma*; *nirveda* (disregard of material objects) gives rise to *jñāna*; and *śraddhā* (faith) in Bhagavān gives rise to *bhakti*.

The conduct of a *bhakti-yogī*

A person in whom faith has arisen is naturally disinterested in the performance of all material activity. He performs prescribed duties (*karma*) to the extent that they are favourable for His faith in Bhagavān. One cannot perform *bhakti-sādhana* without the body. How can the body be maintained if one renounces ambition and activities that cause sorrow but are necessary for maintaining one's life? How is it possible to perform *sādhana* if the body is destroyed? Therefore, people in general should consider such acts, which yield misery, to be meagre and contemptible and tolerate their results without attachment. While performing such fruitive acts for the sake of maintaining their life, they ought to continue to worship Me with fixed faith, by *bhakti-yoga*. Those who enjoy the fruits of their material activities – worldly sensory pleasures – with great honour are called *karmāsakta* (attached to fruitive action). Those who nurture a mood of contempt for the fruits of material activities and engage in such activities with a sense of honour for the propensity to render devotional service to the Lord are called unattached (*anāsakta*). Although detached from worldly activities, they perform the activities of *bhakti* with great enthusiasm.

The sequence of progression for bhakti-sādhakas

The sequence of progression for the practitioner of *bhagavad-bhakti* is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.29, 30, 35):

*proktena bhakti-yogena
bhajato māsakṛn muneh
kāmā hṛdayā naśyanti
sarve mayi hṛdi sthite*

*bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi
mayi drṣṭe 'khillātmani*

*nairapekṣyaṁ param prāhur
niḥśreyasam analpakam
tasmān nirāśiṣo bhaktir
nirapekṣasya me bhavet*

In this way, I come and sit in the heart of the *sādhaka* who incessantly performs *bhajana* of Me by following *bhakti-yoga* as I have instructed. After I seat Myself there, all the material desires in his heart are destroyed, along with his *saṁskāras* (past impressions). At that time, the knot in his heart is broken, all of his doubts are cut to pieces, and the desire to perform *karma* is completely destroyed. Such a state of indifference is the living entity's greatest and topmost auspiciousness.

The conclusion is that making any other endeavours to eradicate the disease of lust (*kāma*) and the ignorance (*avidyā*) situated in the heart is pointless. By adopting *bhakti-yoga* in the form of cultivating service to Bhagavān, the *jīva*'s ignorance (*avidyā*), inauspiciousness (*kala*), lust (*kāma*), and [the results of] *karma*, all his doubts and material bondage are eradicated by the mercy of Bhagavān. But this does not happen through *jñāna-yoga* or *karma-yoga*. *Śuddha-bhakti* therefore arises in the heart when one renounces all types of desires and hopes and becomes totally free from any expectations (*nirapekṣa*).

Bhajana-kriyā (devotional practice) is of two types: resolute (**niṣṭhitā**) and wavering (**aniṣṭhitā**)

It is improper to become discouraged by thinking, “We do not possess the capacity to destroy [the results of] *karma*.” It is necessary for the faith of the *sādhaka* to be invested with enthusiasm from the very beginning of his practice of *bhakti*. There are two types of *bhajana-kriyā*: *niṣṭhitā* (resolute) and *aniṣṭhitā* (wavering). When *niṣṭhā* arises while performing *bhajana* with faith (*śraddhā*) in the association of *sādhus*, then that *bhajana-kriyā* is called *niṣṭhitā*. As long as *niṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā* has not arisen, *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā* (the unsteady practice of *bhajana*) prevails. There are six stages evident in *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*: (1) *utsāha-mayī* (initial enthusiasm), (2) *ghana-taralā* (thick – thin, a wavering resolve to perform devotional practice), (3) *vyūḍha-vikalpa* (oscillating between resolve and doubt), (4) *viṣaya-saṅgarā* (battling sense pleasure), (5) *niyamākṣamā* (the inability to uphold vows favourable for one’s devotional service) and (6) *tarāṅga-raṅgiṇī* (“sporting in the waves” of the conveniences afforded by the practice of *bhakti*).

The offence of inattentiveness

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa considers *pramāda* to be a type of *nāma-aparādha*. In the same scripture, the word *pramāda* is defined as “inattentiveness”. In Śrī *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, this inattentiveness has been divided into three categories: (1) indifference – *udāsīnatā*; (2) inertness – *jaḍatā*; and (3) distraction – *vikṣepa*. One cannot perform *hari-bhajana* at all until one is free of these three types of inattentiveness. Although all other types of *aparādhas* may have been eliminated, a taste for *harināma* will never arise as long as inattentiveness remains present. If from the very beginning of *bhajana* one possesses an enthusiasm that never slackens, then indifference, laziness and distraction will never arise in one’s practice of *nāma-bhajana*. *Utsāha*, or enthusiasm, is therefore helpful in the performance of all types of *bhajana*.

Niṣṭhā gradually arises only through the enthusiastic performance of bhajana-kriyā

When one's performance of *bhajana-kriyā* is full of enthusiasm, then one's irresolute disposition (*aniṣṭhitā*) is removed and the stage of *niṣṭhā* is quickly achieved. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has mentioned:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.15)

This means that the eligibility to perform *bhajana* arises upon the awakening of faith (*śraddhā*). Upon the arousal of this eligibility, one obtains the association of saintly persons (*sādhu-saṅga*), by which one begins to execute the activities of *bhajana* (*bhajana-kriyā*). In the beginning, *bhajana* is not performed with *niṣṭhā*, because various types of unwanted desires in the heart that impede one's progress in *bhakti* (*anarthas*) continuously crush the heart. But performing *bhajana* with enthusiasm vanquishes all *anarthas*.

Enthusiasm is the very life of śraddhā

The word *śraddhā* certainly means “faith”, but *utsāha* is the very life of *śraddhā*. Faith without enthusiasm is meaningless. Many people think they have faith in the Supreme Lord, but because they do not possess enthusiasm, their faith is impotent. For this reason, due to a lack of *sādhu-saṅga*, they are unable to perform *bhajana*.



NIŚCAYA

Firm Resolve

The determined and the doubtful

In Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has instructed *bhakti-sādhakas* to be determined. As long as a person lacks determination, he remains doubtful. A doubtful person can never attain auspiciousness. How can faith in *bhakti* arise in the presence of doubt? In *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.40) it is mentioned:

*ajñāś cāśraddadhānaś ca
samśayātmā vinaśyati
nāyam loko 'sti na paro
na sukham samśayātmanaḥ*

Those who are ignorant, faithless and who have a doubting nature are ruined. A skeptic cannot achieve his well-being in this world or the next, nor can he even achieve happiness.

A doubtful person who is faithless and devoid of knowledge of his relationship with Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha-jñāna*) is lost. For such a doubtful person, there is neither happiness nor peace, in this world or the next. Those who possess *śraddhā* are already free from any doubts, because the very meaning of the word *śraddhā* is “firm faith”. As long as one has doubt in one’s mind, firm faith cannot arise. Hence, a faithful person is always free from any doubts.

The ten ontological truths (daśa-mūla-tattva)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has ordered the entire Vaiṣṇava community to know three *tattvas* (established truths): (1) one’s relationship with Bhagavān – *sambandha*; (2) the means to attain

one's goal – *abhidheya*, and (3) the ultimate goal of one's *sādhana* and *bhajana* – *prayojana*. *Daśa-mūla* (the ten basic philosophical principles) is comprised of these three *tattvas*.

The first basic principle is that the Vedic *śāstras* are the only evidence (*pramāṇa*). To describe *prayojana-tattva*, it is essential to first know the *pramāṇa*. There are nine *prameyas* (subjects that such evidence proves). Evidence is essential in order to establish all these *prameyas*, also. Different kinds of evidence have been presented in different scriptures. Some scriptures consider direct sense perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), comparison (*upamāna*) and so on to be *pramāṇa*, while other scriptures consider various other methods to also be included as *pramāṇa*. The *pramāṇa* presented by Śrīman Mahāprabhu – which is obtained by receiving the message of the Vedas through disciplic succession (*āmnāya*) – is that *pramāṇa* which is self-realized, and it is known as the principal *pramāṇa*. Other types of *pramāṇa* are considered secondary. Only this principal *pramāṇa* is worthy of acceptance.

Conceivable and inconceivable conceptions

All the different kinds of conceptions (*bhāvas*) in this world can be divided into two types: conceivable (*cintya*) and inconceivable (*acintya*). Worldly conceptions, or those that appear of their own accord in the thought process of a human being, are called conceivable conceptions (*cintya-bhāva*). Transcendental conceptions that are beyond the capacity of ordinary human perception are called inconceivable conceptions (*acintya-bhāva*). Without attaining complete, fixed realization of the self (*ātma-samādhi*), one cannot understand inconceivable conceptions. Therefore, in transcendental matters there is no place for those *pramāṇas* headed by *pratyakṣa* that are based on logic.

*acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā
na tāms tarkeṇa yojayet
prakṛtibhyaḥ param yac ca
tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam*

Mahābhārata (Udyoga-parva)

All transcendental *tattvas* are beyond material nature and are therefore inconceivable. Dry argument is within the jurisdiction of material nature, so it can be utilized only in relation to mundane subject matters. It cannot even come close to transcendental *tattvas*, not to speak of grasping them. As far as inconceivable conceptions are concerned, the application of dry argument is undesirable and useless.

The *tattvas* that are beyond the twenty-four material elements are replete with inconceivable conceptions. Evidence based on direct sense perception, inference, and so on cannot enter such spiritual conceptions. The only way to comprehend them is by self-realization (*ātma-samādhi*). But *ātma-samādhi* is unattainable for ordinary people. Due to this unfortunate situation of the living entities, the most merciful Supreme Lord thus manifested the Vedic *śāstras*. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

*māyā-mugḍha jīver nāhi kṛṣṇa-smṛti-jñāna
jīvere kṛpāya kailā kṛṣṇa veda-purāṇa
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 20.122)*

Living entities, bewildered by *māyā*, become oblivious to remembrance of Kṛṣṇa, so Kṛṣṇa has mercifully manifested the Vedas and Purāṇas for them.

*veda-śāstra kahe—‘sambandha’, ‘abhidheya’, ‘prayojana’
‘kṛṣṇa’—prāpya sambandha, ‘bhakti’—prāpyera sādhana
abhidheya-nāma—‘bhakti’, ‘prema’—prayojana
puruṣārtha-śiromaṇi prema—mahā-dhana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 20.124–125)

The Vedic scriptures describe three principles: *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*. Kṛṣṇa is the object of relationship (*sambandha*), and *bhakti*, is the means to attain Him (*abhidheya*). The ultimate objective (*prayojana*) is *prema*, the crown jewel of life’s objectives and the greatest wealth.

The Vedas are to be accepted as the only *pramāṇa* through which one can comprehend inconceivable conceptions. But there is one

thing to consider: the word *āmnāya* indicates “the Vedas received through the bona fide disciplic succession”. There are various kinds of instructions in the Vedas for different kinds of people, according to their qualification. Among all types of qualification, the qualification for *bhakti* is the highest. By the effect of their *bhajana*, our previous *mahājanas*, through means of self-realization, selectively collected Vedic teachings on the qualification to perform *bhakti* and kept them separate. Therefore, it is essential to learn and follow the Vedic instructions that the previous *mahājanas* have illuminated and declared beneficial, to attain the qualification to perform *bhakti*. Only by the mercy of *śrī gurudeva* is it possible to enter the realm of inconceivable conceptions; it is otherwise not only difficult, but quite impossible. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has clarified this topic through the following parable.

One day, an expert astrologer came to the house of a poor man and asked, “Why are you so unhappy, brother? A great deal of ancestral wealth has been hidden in your house. Your father suddenly died in a foreign place and had never even informed you about that wealth. You can find that hidden wealth and live life happily.”

Falling at the feet of the omniscient astrologer, the poor man replied, “If you are merciful, you will let me know where it is hidden. I know about this wealth but am unaware of its location. Although I have greatly endeavoured to find it, I have always been unsuccessful. You would be doing me a huge favour by kindly letting me know where it is located.”

The astrologer was merciful. Pacifying the poor man, he replied, “Do not worry about anything, but you must do exactly as I say. There is a huge beehive just south of your house. Do not try to dig there even by mistake, or else the bees will create massive havoc and you will not receive any wealth. If you dig in the western direction, a ghost who stays there will create obstacles. If you dig in the north, a huge python will emerge and swallow you whole. But if you dig just a little bit to the east, you will certainly attain the wealth you so desire.”

Following the instruction of the omniscient astrologer, the poor man dug a little earth in the eastern direction and attained his hidden ancestral treasure, thus becoming quite wealthy.

In this analogy, the all-knowing astrologer is the scriptures, and the poor man is the conditioned soul. The scriptures explain to the ignorant conditioned *jīvas* about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the greatest and the original treasure, and they give the method to achieve Him. They declare, “Do not follow the paths of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and so on, through which one will attain only misery and through which Kṛṣṇa can never be attained. Kṛṣṇa is controlled only through *bhakti*, which is the only means to reach Him. Perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* with faith, and you will definitely attain Him.”

When a spiritually inquisitive *sādhaka* anxiously hears from his *gurudeva* about the principles of *ātma-tattva* (the truth of the soul), then his consciousness gradually becomes spotless and is led toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. The scriptures attained through the *guru-paramparā* (*āmnāya*) are the only evidence (*pramāṇa*) regarding the ultimate goal of life. In accordance with this evidence, nine types of fundamental truths have been described. Based on *āmnāya*, an understanding of *prameya* (that which is proven by the evidence) manifests in the pure consciousness. This is known as self-realization and is the principal foundation for the ultimate goal of life.

First prameya: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is brahma, Paramātmā and Bhagavān

Through the revealed scriptures, we first learn that the supreme transcendental entity, Śrī Hari, is the only worshipful object for all *jīvas*. It is the effulgence of the toenails of that Śrī Hari that the *brahmavādīs*, through their impersonal meditation, perceive as the impersonal *brahma*. That very same Hari, through His minute expansion as Paramātmā or in the form of Īśvara, carries out the activities of creation, maintenance and annihilation. That Hari is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Paramātmā is Viṣṇu, and His effulgence is *brahma*. All doubts about the supreme transcendental entity are resolved through contemplating the ontological truth of the all-powerful Śrī Hari. As long as such doubts prevail in the heart of the *sādhaka*, he will adopt a mood of impersonalism, which is the opposite of material knowledge, and pursue [the attainment of the impersonal] *brahma*. Then, to attain Paramātmā, who is a minute expansion of Bhagavān, he imagines *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and other yogic process to be

the appropriate path. After becoming free from all these doubts, firm, one-pointed *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa arises.

Second prameya: Śrī Hari is full of inconceivable potency

On the basis of the authentic *sāstras*, the second *prameya* is that Parabrahma Śrī Hari is naturally full of inconceivable potencies (*acintya-śakti*). By compelling one of His potencies known as *nirviśeṣa-śakti*, He appears as *brahma* to the living entities whose knowledge is undeveloped. Then, by compelling His unlimited potencies known as *saviśeṣa-śakti*, Śrī Hari manifests His *bhagavattā* (Godhood), which includes *brahma* and Paramātmā. Although *nirviśeṣa-śakti* (the potency that is devoid of variety) and *saviśeṣa-śakti* (the potency that is replete with variety) are eternally present within Him, it is apparent that *saviśeṣa-śakti* is more prominent.

*parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca*

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.7)

One hears that Parabrahma has different potencies like *jñāna* (knowledge), *bala* (power), and *kriyā* (action).

This transcendental potency is of three different types, namely existence (*sandhinī*), cognizance (*samvit*) and bliss (*hlādinī*). These three potencies are easily comprehended by the devotees.

Third prameya: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is very form of rasa

Āmnāya says that the highest aspect of the Absolute Truth (Parabrahma) Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the topmost transcendental *rasa*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's intrinsic form (*svarūpa*) is *rasa*, due to which both the material and transcendental worlds become intoxicated. Therefore, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has said in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "I am the origin of the impersonal aspect of the Absolute Truth (*brahma*).” By the effect of this topmost transcendental *rasa*, there is unlimited variegation in both the spiritual and material worlds. The *rasa* found in the spiritual world is pure, and the *rasa* found in this material world is but a reflection of that; it is not pure *rasa*. By the influence of Bhagavān's inconceivable

potency, the transcendental pastimes of Vraja (*śrī vraja-līlā*) appear in this material world, wherein the unlimited *rasas* of the spiritual world are present. Every living entity is eligible to obtain this topmost *rasa*, and it is the *dharma* of the living entity, who attains it on the strength of *bhajana*. The act of striving to attain *brahma* is devoid of *rasa* and therefore not really desirable. In *paramātmā-yoga* also, there is no such thing as *rasa*. Only Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the intrinsic form of *rasa* (*rasa-svarūpa*) and only *bhajana* of Him is full of *rasa*.

Fourth prameya: jīva-tattva – the living entity’s independence and intrinsic nature

Āmnāya says that the living entities are minute rays coming from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental sun. They are unlimited in number. Just as the transcendental world manifests from Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s internal, transcendental potency (*cit-śaktī*) and the material world manifests from His external (*apara*, or inferior) potency (*māyā-śaktī*), the living entities similarly manifest from a part of His internal, transcendental potency, which is beyond the material potency. Those qualities that are present in full in Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eternal nature are also constitutionally present in minute quantities within the minute *jīvas*. An independent nature is present in Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the fullest extent, and a particle of this same independent nature is observed to be eternally present in the living entity. Because of this independence, the *jīvas* have various types of tendencies. Through one tendency, the *jīvā* searches for his own happiness, and through another tendency, he inquires about how to please Kṛṣṇa. As a result of these different tendencies, the *jīvas* are of two types: those who pursue self-pleasure and those who inquire about how to please Kṛṣṇa. Those who pursue self-pleasure are eternally bound by *māyā* (*nitya-baddha*) and those who inquire about how to please Kṛṣṇa are eternally liberated (*nitya-mukta*).

In the transcendental world, time exists as the eternal present, whereas it appears as past, present and future in material world

Inconceivable [transcendental] conceptions are subordinate to spiritual time (*cit-kāla*). Under the spiritual energy, time exists solely in the form of the eternal present. Under the inferior material energy, time

exists in three forms: past, present and future. If a person considers all aspects of this subject from the perspective of spiritual time, then he will no longer have any doubt. But if someone considers them from the perspective of material time, then many doubts will arise within him, such as, “Why does the *jīva* seek self-pleasure if he is a particle of pure spirit?” *Bhajana* becomes possible only after giving up such doubts. Utilizing logic and argument in relation to inconceivable conceptions only gives rise to *anarthas* (impediments on the path of *bhajana*).

Fifth prameya: two kinds of *jīvas* – bound and liberated

The *jīvas* who seek their own happiness accept *māyā*, which is situated very close to them, and experience happiness and distress in the realm of material time. Due to his misfortune, the *jīva* becomes entangled in *māyā* and suffers in the material world by means of his gross and subtle bodies. *Karma* [action performed in this world] is nothing but an entanglement. There is no limit to this entanglement. However, just as the *jīva* becomes easily entangled in *māyā*, he can also be very easily liberated from it. Those who have not come in contact with *māyā* have no connection to *karma*.

Sixth prameya: as a result of the association of devotees, the eternally bound living entity attains liberation

Living entities who are entangled in the deluding material energy (*māyā*) are called *nitya-baddha* (eternally bound). Here, the word *nitya* is used in relation to material time. The living entity’s coming in contact with a spiritual object (*cit-vastu*) gives rise to [his experience of] spiritual time (*cit-kāla*) and he realizes that his conditioned nature is temporary. By the mercy of saintly persons and by the influence of spiritual merits that lead one to the path of *bhakti* (*bhakti-unmukhī sukṛti*), accumulated over the course of many lifetimes, the conditioned soul attains liberation from *māyā*.

*bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamaḥ
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate ratiḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.51.53)

O Śrī Acyuta, You are eternally situated in Your original, spiritual form. The living entity has been wandering in the cycle of birth and death since time without beginning. When the time for his release from this cycle approaches, he obtains the association of *sādhus*, and through this, he becomes firmly attached to You, who are the saints' supreme goal and the controller of both spirit and matter.

Through the association of *sādhus*, material miseries are removed and one attains firm faith in the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. At that time, by the effect of *bhajana* and the mercy of Bhagavān, the *jīva* pierces the entanglement of the deluding energy. He then attains service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and residence on the same planet as Him, in the association of the eternally liberated living entities (*nitya-mukta jīvas*).

Seventh prameya: a relationship of inconceivable, simultaneous oneness and difference

Kṛṣṇa and that which is not related to Him have a mutual relationship of inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference (*acintya-bhedābeda sambandha*). This is why the Vedas mention statements supporting oneness in some places and difference in other places. *Siddhānta* (philosophical conclusion) is of two types: that which is related to the Absolute Truth (*tāttvika*) and that which is not (*atāttvika*). Conclusions that are not related to the Absolute Truth comprise only a small portion of the entire Vedas. Conclusions that are related to the Absolute Truth comprise the teachings of the revealed scriptures received through disciplic succession (*āmnāya*), which describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the non-dual Truth and all-pervading.

Only Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth and possesses all energies. Although the living entities and the material world are manifested by His energies, they all are one single substance, and from the perspective of ontological truth (*tattva*), they are constitutionally non-different from Him. However, from the perspective of potency (*śakti*), everything other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa a transformation of *śakti*, and is therefore eternally separate from Him. This eternal oneness and difference is naturally inconceivable, because the ability to discriminate between such oneness and difference is beyond the

capability of the living entity's material intelligence. When by good fortune the living entity's spiritual intelligence is awakened, he has realization of pure knowledge (*śuddha-jñāna*), which is endowed with inconceivable oneness and difference. Keeping firm faith in the statements of the revealed scriptures, the devotees, by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, can clearly perceive the truth of this inconceivable oneness and difference within a short time. If we use material logic or argument to understand this, we will have a theoretical understanding only.

Realized knowledge of the above-mentioned seven proven truths is called sambandha-jñāna

When, through self-realization, knowledge of these seven *prameyas* manifests in the heart of a *sādhaka* on the strength of the revealed scriptures, it may be said that he has attained knowledge of his relationship with the Absolute Truth (*sambandha-jñāna*). In reply to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī's questions, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu elaborately spoke on the science of *sambandha-jñāna*. The questions of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī are (1) "Who am I?" (2) "Why do the threefold miseries always cause me pain?" and (3) "How can I attain auspiciousness?" Those who truly want to attain auspiciousness will surely ask these questions to *śrī gurudeva*. After receiving his divine answers, all one's doubts are eradicated and firm faith in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* awakens. To consider knowledge of Reality (*tattva-jñāna*) useless and to neglect it is improper, because by means of this *tattva-jñāna*, one's *bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes firmly established.

The essence of the above-mentioned single *pramāṇa* (proof) and seven *prameyas* (that which is proven)

Now consider this: of the ten basic principles [that comprise *daśa-mūla-tattva*], the first eight principles are in relation to *pramāṇa* and *sambandha-jñāna*. The answers that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave to the questions of Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī are, from the perspective of *pramāṇa* and *prameya*, extremely astonishing and clear:

(A) *Pramāṇa*: The Vedas are the only *pramāṇa* and categorically provide the conclusions regarding *sambandha*, *abhideya* and *prajojana*.

(B) *Prameya*:

- (1) Kṛṣṇa alone is the Supreme Absolute Truth (*parama-tattva*). He is Svayam Bhagavān (the original Supreme Lord, who has no source other than Himself) and the non-dual Absolute Truth. He is full of all opulences, and His eternal abode is known as Goloka Vṛndāvana. He manifests as *brahma*, *Paramātmā* and *Bhagavān*, in accordance with three kinds of *sādhana*: *jñāna*, *yoga* and *bhakti*.
- (2) Kṛṣṇa possesses unlimited inconceivable potencies, or *śaktis*. Among these unlimited *śaktis*, the most prominent are *cit-śakti* (the spiritual potency), *jīva-śakti* (the marginal potency) and *māyā-śakti* (the material potency).
- (3) Kṛṣṇa is the intrinsic form of *rasa* (*rasa-svarūpa*).
- (4) The *jīva* is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa and is a separated part of Bhagavān (*vibhinnāmśa-tattva*). The *jīva* can be compared to a molecular particle of sunshine or fire. These *vibhinnāmśa-tattva jīvas* are of two types: eternally liberated (*nitya-mukta*) and eternally bound (*nitya-baddha*). The eternally liberated living entity, being engaged in the eternal service of Kṛṣṇa, delights in the bliss of divine love (*premānanda*).
- (5) The bound living entities, due to forgetting Kṛṣṇa, have been averse to Him from time immemorial. *Māyā* makes these averse *jīvas* suffer the miseries of material existence from time immemorial.
- (6) The liberated living entities are free from *māyā*.
- (7) The *jīva* is a product of Kṛṣṇa's marginal potency (*taṭasthā-śakti*) and has a relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa of inconceivable oneness and difference.

Eighth prameya: bhakti to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the sole means to attain Him (abhidheya)

Abhidheya, or *sādhana* (spiritual practice), begins when knowledge of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa (*sambandha-jñāna*) arises. Only *bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *abhidheya*. The purport is that the topmost duty of the living entities is mentioned in the scriptures and is known as *abhidheya*. *Karma*, *yoga* and *jñāna* are extremely

insignificant and inferior *sādhanas*. They cannot bestow any fruit independent of the assistance of *bhakti*. The practice of *bhakti* (*sādhana-bhakti*) is called *abhidheya* and is of two types: *vaidhī* and *rāgānuga*. Of the sixty-four limbs of *vaidhī-bhakti*, nine are known as *navadhā-bhakti*.

*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanam dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.23)

The following nine processes are accepted as *śuddha-bhakti*: Hearing and chanting about Śrī Viṣṇu's transcendental names, forms, qualities and so on, remembering them, serving His lotus feet, worshipping Him with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to Him, becoming His servant, adopting a friendly mood toward Him and surrendering everything unto Him.

How *bhakti* (devotion) differs from *karma* (fruitive acts) and *jñāna* (monistic knowledge)

Absorbing one's consciousness in the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through one's body, mind and words is known as *bhakti*. *Bhakti* possesses an extremely subtle distinction from *karma* and *jñāna*. Many a time, the limbs of *bhakti* appear completely identical to the limbs of *jñāna* and *karma*. When these limbs of *bhakti* are adulterated with desires other than for *bhakti*, they are known as limbs of *karma*; when they are adulterated with dry contemplation on *brahma*, they are known as limbs of *jñāna*; and when they are free from *jñāna* and *karma* and are practised only for the purpose of serving Kṛṣṇa, they are known as limbs of *bhakti*. An activity that results in self-pleasure is called *karma*, and an activity that is performed with the aim of attaining *sayujya-mukti* (merging into either the impersonal *brahma* or the form of Bhagavān) is known as *brahma-jñāna*.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has presented the symptoms of *bhakti* as follows:

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvrtam
ānukālyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.11)

That perpetual endeavour for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is free from all kinds of desires other than the desire to serve Him; that is not eclipsed by the pursuit of knowledge, fruitive work and so on; that is truly performed exclusively out of loving affection for Him, through all physical, mental or verbal endeavours and through all emotions that flow without interruption like an unwavering stream of oil, is called *uttama-bhakti*.

The characteristics of *vaidhī-sādhana bhakti* and *rāgānugā-bhakti*

Practising the limbs of *bhakti* governed by the rules and regulations of the scriptures is known as *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti*, and an act of service that is performed under the influence of loving attachment to Kṛṣṇa is known as *rāga-bhakti*. The devotion of the Vrajavāsīs for Kṛṣṇa is known as *rāgātmikā-bhakti*. Following the example of the Vrajavāsīs is *rāgānuga-bhakti*. *Vaidhī-bhakti* starts from *śraddhā*, and upon reaching *rati* (the stage of *bhāva*), it becomes one with *rāgānuga-bhakti*. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* is extremely powerful. This is the ninth *mūla* (foundational truth) and the eighth *prameya*.

Ninth prameya, or tenth mūla: *kṛṣṇa-prema* is alone the goal

According to the statements of *āmnāya*, *prema* alone is the goal (*prayojana-tattva*). There are many different stages between *sādhana-bhakti* and the attainment of *prema*. As a result of spiritual merit (*sukṛti*) accumulated over many lifetimes, faith (*śraddhā*) arises in fortunate conditioned souls. Those faithful *jīvas* then associate with saintly persons (*sādhus*). In the association of *sādhus*, they perform the practices of *sādhana-bhakti* such as hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*). Gradually, by the influence of *sādhana*, all desires that impede spiritual progress (*anarthas*) are eradicated, after which *śraddhā* transforms into firm faith (*niṣṭhā*). When

niṣṭhā is firmly established, it becomes *ruci* (a taste for practising the limbs of *bhakti*). From *ruci* comes attachment to the object of such practice (*āśakti*), and from *āśakti*, the seed of transcendental affection (*prīti*) appears. When this seed of *prīti* – which is known as *rati* – thickens, it becomes rapturous divine love (*prema*). *Prema* indeed is the ultimate goal of life for each and every living entity.

The *sādhana-bhajana* of those who doubt these ten fundamental teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu becomes meaningless. When doubts arise, *bhajana* becomes polluted. The *jīva* whose *bhajana* becomes polluted is completely ruined. Therefore, those who desire to perform *bhajana* with purity should do so with firm resolve (*niścaya*).



DHAIRYA

Patience & Forbearance

The necessity of patience in bhajana

It is extremely necessary for those engaged in *bhajana* to possess the quality of patience and forbearance (*dhairya*). Those who possess this quality are known as *dhīra* (sober). In the absence of patience, a person becomes restless, or *adhīra*, and is therefore unable to perform any task. By the quality of patience, a *sādhaka* first controls himself and eventually the whole world.

Controlling the six kinds of urges is dhairya

In the first verse of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, the quality of *dhairya* is mentioned:

*vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmām pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt*

A wise and self-composed person who can subdue the impetus to speak, the agitation of the mind, the onset of anger, the vehemence of the tongue, the urge of the belly and the agitation of the genitals can instruct the entire world. In other words, all persons may become disciples of such a self-controlled person.

The six urges are the urges of speech, the mind, anger, the belly, the tongue and the genitals.

The urge of speech and the means to control it

When the desire arises to speak excessively, a person becomes talkative. And when a person is incapable of controlling his speech, he speaks about others (*paracarcā*). Speaking about others causes many people to become your enemy. Although it is extremely foolish to make statements that are useless and unnecessary, a materialist always wastes his time by doing so. The result is great distress. To check oneself from this disturbance, one who is a follower of *dharma* observes a vow of silence (*mauna-vrata*). This is why our *ṛṣis* have prescribed the observance of *mauna-vrata*, along with all other important *vratas*.

A sincere practitioner of *bhajana* should not speak unnecessarily. If the need to speak unnecessarily arises, he should definitely remain silent. All talks other than *bhagavata-kathā* are unnecessary, but it is never unnecessary to speak about topics favourable to *bhakti* to Śrī Hari. For this reason, devotees should speak only *hari-kathā* and topics favourable for *hari-kathā*. All other topics fall under the category of the urge to speak. One who is able to tolerate the urge to speak is *dhīra* (sober).

The urge of the mind and the means to control it

It is the duty of those who are *dhīra* to tolerate the urge of the mind. Unless a person is habituated to controlling the urge of the mind, how can he attentively perform *bhajana*? Within the minds of materialists, urges perpetually arise in the form of desires. Except for when he is sleeping, the materialist sits on the chariot of his mind, where he busies himself in weaving various schemes. And he never stops. He is never peaceful, even as he sleeps. In the form of good and bad dreams, anxiety never leaves him. To regulate the urge of the mind, the *ṛṣis* have prescribed *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and *rāja-yoga*. But the Supreme Lord has decreed that the mind should be engaged in tasting a higher *rasa*, through which it will become detached from lower worldly *rasas* and thus become regulated. Those who have a taste for the path of *bhakti* can easily regulate their mind. The mind cannot remain without urges, so if we engage it in thinking about transcendental subject matters, it becomes absorbed in them. Having

experienced the *rasa* of transcendental subjects, the mind is not agitated by material subjects, which are inferior.

Śuddha-bhakti, not yoga, is the topmost method for controlling the mind

Many people think there is no method to regulate the mind other than *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, but this is not the case. The mind cannot be regulated through *yoga* as easily as it can through *bhakti*. Patañjali Muni also has accepted that like *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, meditation on Īśvara, or *bhakti-yoga*, is a method to regulate the mind. The meditation on the Supreme Lord propounded by Patañjali is not pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*), but rather devotion performed with selfish intent (*kāmya-bhakti*). *Bhakti* performed for the sole purpose of regulating the mind is certainly not the purest form of *bhakti* or completely devoid of desires other than to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnya*). That perpetual endeavour for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇānuśilana*) performed exclusively out of loving affection for Him (*ānukūlya-pūrvaka*) – is alone *śuddha-bhakti*. Therefore, when *śuddha-bhakti* is performed, joyfulness awakens in the consciousness of its own accord. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.1.32) states: “*tasmāt kenāpy upāyena manaḥ kṛṣṇe niveśayet* – one should therefore fix the mind on Kṛṣṇa by any means.”

By following this instruction and absorbing the mind in the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the mind very easily becomes regulated and does not wander to other topics. In this way, through pure *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, the urges of the *sādhaka*'s mind are regulated. By carefully meditating on this subject, one can know the inherent differences between *yoga* and *bhakti*.

The impetus of anger and the means to control it

It is mandatory for those who are thirsty for *bhakti* to control the impetus of anger. Anger arises when material lust is unfulfilled, and it can gradually lead one to ruin. It is said in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 19.149), “*kṛṣṇa-bhakta niṣkāma ataeva śanta* – the devotees of Kṛṣṇa are without material desires and are therefore peaceful.”

The hearts of those who relish *śuddha-bhakti* do not contain any lust (*kāma*), which is of no value. Due to the absence of lust, there is

not the slightest possibility of anger arising within their mind. One cannot control anger if one's *bhakti* is performed with selfish intent (*kāmya-bhakti*) nor can one control it by mere intelligence. If one does control it by the intelligence, such control is not permanent, but temporary. Within no time, one's attachment to sense objects defeats the intelligence and again allows anger a place in its kingdom.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.23), the story of a renunciant mendicant (*tridaṇḍī-bhikṣuka*) has been given.

In Ujjain, there lived a wealthy *brāhmaṇa*. He was very greedy, miserly and short-tempered. Due to his bad behaviour and miserly nature, his entire family became his enemy. Eventually, everything took a turn for the worse, and whatever he had was destroyed. Because of this, an ardent desire to renounce the world was aroused within his mind. Accepting the religious duties (*dharma*) of a *tridaṇḍī-bhikṣuka*, he began practising *bhakti-yoga*. Within some days, by the influence of *bhakti-yoga*, he became capable of controlling his anger.

*taṁ vai pravayasam bhikṣum
avadhūtam asaj-janāḥ
drṣṭvā paryabhavan bhadra
bahvibhiḥ paribhūtibhiḥ*

*kecit tri-veṇuṁ jagṛhur
eke pātram kamaṇḍalum
pīṭham caike 'kṣa-sūtram ca
kanthām cīrāṇi kecana
pradāya ca punas tāni
darsītāny ādadur muneh*

*annam ca bhairkṣya-sampannam
bhuñjānasya sarit-taṭe
mūtrayanti ca pāpiṣṭhāḥ
ṣṭhīvanty asya ca mūrdhani*

*kṣipanty eke 'vajānanta
eṣa dharmadhvajaḥ śaṭhaḥ
kṣīṇa-vitta imām vṛttim
agrahīt sva-janojjhitāḥ*

*evam sa bhautikaṃ duḥkham
daivikaṃ daihikaṃ ca yat
bhoktavyam ātmano diṣṭam
prāptaṃ prāptam abudhyata*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.23.33–35, 37, 40)

After untying the knot of “I” and “mine” in his heart, that *brāhmaṇa* from Ujjain became a peaceful *bhikṣuka* (mendicant). He was elderly and unclean, and at the mere sight of him, wicked people troubled him, and they insulted and criticized him in many ways. Some would seize his *tridaṇḍa* (the staff of a mendicant), and some would knock his begging bowl from his hand. Some would snatch away his water pot and *āsana*, and some would run away with his *mālā* (chanting beads) and raggedy *cādar* (shawl). Some would even scatter his undergarments and clothes here and there. Then they would show him these things, and then tease him by again snatching them back. When that ascetic would beg alms and then sit on the bank of the river to eat, sinful people would sometimes pass urine on his head and spit on him. Some would criticize him by taunting, “Just see! Now this wicked person is making a show of spirituality. He makes begging his occupation simply because he lost all his wealth and his family rejected him.” But even after being insulted in this manner, he would quietly tolerate everything. Sometimes he had to tolerate bodily miseries like high fever, sometimes he would have to tolerate miseries from higher forces of nature like heat and cold, and sometimes wicked people would insult him and cause him misery. But these would cause no disturbance to the mind of the mendicant. He would understand, “These are the fruits of my *karma* and I have to bear them.”

The moral of the story about the renunciant mendicant is to be accepted by householders and renunciants alike

That mendicant expressed himself as follows:

*etāṃ sa āsthāya parātma-niṣṭhām
adhyāsitaṃ pūrvatamair maharṣibhiḥ
ahaṃ tariṣyāmi duranta-pāram
tamo mukundāṅghri-niṣevayaiva*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.23.57)

“I am a soul, a minute living entity. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Soul. Being attached to this material world, a living entity who is averse to Kṛṣṇa suffers from miseries caused by other living entities, the body and mind, and natural disasters, such as excessive heat or cold. Service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the *jivā’s* eternal occupation. I will give up my faith in this material world and perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* with irrevocable faith in the Supreme Person (*parātma-niṣṭhā*), controlling my mind, speech, anger and so on through a lifestyle favourable for *bhakti*. Eminent ṛṣis of yore have taken shelter of this such faith and crossed the material ocean. In some places, this faith is evident in the *dharma* of householders, such as King Janaka, and it is sometimes evident in the *dharma* of renunciants, such as Sanaka and Sanātana. In reality, *parātma-niṣṭhā* is the same in both cases. Without this *parātma-niṣṭhā*, one cannot cross the insurmountable ocean of nescience. Service to Bhagavān Mukunda is our only shelter. It is solely by serving His lotus feet that will I cross this ocean of nescience.”

We can clearly see from this song of the mendicant that it is impossible to cross the material ocean through the process of *yoga*. Everything can be achieved by having firm faith in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. One who takes the shelter of *bhakti* and thereby controls the urges of the mind, speech and anger is known as *dhīra*.

The urge of the tongue and the means to control it

It is also absolutely essential to control the urge of tongue. A materialistic person is always preoccupied with tasting the six kinds of *rasa*: sweet, spicy, sour, bitter, pungent and salty. “Today I will eat sweet rice.” “Today I will eat *halvah*.” “I will drink the finest drinks.” Such desires do not allow a materialist to be peaceful. The more the tongue tastes, the more its hankering to taste increases. Attaining Kṛṣṇa is very difficult for those who run here and there to satisfy the voracity of the tongue. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said:

vairāgī haiyā kare jihvāra lālasa
paramārtha jāya, āra haya rasera vaśa
vairāgīra kṛtya—sadā nāma-saṅkīrtana
sāka-patra-phala-mūle udara bharaṇa

jihvāra lālase jei iti-uti dhāya
śiśnodara-parāyaṇa kṛṣṇa nāhi pāya
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 6.225–227)

The meaning is that one who is subservient to the tongue and who thus wanders here and there to satisfy it is devoted to the genitals and the belly and cannot attain Kṛṣṇa. The ultimate spiritual goal of a person who hankers to satisfy the tongue even after becoming a renunciant will surely be lost. Moreover, under the influence of [material] *rasa*, he will also lose his social standing. A renunciant should always perform *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and satisfy his belly with vegetables, leaves, fruits, roots and so forth.

A person should fill his belly with whatever foods are easily available. By offering to Śrī Kṛṣṇa foods in the mode of goodness and then honouring them as *prasāda*, the hankering of the tongue is eradicated and service to Kṛṣṇa is cultivated. If palatable *prasāda* becomes easily available without any arduous endeavour, then the tongue's greed will not increase but gradually become controlled.

The urge of the belly and the means to control it

The urge of the belly is a big disturbance. That foodstuff by which one's hunger is mitigated and one's physical body is nourished is necessary for the belly. Those who are thirsty for *bhakti* should maintain their life by eating moderately. Those who endeavour to overeat are gluttonous. One characteristic of a devotee is that he is *mita-bhuka*, which means "one who eats only what is necessary". By eating less, the body remains light and does not create obstacles in one's *bhajana*. Those who do not possess the strength to tolerate the urges of the stomach are always greedy to eat. Those who take a determined vow to eat nothing but *bhagavat-prasāda* are particularly capable of tolerating the urges of the belly. To observe fasting during *vratas* is a good way of learning to control the urges of the belly.

The urge of the genitals and the means to control it

The urge of the genitals is extremely fearsome. It is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.11):

*loke vyavāyāmiṣa-madya-sevā
nityā hi jantor na hi tatra codanā*

Those who reside in a material body made of blood and flesh assume that the act of associating with the opposite gender is natural. This is a result of their wrongly identifying themselves with this body. In order to regulate this unnatural behaviour, the process of marriage has been prescribed. Those who wish to abandon and become free from the regulations of marriage remain engaged in animalistic activities. For those who have overcome this unnatural propensity by associating with saintly persons and on the strength of their *bhajana*, and who have thus attained a taste for spiritual topics, association with the opposite gender is extremely base. Persons who are completely afflicted with the disease of enjoying sense objects and filled with attachment to material enjoyment can never tolerate the urge of the genitals. As a result, they are always engaged in illicit activities.

In this regard, there are two kinds of *sādhaka-bhaktas*. Those who have transcendental affection (*rati*) for Bhagavān have been purified by the strength of their association with *sādhus*. They completely give up the association of women and engage in *bhajana*. Such people are known as *gr̥ha-tyāgī* Vaiṣṇavas, devotees who have renounced their homes. The other type consists of those whose propensity for associating with women has not yet been removed. They execute the procedure of marriage and thereby accept *gr̥hastha-dharma*. As householders, they engage in *bhagavad-bhajana*. The lawful association of women [that is, associating with women according to the regulations prescribed in the scriptures,] is known as controlling the urge of the genitals.

The best solution to control the six urges

Tolerating the above-mentioned six urges according to the prescripts of scripture is helpful for *bhajana*. When those urges are strong, they are unfavourable for *bhajana*. To subdue the above-mentioned six urges is called *dhairya*, or forbearance. These tendencies cannot be completely eradicated as long as one

possesses a material body, but by properly engaging them in their respective, appropriate objects, they are no longer faulty.

The conclusion is that it is the duty of an intelligent person to remove these urges from focusing on their respective [material] objects and to make them favourable for *bhakti*. For instance, one should divert one's lust for material objects toward *kṛṣṇa-sevā*, anger toward those who are inimical to devotees, greed toward *sādhū-saṅga* and *hari-kathā*, and intoxication toward chanting the glories of Kṛṣṇa. In this way, when all the urges are directed toward those objects and topics that are related to Bhagavān, they no longer remain obstacles, but rather become helpful. However, this is possible only when the quality of *dhairya* is present.

It is compulsory for every sādhanaka to possess the quality of dhairya

There is another meaning of the word *dhairya*. Those who are engaged in a *sādhana* (practice) desire to attain some result. *Karmīs* hope to attain heavenly happiness by [observing the rituals mentioned in] *karma-kāṇḍa*, *jñānīs* hope to attain *mukti* by [observing the injunctions of] *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, and devotees hope to please Kṛṣṇa through *bhakti-sādhana*. There are some *sādhakas* who, due to the time it takes to obtain the results of their *sādhana*, eventually become impatient and deviate from the path leading to their ultimate goal. Therefore, only when a practising devotee adopts *dhairya*, or patience, does he attain his desired goal. “Kṛṣṇa will certainly be merciful to me, whether today, tomorrow, after one hundred years, or even after ten births. I will take shelter of His lotus feet with determination and never leave them.” This type of patience is most desirable for *bhakti-sādhakas*.



TAT-TAT-KARMA-PRAVARTANA

Performing Activities Favourable for Bhakti

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has prescribed the methodology of *tat-tat-karma-pravartana* for those persons who are eager to perform *bhajana*. In his *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, he has designated those activities that are favourable for the cultivation of *bhakti* as *tat-tat-karma*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.19.20–24), Śrī Kṛṣṇa has told Uddhava:

*śraddhāmṛta-kathāyām me
śaśvan mad-anukīrtanam
pariniṣṭhā ca pūjāyām
stutibhiḥ stavanam mama*

*ādarah 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 vratham tapaḥ*

*evam dharmair manuṣyāṅām
uddhavātma-nivedinām*

*mayi sañjāyate bhaktiḥ
ko 'nyo 'rtho 'syāvaśisyate*

O Uddhava! I will tell you the topmost method to attain *prema-bhakti* to Me. One must first practise *sādhana-bhakti*. Through this, one attains *prema-bhakti*. Hear this point about *sādhana-bhakti*: those who want to attain *prema-bhakti* to Me ought to have firm faith in the nectarean narrations of My pastimes, constantly perform *sañkīrtana* of My qualities, pastimes, and names, remain completely fixed in their worship of Me, praise Me through *stotras*, perceive all living entities in relation to Me, dedicate all material endeavours to Me, glorify Me alone with their words, offer their mind to Me, reject all material desires, give up wealth and material sense gratification for My sake, and perform all activities such as charity, sacrifice, chanting, vows and austerities for Me alone. O Uddhava, what other object remains to be attained by one who follows these practices and has attained *bhakti* to Me?

The sixty-four limbs of bhakti are tat-tat-karma

Based on these instructions of Bhagavān, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, has divided these activities into sixty-four limbs. These sixty-four limbs are mentioned in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.115–129)* as follows: (1) to take shelter of the lotus feet of *śrī guru*, (2) to accept *dīkṣā* from him, (3) to serve him (*guru-sevā*), (4) to be inquisitive to learn about the true *dharma* of the living entity, (5) to follow the path by which *sādhus* have attained Bhagavān, (6) to give up one's own enjoyment for the sake of love for Kṛṣṇa, (7) to live in a holy place related to Kṛṣṇa, (8) to accept things only in a quantity sufficient to maintain one's life, (9) to fast on Ekādaśī, (10) to respect the myrobalan (*āmalakī*) and pipal (*aśvattha*) trees, the cows, *brāhmaṇas*, and Vaiṣṇavas, (11) to avoid offences to the deity and to the holy name, (12) to give up the company of non-devotees, (13) to refrain from accepting many disciples, (14) to give up the partial study of many scriptures and giving expanded commentaries on them, (15) to be equipoised in loss and gain, (16) to not be overwhelmed by lamentation, (17) to refrain from hearing criticism of any demigods or

scriptures, (19) to refrain from hearing gossip (topics related to sense enjoyment), (20) to refrain from causing anxiety to any living entity through one's body, mind or words, (21) to hear narrations about Bhagavān, (22) to chant His names, (23) to remember Him, (24) to worship the deity form of the Lord, (25) to recite prayers, (26) to serve Him [with various articles], (27) to accept servitorship, (28) to regard the Lord as one's friend, (29) to absolutely surrender one's very soul (*ātma-nivedana*), (30) to dance in front of the deity form of the Lord, (31) to sing to Him, (32) reveal one's mind to Him, (33) and offer prostrated obeisance to Him, (34) to show respect to Bhagavān or a devotee by standing when seeing them coming or by going forward to welcome them, (35) to follow behind a devotee or Bhagavān for some distance when they depart, (36) to visit holy places (*tīrthas*) and temples, (37) to perform *parikramā*, (38) to recite various hymns, (39) to chant *japa* and (40) *saṅkīrtana*, (41) to accept the flower garlands, incense and sandalwood paste that have been offered to Bhagavān, (42) to honour and serve *mahāprasāda*, (43) to have *darśana* of Bhagavān's *ārati* and festivals, (44) to have *darśana* of the Lord's deity form, (45) to offer Bhagavān those items that are very dear to oneself, (46) to perform meditation [on Bhagavān and persons and things related to Him], (47) to serve *tulasī* and (48) the Vaiṣṇavas, (49) to reside in a *dhāma* such as Mathurā (50), to relish *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, (51) to perform all one's endeavours for Kṛṣṇa, (52) to await His mercy, (53) to celebrate the appearance day of Bhagavān with devotees in grand festival, (54) to surrender in all respects, (55) to observe *kārtika-vrata* and other *vratas*, (56) to wear the signs and markings of a Vaiṣṇava, (57) to write and wear the holy names on one's body, (58) to accept the remnant garlands [of Bhagavān or devotees], (59) to honour *caraṇāmṛta*, (60) to associate with saintly persons (*sat-saṅga*), (61) to perform *nāma-kīrtana*, (62) to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, (63) to reside in Mathurā and (64) to serve the deity with faith.

(1) Guru-padāśraya

The first duty of a *sādhaka* is to take shelter at the lotus feet of *śrī guru*. Without taking shelter of *śrī guru*, one cannot attain

auspiciousness. There are two kinds of human beings: those who have the ability to discriminate and those who do not. A person who is fully engrossed in material happiness is known as *aprāpta-viveka* (one who has not yet attained discrimination). If by good fortune he attains the association of devotees, he may become able to achieve the ability to discriminate. At that time, the following feelings arise in his heart: “Alas, alas! I am extremely unfortunate. I have always been engrossed in sense gratification. I have lived my entire life like an animal. What shall I do now?” The association of a great personality due to whom such thoughts arise is known as the association of the *śravaṇa-guru* (one from whom one hears about the *bhaktas*, *bhakti* and *bhagavat-tattva*). At this time, faith (*śraddhā*) arises by good fortune. By possessing faith, the desire to perform *bhajana* is born. Taking shelter at the lotus feet of a spiritual master (*guru-padāśraya*) then becomes extremely necessary. Hence, by good fortune, persons with *aprāpta-viveka* (undeveloped discrimination) obtain *prāpta-viveka* (developed discrimination) and accept shelter at the lotus feet of a *guru*.

Who is a guru?

“What type of *guru* is it proper to take shelter of?” This is a question to consider. A person is eligible to become a *guru* if he has conquered the six enemies (lust, anger, greed, false pride, illusion and envy); who has a natural deep loving attachment to Kṛṣṇa; who is fully conversant with the Vedas, Vedānta, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas and other *sāstras*; who is accepted as *guru* by saintly persons, who have faith in him; who has controlled his senses; who has compassion for all living entities; and who is peaceful, without duplicity, and truthful. Having deep loving attachment (*anurāga*) for Kṛṣṇa (that is completely devoid of all other attachments) is the primary quality of *gurudeva*. All other symptoms are secondary. Therefore, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

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

Whether a person is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī*, or even a *śūdra*, he is a *guru* if he knows *kṛṣṇa-tattva*.

If one possesses this principal symptom, then he is eligible to be *guru*, even though he may lack one or two secondary symptoms. No harm. Being a *brāhmaṇa* and being a householder are secondary symptoms. The purport is that it is good if one who knows *kṛṣṇa-tattva* (that is, a *premi-bhakta*) possesses the two secondary symptoms of being a *brāhmaṇa* and being a householder. However, if a person possesses the two secondary symptoms but is flawed in regard to the primary symptom, then he is not qualified to become a *guru*.

*mahābhāgavata śreṣṭho
brāhmaṇo vai gurur nṛṇām
sarveṣām eva lokānām
asau pūjyo yathā hariḥ*

*mahākula prasūto 'pi
sarva yajñeṣu dīkṣitaḥ
sahasra-sākhādhyāyī ca
na guruḥ syād avaiṣṇavaḥ*

Padma Purāṇa

(2-3) The necessity of performing guru-sevā and accepting dīkṣā

Upon finding a qualified *guru*, a faithful disciple is to serve him with firm conviction and without duplicity. After pleasing the *guru*, one must accept *śrī kṛṣṇa-mantra* and initiation from him. Those who are averse to accepting initiation make a deceitful show of performing *kīrtana*, and they preach, referring to themselves as Vaiṣṇavas. Such persons certainly cheat themselves. Materialistic persons should not neglect accepting initiation upon observing that personalities like Jaḍa Bharata and others did not take it. Initiation is prescribed for every living entity in every birth. If it is seen in the life of a perfected, great personality (*siddha-mahāpuruṣa*) that he does not take initiation, it is not to be taken as a precedent. Those *mahāpuruṣas* have displayed such behaviour due to special situations, and therefore, it is not to be considered a general rule. Śrī Dhruva Mahārāja went to Dhruvaloka in his material body. Upon hearing about this, should everyone hope and wait to enter

Dhurvaloka in their material body? The general rule is that when the living entity gives up his material body, he goes to Vaikuṅṭha in his spiritual body.

Common people obtain their welfare when they follow general rules. Whenever Bhagavān, who is full of inconceivable potencies, desires something, it surely happens. Therefore, we must never transgress the general rules. Rather, after pleasing śrī gurudeva and by serving him without duplicity, one should indubitably accept initiation into *bhagavan-nāma*, *bhagavan-mantra* and so on, and accept instructions on the Absolute Truth.

(4) Following in the footsteps of sādhus

Fortunate disciples, after receiving initiation and instructions from a bona fide spiritual master, will follow the path of the *sādhus*. Only proud persons disobey the *mahājanas* and concoct new ideas. As a result, they very soon become the cause of their own ruination, having traversed the inauspicious path. In *Skanda Purāṇa* it is mentioned:

*sa mṛgyaḥ śreyasām hetuḥ
panthāḥ santāpa-varjitaḥ
anavāpta-śramam pūrve
yena santah pratasthire*

The eternal path, upon which the *sādhus* have traversed since previous times is alone auspicious for us. By following the path of the *mahājanas*, one attains determination, valour and fulfilment. When we follow the path of *bhajana* traversed by Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, we experience a happiness beyond description. What did Haridāsa Ṭhākura say when he was beaten by the Muslim miscreants in order to induce him to give up the chanting of *harināma*?

“Even if my body is cut into pieces and I lose my life, I will never give up *harināma*. O Kṛṣṇa, these misguided *jīvas* who are beating me are not slightly at fault. Please forgive them and be merciful to them.”

Having such determination, constantly chanting *harināma* with compassion at heart for all living entities is the path of *bhajana* exhibited by the previous *mahājanas*. There is no new path to be invented. *Sādhus* always follow only the known path that has already been established. However, persons full of false pride and who desire prestige make further endeavours to invent newer paths. It is due to great fortune that people develop faith in the path of the previous *mahājanas*. After faith (*śraddhā*) arises, such persons give up their pride and start walking that path. Those who are unfortunate concoct a new path and cheat themselves as well as others. In many ways, the scriptures have cautioned against associating with such persons:

*śruti-smṛti-purānādi-
pañcarātra-vidhiṃ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir
utpātāyaiva kalpate*

*bhaktir aikāntikī veyam
avicārāt pratīyate
vastu tastu tathā naiva
yad aśāstrīyatekāśyate*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.101-102)

The purport is that the path of *bhakti* is of two types: *vaidhī* and *rāgānugā*. According to their respective qualifications, the *mahājanas* have themselves followed these two paths. The *śāstras* such as the Śruti, Smṛti and Pañcarātra are filled with descriptions of these two paths of *bhakti*. The new paths discovered by Buddha, Dattātreya and others – who rejected the path of *bhakti* shown by these scriptures – will be renowned until the end of time only for creating disturbances. Although those who traverse these new paths advertise them as one-pointed (*aikāntikī*) *hari-bhakti*; in reality, their doing so only indicates their ignorance. The path exhibited in *śāstras* like the Vedas is the one and only true path. Nowadays, many new paths are being invented, but ultimately, they disappear along with their *ācāryas*.

(5) Inquiring about *sad-dharma* (our eternal function)

For a sincere disciple, to inquire about *dharma* gives rise to *bhakti*. Therefore, the *Nārada-pañcarātra* states:

*acirād eva sarvārthaḥ
siddhaty eṣām abhīpsitaḥ
sad-dharmasyāvabodhāya
yeṣām nirbandhiniṁ matiḥ*

Those whose minds are exceedingly anxious to know all about *sad-dharma*, or the procedures of *bhakti*, very quickly attain all their cherished goals.

Just as fortunate persons desire to follow the conduct of the *sādhus*, they also desire to know their *dharma*. But unfortunate persons are just the opposite. Just as they search for newer and newer paths, different from those of the *sādhus*, they similarly disrespect the *sādhus'* established *siddhānta* and practise their own. They do not try to understand the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but rather accept and preach doctrines contradictory to them. They do not understand the horrific consequences of their erroneous preaching. Sincere disciples make special endeavours to inquire about *sad-dharma* (the eternal religion – *bhakti*). If they are incapable of understanding it on their own, they faithfully inquire about and understand it from their *śikṣā-guru*. Such people quickly attain success in their *sādhana*.

What is *sad-dharma*?

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
sīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

Service that is favourable to Kṛṣṇa, free from desires other than the desire to serve Him, such as those for worldly or heavenly pleasures, and not covered by *karma* and *jñāna* is known as *uttamā-bhakti*.

Until the aforementioned symptoms of pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*), in the form of *sad-dharma*, arise in the heart of an inquisitive person, his heart remains covered by darkness. In such a condition, he cannot understand what pure devotion is. If one depends on one's own speculation, then pure *bhakti* will never manifest. The majority of people think that they have understood the intrinsic nature of *bhakti* on the strength of their intelligence and knowledge. But in reality, some of them have mistaken devotion mixed with impersonal knowledge (*jñāna-miśrā-bhakti*) to be pure *bhakti*, and others have mistaken devotional service mixed with both *karma* and *jnana* to be pure *bhakti*. They are so full of pride that after listening to the teachings of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, they express their view by saying, "Everyone presents a proper conclusion according to his or her individual doctrine. What is the need to accept the conclusion of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*? We do not want to get entangled in the differences of opinion among various doctrines. One's own independent conclusions are certainly better." Such people have no relation with *sad-dharma*. The result of performing their own concocted new process of devotion is that they can never relish pure devotion.

(6) Renouncing sense enjoyment for the sake of affection for Kṛṣṇa

It is the duty of a *bhakti-sādhaka* to give up all types of *bhoga* for the sake of Kṛṣṇa. *Bhoga* means "sense enjoyment". The objects that our senses want to enjoy – items that are very dear to us – are to be offered to Kṛṣṇa and accepted in the form of *prasāda* in a moderate quantity suitable for sustaining one's life.

(7) Tirtha-vāsa

To reside in a place related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-tīrtha*) is a limb of *sādhana*. If one resides in Dvārakā, Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, on the bank of the Gaṅgā, on the bank of the Yamunā or at the pastime places of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, then the remembrance of Kṛṣṇa will be perpetually ever-fresh. What more does the *sādhaka* need?

(8) Accepting according to one's need

Through practical activities that are favourable for the practice of *bhakti*, one is to engage in earning only as much wealth as needed for maintaining one's livelihood. By desiring more than is needed, *bhakti* will disappear. If a *sādhaka* accepts less wealth than is needed, then his practice of *sādhana* will become weak due to those needs not being satisfied.

(9) Observing Ekādaśī

One must attentively observe Ekādaśī. When one gives up all enjoyment and practises *bhajana* on the occasion of Ekādaśī, once every fortnight, gradually, the practice of *bhajana* becomes continuous.

(10) Serving tulasī and others

Through the worship of myrobalan (*āmalakī*) and pipal (*aśvattha*) trees, *tulasī*, cows, *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas, one's sinful reactions are vanquished. Through this, one attains the mercy of Bhagavān.

The necessity of observing the ten aforementioned rules

These aforementioned ten limbs of *bhakti* are prerequisites for performing *bhajana*. Attaining *bhajana* and Bhagavān is very difficult for those who neglect these limbs in the initial stage.

The *sādhaka* ought therefore to first take shelter of *śrī guru* and accept *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā* from him. One must follow the conduct of the *sādhus* and accept instructions on their *siddhānta*. In order for one's life to be permeated with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one is to reside in a *kṛṣṇa-tīrtha* and, for the sake of attaining Kṛṣṇa, give up all sense gratification. Through practical conduct, one is to earn or collect only as much wealth as is needed to maintain one's life and is favourable for *bhakti*. For the sake of *bhakti*, one should, according to the rules, observe days like Ekādaśī and Jayantī (Janmāṣṭamī). One must honour Vaiṣṇavas and other personalities and objects related to Kṛṣṇa. In this way, it is necessary to observe these ten rules. Along with these rules, one's *bhakti-sādhana* will not be stable if one does not observe the ten prohibitions, mentioned below.

The association of Māyāvādīs and atheists is to be renounced

A *sādhaka* ought not to associate with persons averse to Bhagavān. Although he will inevitably meet such people in ordinary dealings, he is to deal with them only until his work is finished. Those in whose hearts the *svarūpa* of devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa has not yet awakened remain full of pride, as they have taken shelter of *jñāna* and *karma*. They are therefore averse to Bhagavān. Those who engage in serving many *devās* and *devīs*, those who are Māyāvādīs, thirsty for impersonal *jñāna*, and those who are atheists, who oppose the Vedas, are all averse to Bhagavān.

One must refrain from making many disciples and reading many types of śāstras

One who has no faith in *śuddha-bhakti* must not be accepted as a disciple. By accepting such a person, the *bhakti-sampradāya* becomes polluted. One's *bhakti* will diminish by starting big projects (like arranging grand festivals and other such activities). They are therefore to be renounced.

Satisfaction and equal vision

The endeavour for food and clothing will always exist in both household life and renounced life, but one must always be careful in such dealings. The *Padma Purāṇa* gives a very beautiful instruction in this regard:

*alabdhe vā vinaṣṭe vā
bhakṣyācchādāna-sādhane
aviklava-matir bhūtvā
harināmaiva dhīyā smaret*

The purport is that whether a *sādhaka* stays at home or in the forest, he will certainly have to make some endeavour for food and clothing. A householder will have to endeavour for his food and clothing through agriculture, business or work. A renunciant will have to depend on begging alms for his food and clothing. Devotees are not to be agitated at heart if, upon engaging in these activities,

food and clothing are not obtained, or if they are obtained but then lost. They are to continue being peacefully engaged in *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*.

Sadness is to be cast off

Those who are absorbed in material life lament grossly if they lose their wife, children, money, wealth and so on. But *bhakti-sādhakas* in such situations must not lament for very long. They should quickly give up their lamentation and engage in the cultivation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is not appropriate for a renunciant to lament if he does not possess a quilt, a water pot or a begging bowl, or if these things are stolen by a person or an animal. A practising Vaiṣṇava must give up all impulses like lamentation and anger, otherwise there will be obstacles in his constant remembrance of Kṛṣṇa. It is explained in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*śokāmarṣādibhir bhāvair
ākrāntam yasya mānasam
katham tasya mukundasya
sphūrttiḥ sambhāvanā bhavet*

How can Śrī Mukunda ever be manifest to a person whose heart is invaded by lamentation, anger and other agitations?

The worship of various demigods and goddesses is prohibited; it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone who is to be worshipped

Sādhakas should worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa only. They are not to worship various demigods. But it is important to remember to never disrespect any demigod or scripture. When coming before any demigods, one must offer them respect, knowing them to be servants who are under the authority of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *Padma Purāṇa* instructs:

*harir eva sadārādhyāḥ
sarva-deveśvareśvaraḥ
itare brahma-rudrādya
nāvajñeyāḥ kadācana*

The purport is that Parameśvara is the one and only worshipful object. Others [Brahmā and Śiva] are His manifestations that govern

the modes of material nature (*guṇa-avatāras*). According to their respective qualifications, people worship particular demigods, but Bhagavān Viṣṇu is the only worshipful object for those with a *sāttvika* nature. People progress gradually, transcending the modes after having worshipped various demigods for many lifetimes. A person's life becomes eternally auspicious from that birth in which he begins worshipping Viṣṇu, considering Him, exclusively, to be the Supreme Lord. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the topmost manifestation of *viṣṇu-tattva*. As a result of the living entity's performing worship in the mode of goodness (*sattva-guṇa*), he attains the stage of *nirguṇa* (freedom from the modes of material nature). He then attains service to *śrī-kṛṣṇa-tattva*.

One should not cause anxiety for anyone

One should be merciful toward every living entity, not giving even the slightest anxiety to anyone. It is necessary that one's heart be full of compassion for all. Exhibiting a mood of mercy toward all living entities is a limb of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. To attain this nature, a *sādhaka* should carefully cultivate the quality of mercy.

It is imperative to give up *sevā-aparādha* and the ten *nāma-aparādhas*

It is most essential for those desiring to do *bhajana* to give up *sevā-aparādhas* (offences in service) and the ten kinds of *nāma-aparādhas* (offences to *harināma*). For devotees in general, there are a number of rules for serving the deity form of Bhagavān. *Sevā-aparādha* is committed when those rules are transgressed. Hence, one must avoid committing *sevā-aparādha* upon entering the temple room. There are ten kinds of *nāma-aparādha* that have been discussed in many places. All *sādhakas* ought to be extremely careful to give up these offences. Every endeavour in *sādhana-bhajana* by those who are negligent in this regard is useless. *Padma Purāṇa* says:

*sarvāparādha kṛd api
mucyate hari-saṁśrayaḥ
harer apy aparādhān yaḥ
kuryād dvipada pāmsanaḥ*

*nāmāśrayaḥ kadācit syāt
taraty eva sa nāmataḥ
nāmno hi sarva-suhṛdo
hy aparādhāt pataty adhaḥ*

The conclusion is that if one takes shelter of Śrī Hari, then all types of offences are vanquished. All *sevā-aparādhās* committed while serving Bhagavān are destroyed by taking shelter of śrī nāma. Nāma alone delivers the Vaiṣṇavas, but on the condition that they give up all kinds of offences. If they do not, they will surely fall down, despite chanting the name of Bhagavān.

Refraining from criticizing Vaiṣṇavas and Viṣṇu and taking shelter of the lotus feet of śrī guru

A *sādhaka* is not to hear any blasphemy of Kṛṣṇa or Vaiṣṇavas, and must leave that place where such blasphemy is spoken. Those who have weak hearts and hear blasphemy of Kṛṣṇa or Vaiṣṇavas out of fear of transgressing social etiquette eventually leave *bhakti*.

By respectfully practising the aforementioned twenty limbs of *bhakti*, *bhāva* is awakened. The mercy of Kṛṣṇa is the root cause of the awakening of *bhāva*. Without *sādhu-saṅga*, one cannot achieve the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. In this regard, taking shelter at the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru* (*guru-padāśraya*), receiving *mantra* initiation (*dīkṣā*), and serving the spiritual master (*guru-sevā*) are the root cause of everything.

Classifications of bhakti: dāsya, sakhya and others

All the limbs of *bhajana* mentioned above, from accepting Vaiṣṇava markings and symbols up to *dhyāna*, are all limbs of *arcana*. One is to perform *sādhana* of these limbs of *bhakti* to the best of one's ability after receiving them from śrī *gurudeva*. *Dāsya* (servitude), *sakhya* (fraternity) and *ātma-nivedana* (surrender of the self) are activities that awaken *bhāva*. Only after sincerely practising these activities will *bhāva* arise. They are considered to be *sādhana-bhakti* only when one is at the stage of *sādhana*.

Whatever one's most cherished items are in this world and whatever is very dear to oneself is to be offered to Bhagavān Śrī

Kṛṣṇa. The result of this is wonderful. The purport is that one ought to not enjoy anything that is dear to oneself, but rather offer it to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and enjoy it as His *prasāda*.

All endeavours and worldly activities are to be performed for Kṛṣṇa

One can attain true auspiciousness only when all of one's endeavours, worldly and spiritual, are performed for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is said in the *Nārada-pañcarātra*:

*laukikī vaidikī vāpi
yā kriyā kriyate mune
hari-sevānukūlaiva
sā kāryā bhaktim icchatā*
quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (9.2.93)

The purport is that whatever activities one performs – be they worldly (*laukika*) or prescribed Vedic regulations (*vaidika*) – they are not to be performed with the sentiment of being averse to Kṛṣṇa. It is proper to always perform them in a way that is favourable for *kṛṣṇa-sevā*. *Smārta-saṁskāras*, such as marriage, are *vaidika*, whereas social and bodily activities performed to maintain one's social standing are *laukika*. Marriage is for nurturing Kṛṣṇa-centred activities, procreation is for increasing the number Kṛṣṇa's servants, offering oblations to the forefathers is for satisfying Kṛṣṇa's servants, and feasting is for gratifying Kṛṣṇa's living entities. In this way, all activities must be done in such a way that they are favourable for service to Kṛṣṇa. If one follows accordingly, then the fear of getting entangled in the worldly section of the Vedas dealing with fruitive action (*karma-kāṇḍa*), is eradicated. Understanding that his body, home, society, etc., belongs to Kṛṣṇa, the *sādhaka* should protect them. This is called *kṛṣṇa-saṁsāra*.

Surrender (śaraṇāgati) and nine types of tulasī-sevā

The entire life of a *sādhaka* should be decorated with *śaraṇāgati*. The six types of surrender have been explained in many places in this

publication. The life of the living entity is useless without *śaraṇāgati*. The living entity is to always perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* with full surrender.

Anything that is related to Kṛṣṇa is known as *tadīya*. Serving *tulasī* is the primary form of *tadīya-sevā*. It is stated in the *Skanda Purāna*:

dṛṣṭā sprṣṭā tathā dhyātā
kīrtitā namitā śrutā
ropitā sevitā nityam
pūjitā tulasī śubhā

navadhā tulasīm devīm
ye bhajanti dine dine
yuga koṭi sahasrāṇi
te vasanti harer gr̥he

The essence of this verse is that one attains residence in the home of Bhagavān by daily performing nine types of *tulasī-bhajana*: beholding her, touching her, meditating on her, glorifying her, offering her *praṇāma*, hearing her glories, planting her, offering her water, and worshipping her.

Studying bhakti-śāstras, residing in Mathurā and serving the devotees

Literatures that substantiate *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* are also known as *tadīya-vastu*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the topmost among them, as is *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Those who regularly read and hear these *bhakti-śāstras* are glorious.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy pastime places, such as Mathurā, are appropriate residences for *sādhakas*. Among such places, residence in Mathurā is topmost, as is residing in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. In this connection, the glory of Mathurā-dhāma is mentioned in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāna*:

śrutā smṛtā kīrtitā ca
vāñchitā prekṣitā gatā
sprṣṭāsritā sevitā ca
mathurābhīṣṭadāyini

Hearing about, remembering, glorifying, desiring, seeing, visiting, touching, taking shelter of and serving Mathurā fulfils all the desires of human beings.

The devotees of Kṛṣṇa are also considered *tadīya*. It is written in the *Ādi Purāṇa*:

*ye me bhakta-janāḥ pārtha
na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ
mad-bhaktānam ca ye bhaktā
mama bhaktās tu te narāḥ*

Those who consider themselves My direct devotees are actually not My devotees, but those who see themselves as the devotees of My devotees are factually My devotees. This is My opinion.

In regard to serving devotees, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said:

*yāvanti bhagavad bhakter
aṅgāni kathitānīha
prāyastāvanti tad bhakta
bhakter api budhā vidhuh*

The purport is that the limbs of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* are also the limbs of *kṛṣṇa-bhakta-bhakti*, or devotion to the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The word *prāyaḥ* indicates that the difference is that the devotees are to be worshipped by offering them *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*. All other limbs, such as offering *praṇāma*, remain the same.

Serving the deity, yātra-mahotsava and relishing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam with rasika-bhaktas

It is appropriate for the *sādhakas* to hold festivals according to their respective capacities. Celebrating festivals in the association of devotees (*sat-saṅga*) is a principal activity in *bhakti-sādhana*. However, it is necessary to be careful to not associate with non-devotees on the pretext of holding such festivals.

One is to observe festivals on the occasion of Śrī Bhagavān's appearance day and other similar days. One ought to serve the deity

form of Bhagavān with love. Having faith in the formless aspect of the Lord, foolish people disrespect the deity form. But if such people stay in the association of *sādhus* and hear and contemplate devotional discourses, then they, also, will understand the eternal need to serve the deity form of the Lord.

It is essential to relish *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *śāstras* in the association of *rasika-bhaktas*. If one hears *bhakti-śāstras* from rationalists, logicians or those given to dry speculation, then one's heart will become dry and the awakening of *rasa* will not take place.

Sādhu-saṅga

It is extremely necessary for *sādhakas* to associate with devotees of Bhagavān. Those who are ill-natured, like *jñānis* and *karmīs* are not devotees. One should associate with persons who are of the same devotional mood (*svajātiya*), affectionate to oneself (*snigdha*), passionate about *bhakti*, and more advanced than oneself. Otherwise, the *sādhaka's* heart will not take shelter of *śuddha-bhakti*. In this regard, the rules of *sat-saṅga* have been given in *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (8.51):

*yasya sat-saṅgatiḥ puṁso
maṇivat syāt sa tad guṇaḥ
svakularddhyai tato dhimān
svayūthāny eva saṁśrayet*

The purport is that one attains qualities according to the association one keeps, just as the colour of crystal appears the same as that of a nearby object. One must be particularly careful in this regard. Among all the limbs of *bhakti*, associating with devotees is one principal limb.

Of the five limbs of bhakti, nāma-saṅkīrtana and vaiṣṇava-sevā are foremost

Among the sixty-four limbs of *bhakti*, the following five are foremost: (1) serving the deity, (2) relishing the purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with *rasika-bhaktas*, (3) associating with devotees

more advanced than oneself, who are affectionate to oneself and in the same mood, (4) performing *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and (5) residing in Mathurā. Of these five types of *sādhana*, two are most prominent: *nāma-saṅkīrtana* and *vaiṣṇava-sevā*. The *Padma Purāṇa* says:

*yena janma-sahasrāṇi
vāsudevo niṣevitaḥ
tan-mukhe hari-nāmāni
sadā tiṣṭhanti bhārata*

The purport is that the fruit obtained by those who have served the deity for many lifetimes is that *harīnāma* perpetually resides on their tongue. That is, their tongues constantly vibrate *harīnāma*. It is further stated:

*nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
’bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ*

*ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.223, 232)

Śrī nāma and *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* are one and the same. They are the personified form of a wish-fulfilling jewel, the embodiment of transcendental *rasa*, complete, pure – that is, devoid of any material connection – transcendental and spiritual. The material tongue cannot chant the fully transcendental holy name. But when the living entity becomes inclined toward the service of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* (*kṛṣṇa-sevonmukha*), and his body is pure and transcendental, the transcendental holy name mercifully descends of its own accord and dances on his tongue. Such is the independent mercy of spiritual objects.

Śrī Mathurā-maṇḍala, the holy name of *Bhagavān*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other devotional scriptures, the pure devotee and

the form of the deity are all transcendental. By associating with them, one quickly attains *bhāva* and *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

Rāgānuga-bhakti and activities favourable to bhakti (tat-karma-pravartana)

In this way, *vaidhī-bhakti* has an important place in *sādhana-bhakti*. Besides this, the practice of *rāgānuga-bhakti* is very powerful in the process of *sādhana*. The part of *sādhana* that arises through a disposition for following in the footsteps of the Vrajavāsīs and that aims for acquiring their innate propensity for *kṛṣṇa-sevā* is known as *rāgānuga-bhakti*. We will describe this further.

Persons who endeavour for *bhakti* are to follow these activities with their body, mind and speech. According to a *sādhaka*'s qualification, he must arduously engage in the limbs of either *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti* or *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti*.

Some attain the topmost fruit of *bhāva* by performing *sādhana* of only one limb of *bhakti*, and others attain it by performing *sādhana* of several limbs. The *bhakti* of those who take shelter of the holy name and serving the Vaiṣṇavas is known as *aikāntikī* (one-pointed). Such persons have no taste for other types of *sādhana*. Therefore, *sādhakas* must become one-pointedly surrendered and engage in *bhakti-sādhana* with enthusiasm (*utsāha*), firm determination (*niścayatā*) and patience (*dhairya*).

Relinquishing Mundane Association

In his *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written that one's devotion is enhanced by enthusiasm (*utsāha*), determination (*niścaya*), patience and forbearance (*dhairya*), performing acts favourable for *bhakti* (*tat-tat-karma-pravartana*), giving up worldly association (*saṅga-tyāga*), and adopting the life and character of the *sādhus* (*sad-vṛtti*). Of these, separate articles on *utsāha*, *niścaya*, *dhairya*, and *tat-tat-karma-pravartana* have already been written. In this section, we will discuss the purport of *saṅga-tyāga*.

Types of detrimental association (ku-saṅga)

There are two types of association (*saṅga*): that characterized by proximity (*samsarga*) and that characterized by attachment (*āsakti*). Association characterized by proximity is of two types: with non-devotees and with women. Association characterized by attachment also, is of two types: attachment to that for which one possesses *samskāras* (impressions in the heart) and attachment to material objects. Practitioners of *bhakti* should endeavour to give all these up, otherwise their gradual ruination is inevitable. One should always remember the following verses from *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.62–63):

*saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmahaḥ
kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate
krodhd bhavati sammohaḥ
sammohāt smṛti-vibhramahaḥ*

*smṛti-bhramśād buddhi-nāśo
buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati*

Attachment gives rise to lust, which in turn leads to the awakening of anger. Anger gives rise to utter delusion, and from such delusion comes loss of memory. Loss of memory destroys one's intelligence, and when intelligence is destroyed, one's entire spiritual direction in life is lost. One then falls into the ocean of material existence.

If a *sādhaka* enters into association that is prohibited [for the development of his *bhakti*], then his attachment to the objects of the senses will gradually increase. The more this attachment increases, the more his faith in the supreme goal is diminished. The purport is that the living entity is spiritual, but being shackled by *māyā*, he forgets his spiritual identity and adopts the conception of "I" and "mine" in relation to temporary material objects. In his pure state, the living entity has no relationship with *māyā*. There [in the spiritual world], all the living entity's association is spiritual, and therefore, he only desires the association of those who have attained that platform. The living entity's association in the conditioned state is contaminated. That association, being polluted with ignorance in the form of association with non-devotees, the association of women, attachment to *saṁskāras* and attachment to wealth, is a hindrance for the living entity who is on the path of auspiciousness. Spiritual association (*cit-saṅga*) is like-minded association (*svajātīya-saṅga*) for the living entities, and mundane association (*acit-saṅga*) is incompatible association (*vi-jātīya-saṅga*). The living entities' liberation is freedom from this incompatible association. We will now discuss incompatible association.

The association of non-devotees (*jñānīs* are non-devotees)

We must first consider this: Who a non-devotee? Non-devotees are those who are not obedient to Bhagavān (that is, averse to Him). *Jñānīs* (those who cultivate knowledge of the impersonal oneness), are never obedient to Bhagavān. They claim, "After I attain *jñāna*, I will be equal with Bhagavān. I am *brahma* (that all-pervading, impersonal spirit), and *jñāna* (impersonal knowledge) is the topmost object. Bhagavān cannot keep one who attains *jñāna* under His control. It was due to Bhagavān's *jñāna* that He became perfected in His *brahmatā* (the quality of being *brahma*). Through *jñāna*, I too will become *brahma*."

Can there ever be dependency on Bhagavān if there is a desire to become equal to Him or become Him?

All the endeavours of the *jñānīs* are for the purpose of attaining independence from Bhagavān. This is the conception of *brahma-jñānīs*. Those who acquire knowledge of the self (*ātma-jñānīs*) and those who acquire knowledge of material nature (*prākṛta-jñānīs*), also, do not desire the mercy of Bhagavān. They try to achieve their desired goal with the help of knowledge and logic. They do not make any endeavour to attain the mercy of Bhagavān. Therefore, all the different types of *jñānīs* fall within the category of non-devotees. Although some *jñānīs* utilize *bhakti* during the time of practice, they discard it at the time of perfection. Their practice possesses no symptoms of devotion as an eternal principle (*nitya-bhakti*), nor do they accept subordination to the Lord. This point is applicable to all types of *jñānīs*. They do not attain real *jñāna*, but rather only a semblance of *jñāna*. True *jñāna* is a characteristic of pure *bhakti* that is easily attained by pure devotees simply by the mercy of Bhagavān. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has instructed Sanātana Gosvāmī in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.29):

*jñānī jīvan-mukta-daśā pāinu kori' mane
vastutaḥ buddhi śuddha nahe kṛṣṇa-bhakti bine*

The *jñānī* considers himself to have attained the stage of being liberated while living. But factually, his intelligence cannot be pure without engaging in devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, those who display faith in the doctrine of impersonal knowledge are counted in the category of non-devotees. Their primary goal is liberation (*mukti*). Attaining the mercy of Bhagavān through serving Him is not their life goal.

Those who work solely for the fruit of their action are also non-devotees

Those who subscribe to the doctrine of *karma* are also non-devotees. Action (*karma*) that is performed with the sole intention of attaining the mercy of Bhagavān is called *bhakti*. Action that is

performed solely to attain a material object, a result or knowledge averse to Kṛṣṇa (*bahirmukha-jñāna*) is action that is averse to Bhagavān. *Karmīs*, or those who perform *karma*, do not inquire exclusively about the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Although they view Kṛṣṇa with respect, their primary objective is to attain worldly pleasures only. Activities performed for one's pleasure are known as *karma*. Therefore, a person who performs such activities is a non-devotee.

Yogīs, worshippers of demigods and demigoddesses, logicians, sense enjoyers and other such persons are all non-devotees

Yogīs sometimes practise *karma* and *jñāna*, considering the fruit of *jñāna* to be liberation and the fruit of *karma* to be opulence. Therefore, they too may be called non-devotees.

Worshippers of various demigods, also, are non-devotees, because they are not exclusively surrendered. Those who have faith in only contemplating dry logic are also non-devotees averse to Bhagavān. Not to speak of persons who consider Bhagavān to be an imaginary principle, even those who do not receive an opportunity to remember Bhagavān due to their attachment to the objects of the senses are non-devotees.

By associating with these types of non-devotees, a person's intelligence is very quickly polluted and all their bad qualities enter him. If anyone truly desires to attain *bhakti*, he should certainly give up the bad association of non-devotees.

The second type of saṅga: associating with women (for renunciants)

The association of women [for renunciants] is extremely harmful. Śrīman Mahāprabhu instructed Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī:

asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra

'strī-saṅgī'—eka asādhu, 'kṛṣṇābhakta' āra

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.87)

It is the custom of Vaiṣṇavas to give up bad association. Those who associate illicitly with women are one type of unsaintly person, and non-devotees are another.

There are two types of Vaiṣṇavas: householders (*grhasthas*) and renunciants (*tyāgīs*). Renunciants are forbidden to speak with any woman whatsoever. As Śrīman Mahāprabhu says:

*kṣudra-jīva saba markṭṭ-vairāgya koriyā
indriya carāiyā bule ‘prakṛti’ sambhāṣiyā
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 2.120)*

Those immoral persons whose renunciation is like that of monkeys simply wander around satisfying their senses and intimately conversing with women.

The Lord’s behaviour with Vaiṣṇavī women is ideal for *tyāgīs*:

*pūrvavat kailā prabhu sabāra milana
strī-saba dūr haite kailā prabhura daraśana
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 12.42)*

Just as he had previously done, the Lord received all those who had travelled to Purī, and the women beheld Him from a distance.

Associating with women (for householders)

The regulations in regard to householder Vaiṣṇavas is that they should not associate with prostitutes or with women other than their own wife. And they are not to associate with their wife in a way that transgresses the regulations of scripture. They must, in every way, give up attachment and submissiveness to their wives. In relation to *smārtas* (those who observe the regulations of the *Smṛtis*), the scriptures have instructed:

*na grham grham ity āhur
grhīṇī grham ucyate
tayā hi sahitaḥ sarvān
puruṣārthān samaśnute*

It is said that a house itself is not a home. A house is called a home when a wife is in it. With her, a householder can engage in attaining all the goals of human life.

Having a wife is necessary for a householder. With the help of his wife, a householder is to perform activities meant for fulfilling the goal of human life (*puruṣārtha*), which, for people in general, is fourfold: religiosity (*dharma*), economic development (*artha*), sense gratification (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*). The directives related to *varṇāśrama* that are mentioned in the scriptures are called *dharma*, and whatever is prohibited is called *adhharma*. With the help of his wife, a householder follows the rules and regulations of the scriptures and gives up that which they prohibit. The fruit achieved by following *dharma* is called *artha*. Money, food, progeny and cows are all *artha*. The desire to enjoy *artha* is known as *kāma*. *Dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* are together known as *trivarga*. While wandering in the cycle of *karma*, the living entity considers the attainment of *trivarga* to be the ultimate goal of life; *trivarga* is his very lifeblood. It is the duty of the *smārta* householder to attain *trivarga* with his wife. Day and night, a householder should perform activities directed at attaining *trivarga* with his wife. A person's wife can accompany him while visiting holy places. As long as a taste for spiritual attainments does not arise in a person's heart, how can he practise pure *dharma*, which is separate from *trivarga*?

Liberation (*mokṣa*) is the living entity's fourth goal of life (*puruṣārtha*). There are two types of liberation: (1) the cessation of extreme distress by which one is completely freed from all kinds of suffering and (2) the attainment of spiritual happiness, by which one is not only completely freed from all kinds of distress but also attains spiritual happiness. The ultimate goal for dry *jñānīs*, or *Māyāvādīs*, is the cessation of extreme distress, and for purified *jñānīs* – that is devotees – it is the attainment of spiritual happiness. That devotee may be either a householder or a renunciant.

A householder Vaiṣṇava should perform spiritual practice with his wife for the purpose of attaining spiritual happiness. Although engaged in such activities, he never becomes dominated by his wife. In this way, throughout his life, the fault of associating with women can never be attributed to him. He should completely give up both unrestrictedly conversing with women and his mundane mood of submission that results from fondness for his lawful wife.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.9–10, 13–14), we find the directives to be accepted by a householder Vaiṣṇava:

*dharmasya hy āpavargyasya
nārtho ’rthāyopakalpate
nārthasya dharmaikāntasya
kāmo lābhāya hi smrtah*

*kāmasya nendriya-prīti
lābho jiveta yāvatā
jīvasya tattva-jijñāsā
nārtho yaś ceha karmabhiḥ*

*ataḥ pumbhir dvija-śreṣṭhā
varṇāśrama-vibhāgaśaḥ
svanuṣṭhitasya dharmasya
samsiddhir hari-toṣanam*

*tasmād ekena manasā
bhagavān sātvatām patih
śrotavyah kīrtitavyaś ca
dhyeyaḥ pūjyaś ca nityadā*

In the above verses, it is mentioned that *trivarga* is the only *dharma* of those who possess the qualification to perform *karma*. Those who have become detached from this world, which is pervaded with *karma*, its pleasures and the pleasures found in the heavenly planets headed by Svarga, obtain the qualification to perform *jñāna*. For them, the rules and regulations of the path of *karma* are unnecessary. Such persons are beyond the boundaries set for those who possess the qualification to perform only *karma*. They are eligible for *sannyāsa* that is characterized by dry *jñāna*. Those who have faith in hearing topics about Bhagavān and performing *kīrtana*, having received the mercy of Bhagavān on the strength of heaps of *sukṛti* that has gradually accumulated over many lifetimes, are beyond the qualification for *karma*. Such persons are eligible to be called Vaiṣṇavas. Among them, whatever is acquired by householder Vaiṣṇavas who are accumulating wealth through the observance of *dharma* is not for the fulfilment of

their own desires; rather, it assists them in maintaining their lives in a pure manner that is favourable for the cultivation of *bhakti*, and it also assists them in their inquiry into the Absolute Truth.

This is the difference between *dharma* (worldly religious duty) and *paramārtha* (duties pertaining to the supreme goal of life). In order to maintain his life, a householder Vaiṣṇava, along with his wife, must, while observing *varṇāśrama-dharma*, perform the activities related to material religion, economic development, sense enjoyment and liberation (*dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*) with the sole purpose of attaining Bhagavān's mercy. But if his home becomes unfavourable for spiritual practice, and if renunciation has thus arisen [in his heart], he will leave his home.

By properly performing the activities of *trivarga*, the Vaiṣṇava's character quickly becomes pure. Such a Vaiṣṇava of pure character will faithfully hear, chant and remember Bhagavān's names, form, qualities and pastimes with undivided surrender. It is the duty of the householder Vaiṣṇava to always perform spiritual practice together with his wife in order to attain the ultimate goal of life. It is also proper for the wife to follow her husband and perform spiritual practice for spiritual perfection, assisted by other women, such as any daughters she may have. In this way, the fault of associating with women will not exist. Therefore, whether practitioners are householders or renunciants, all are to give up the inappropriate association of women. By making this endeavour, devotees will remain far from such association.

The bad association (ku-saṅga) of attachment and types of attachment

Now we are considering bad association in the form of attachment (*āśakti*). Attachment is of two types: attachment to that for which one possesses impressions (*saṁskāras*) and attachment to material objects. There are two types of *saṁskāras*: previous (*prāktana*) and current (*ādhunika*). When impressions are produced as a result of the living entity's performing the activities of *jñāna* and *karma* under the influence of *māyā* since time immemorial, they are known as *prāktana-saṁskāras*. These *saṁskāras* are known as one's *svabhāva* (nature). As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.14):

*na kartṛtvam na karmāṇi
lokasya sṛjati prabhuḥ
na karma-phala-samyogam
svabhāvas tu pravartate*

The Supreme Lord has neither created the individuals' tendency to act, nor the actions themselves, nor the resultant fruits. All this is performed by their acquired nature, the nature impelled by the ignorance, or illusion, that has covered them since time immemorial.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa clarifies:

*“anādi-pravṛttā pradhāna-vāsanātra svabhāva-śabdenoktā-prādhānika-
dehādīmān jīvaḥ kārayati kartā ceti na viviktasya tattvam” iti—(śrī
baladeva) bhāṣyakāraḥ |*

The word *svabhāva* expresses here material impressions that have accumulated since time immemorial. That a living entity possessing a material body causes others to act and is the agent is not a profound truth.

Again, from *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.60):

*svabhāva-jena kaunteya
nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā
kartuṁ necchasi yan mohāt
kariṣyasi avaśo 'pi tat*

O son of Kuntī, you will be helplessly compelled to perform that action which in your deluded state you now wish to avoid, because you are bound to act in accordance with your inborn nature.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.6), *jñāna-saṁskāras* are clearly considered to be bondage:

*tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt
prakāśakam anāmayam
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti
jñāna-saṅgena cānagha*

O sinless one, of these three modes, the quality of goodness is illuminating and free from vice due to its purity. It binds the living entity by attachment to happiness and knowledge.

Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa gives the following meaning: “*jñānyaham, sukhyaḥam’ ity abhimānas tena puruṣam nibadhnāti* – therefore, such erroneous conceptions as ‘I am knowledgeable’ and ‘I am happy’ shackle the soul.”

In this way, *saṁskāras* are born as a result of activities related to *jñāna* and *karma* that were performed in previous births. Those *saṁskāras* are followed by attachment, and according to the attachment, a person develops a taste for either *karma* or *jñāna*. The previous verse shows that the *jñāna* of the Māyāvādīs is bondage.

Attachment arising from *saṁskāras*

In relation to one who ‘associates’ with the activities of *karma*, it has been mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.26):

*na buddhi-bhedaḥ janayed
ajñānām karma-saṅginām
joṣayet sarva-karmāṇi
vidvān yuktah samācaran*

A person who is learned in the path of spiritual advancement through knowledge should not bewilder the intelligence of ignorant people by instructing them to give up their prescribed duties and engage in the cultivation of *jñāna*. Rather, by properly performing his own actions in a composed and detached state of mind, he should engage such people in their prescribed duties.

Due to the activities of *karma*, *jñāna* and so on performed in one’s previous births, one receives either *karma-saṅga* or *jñāna-saṅga* in one’s current birth. Association of these *saṁskāras* is extremely strong and unavoidable. To get rid of them is not only difficult, but practically impossible. Even by committing suicide one cannot get rid of them. *Saṁskāras* are of two types: *pūrva* (previous) and *ādhunika* (current). *Saṁskāras* created from the activities and factors of one’s previous births are known as *pūrva-saṁskāras*. *Ādhunika-saṁskāras* are those created from the activities and association of one’s current

birth. Because of these two types of *saṁskāras*, all living entities are wandering in the cycle of *karma*. When the living entity is not bound by the shackles of *māyā*, his nature is to be a pure servant of Kṛṣṇa, but that pure, inherent nature of the living entity is covered when he is ensnared in the net of *māyā*. At this time, he is incapable of giving up previous or current impressions. In one's present birth, one's previous *saṁskāras* manifest as his second *saṁskāras*.

Sādhu-saṅga: the solution to become free of attachment to *saṁskāras*

This unavoidable attachment to *saṁskāras* can be purified only by the association of *sādhus*. It is the only remedy for this great disease. Until one is purified from indulging in activities that have developed impressions in the heart, perfection in *bhakti* cannot in any way be attained:

*saṅgo yaḥ saṁsṛter hetur
asatsu vihito 'dhiyā
sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto
niḥsaṅgatvāya kalpate*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.23.55)

Association with materialistic people (*asat-saṅga*) is the cause of material bondage, whether one associates knowingly or unknowingly. If a person associates with a spiritually realized person in the same manner [knowingly or unknowingly], he attains freedom from material association. It is also said:

*na rodhayati mām yogo
na sāṅkhyam dharmā eva ca
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo
neṣṭā-pūrtam na dakṣiṇā*

*vratāni yajñāś chandāmsi
tīrthāni niyamā yamāḥ
yathāvarundhe sat-saṅgaḥ
sarva-saṅgāpaho hi mām*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.12.1-2)

The ‘association’ of one’s *saṁskāras* is extremely base. The living entity cannot be purified from the fault of that association even by performing virtuous activities like *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, acquiring knowledge of *sāṅkhya* philosophy, following *varṇāśrama*, studying the Vedas, performing austerities, accepting *sannyāsa*, worshipping demigods, giving in charity, giving donations, observing *vratas*, performing fire sacrifices, visiting holy places and observing disciplinary rules and prohibitions – for a very long time. Śrī Kṛṣṇa therefore says, “He cannot attain Me. As soon as this defect is rectified through saintly association, I am immediately bound within the heart of that devotee.” By associating with and respecting a pure devotee of Bhagavān, the faults of indulging in *karma* and *jñāna* are eradicated.

The fruit of bad-impressions (*ku-saṁskāras*)

Due to bad impressions (*ku-saṁskāras*), the propensity in the living entity for passion (*rājasa*) and ignorance (*tāmasa*) is strengthened. *Saṁskāras* are the root cause of whatever tendencies in the modes of goodness, passion and ignorance are seen in a person’s eating, drinking, sleeping and other activities. As a result of bad impressions, *karmīs* and *jñānīs* develop a mood of disregard toward Vaiṣṇavas. Unless bad impressions are destroyed, the ten offences to the holy name will not be completely eradicated. Offences committed at the feet of saints are due to pride in *karma* and *jñāna*. Due to bad impressions, blaspheming *sādhus*, which is one of the offences to the holy name, enters the heart of non-devotees and takes up residence there. Due to bad impressions, the living entity cannot take exclusive shelter at the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Rather, considering various demigods to be independent lords, he wanders here and there, sometimes taking shelter of one demigod and sometimes taking shelter of another. Due to bad impressions, the living entity disobeys the spiritual master, blasphemes the scriptures, considers the results of the holy name to be exaggerations, considers the name of Bhagavān to be equal to pious activities, commits sinful activities on the strength of the holy name, possesses the conception of “I” and “mine” in relation to the body and in relation to his wife, children, family and wealth, and bestows *harināma* upon unqualified persons.

He thus remains intoxicated in the ten offences to the holy name. How can auspiciousness come to a living entity in such a state? It is therefore said:

*asadbhiḥ saha saṅgas tu
na kartavyaḥ kadācana
yasmāt sarvārtha-hāniḥ
syād adhah-pātaś ca jāyate*

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (10.294)

The purport is that one should never associate with materialistic people, because by their association, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa* and also *bhakti*, as well as other types of objectives, are destroyed. It is only in the association of *sādhus* that one can wash away the flaw of taking bad association, and only through the association of *sādhus* can one attain all types of objectives.

The effect of pure vaiṣṇava-saṅga

It has been seen that for fortunate persons, the attachment to *saṁskāras* is destroyed by their spending a few days in constant association with pure Vaiṣṇavas. Who does not know the effect of the association of Śrī Nārada Muni, through which the hunter (Mṛgāri) and the dacoit Ratnākara (Vālmiki Ṛṣi) attained auspiciousness? The following instruction of Śrī Rāmānujācārya is worthy of remembrance at all times: “If you are unable to purify yourself by thousands of endeavours, then sit near Vaiṣṇava *sādhus*. By this, all your sins will be washed away and you will very soon achieve all auspiciousness.”

By staying in *sādhu-saṅga* for only a very short time, a person’s mind is changed, his attachment to sense enjoyment is destroyed, and the seed of *bhakti* sprouts in his heart. Gradually, one develops a taste for the Vaiṣṇavas’ conduct and behaviour. It has been seen that by the influence of *sādhu-saṅga*, people have given up such habits as associating with women, thirsting for wealth, desiring sense enjoyment and liberation, being inclined toward *karma* and *jñāna*, eating meat and fish, eagerly desiring sex life, drinking wine, smoking tobacco, and desiring to chew betel, and having accepted proper conduct, practised pure *bhakti*. It has been seen that by being

influenced by the Vaiṣṇava *dharma* of being constantly engaged in service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, many people have become freed from laziness, useless talk, criticizing and other unbeneficial habits (*anarthas*).

In this regard, we have seen that by associating with Vaiṣṇavas, the wickedness and the desire for prestige (*pratiṣṭhā*) in many have been vanquished. If that association is taken with some faith, the results are astonishing. There is a complete change in one's nature and one's attachment to the material world is eradicated, as is one's greed for being victorious in battle. Moreover, by the influence of saintly association, a king gives up his greed for his kingdom, a sense enjoyer renounces the desire to enjoy, a rich man abandons his covetousness for money, a lusty person completely leaves the object of his lust, a politician gives up politics, a worldly poet leaves his passion for mundane poetry, a logician awakens from his dream of defeating the world with his logic, and a material scientist becomes a one-pointed devotee of Bhagavān and kicks away his investigation of worldly or atomic miracles, through which he has led the whole world toward destruction. There is no other way but the association of Vaiṣṇavas to eradicate attachment resulting from *samskāras*.

Attachment to material things should be abandoned by everyone

One is to endeavour to give up all types of attachments to material objects. Householders have a natural attachment to their home and its paraphernalia, to their wife and children, their beautiful clothes and ornaments, their body, their trees, their animals, their birds and the things used in their day-to-day living. Some people are so attached to bad habits – such as smoking, eating fish and meat and drinking alcohol – that these habits end up being substantial hindrances to their spiritual practice. Some people, without any consideration, disrespect Bhagavān's *prasāda* by eating fish and meat and drinking wine. The habit of constantly smoking is such a hindrance to the study and hearing of devotional scriptures and to the performance of *kīrtana* that such scriptures cannot be relished for a long time. People who are powerless against such habits cannot remain for long within temples, nor can they derive bliss from being in the association of *sādhus* for an extended period. As long as one

does not completely give up attachment to material objects, one cannot experience the joy of *bhajana*. All these attachments are easily destroyed by associating with *sādhus*. Still, one should endeavour to destroy these petty attachments through the practice of *bhakti*. These attachments can be vanquished by observing *vratas* that have relevance to Bhagavān.

Attachment is eradicated by following Ekādaśī and other vratas

By faithfully and properly observing Ekādaśī, Janmāṣṭamī, Gaurapūrṇimā, Rāma-navamī, Nṛsimha-caturdaśī and other such *vratas*, these attachments are easily vanquished. One of the purposes of observing *vratas* and regulations is to remove attachments. On the day of a *vrata*, one should single-pointedly perform *bhajana* of Bhagavān and relinquish all types of enjoyment; this is the one and only rule.

Objects of enjoyment are of two types: those that sustain life and those that gratify the senses. Food and drink are life-sustaining, whereas alcohol, meat, betel, tobacco, cigarettes and so on are all for gratifying the senses. On days of *vratas*, it is necessary to completely give up all objects of sense gratification, otherwise, one will not have properly followed the *vrata*. One should also try as far as possible to decrease the items needed to sustain one's life. According to the needs of one's bodily condition, one must try as far as possible to reduce even the acceptance of life-sustaining foodstuffs. To meet one's minimal requirement, a provision exists to accept *anukalpa* (simple non-grain foodstuff). However, there is no such rule for accepting objects of sense gratification; the only rule is that they are to be completely rejected.

One of the purposes of observing *vratas* is to gradually diminish the propensity for enjoyment. If one thinks, "Today, I will somehow or other endure the austerity of being without a particular item, but I will enjoy it profusely tomorrow," then the *vrata* will not be successful in its objective. The reason is that *vratas* have been prescribed so that one may give up such items by gradual practice. *Vratas* are usually observed for three days. In this way, by giving up the association of the objects of sense enjoyment for three days, then for the month-long *cāndrāyaṇa-vrata* and then by

observing the four months of *caturmāsya-vrata* and other *vratas* in the same way, such objects will gradually be given up forever. The renunciation of those who at the time of observing a *vrata* cannot remember the statement of *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.31), “*kṣīpraṁ bhavati dharmātmā* – he quickly becomes righteous,” is fleeting, like the results of an elephant’s bath.

Association to be abandoned

The inappropriate association of women and non-devotees is in all ways prohibited for those who desire to attain pure *bhakti*. For this, *sat-saṅga* is extremely necessary. In addition to this, it is also necessary to follow Vaiṣṇava *vratas* in order to remove attachment to material objects. To neglect this is improper. These *vratas* will not bear fruit if they are followed without faith. Rather, pride and duplicity will increase, and *hari-bhakti* will become difficult to attain, despite hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*) for many lifetimes.

What are saṅga and saṅga-tyāga?

Numerous types of doubts arise in many people regarding *saṅga* and *saṅga-tyāga*, and for good reason: If association were to be defined by mere proximity to worldly persons or objects, then there would be no means of avoiding such association. As long as one has a material body, how can the association of the objects and items required to sustain one’s life be renounced? How does a householder Vaiṣṇava leave his family members? Whether one stays at home or in the forest, it is necessary to visit worldly persons in order to maintain one’s body. Therefore, in establishing the limits of *saṅga* and *saṅga-tyāga*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written in *Śrī Updeśāmṛta* (4):

dadāti pratigrhṇāti
guhyam ākhyāti pṛcchati
bhunkte bhojayate caiva
ṣaḍ-vidhaṁ prīti-lakṣaṇam

Offering pure devotees items in accordance with their requirements, accepting *prasādi*, or remnant, items given by pure devotees, revealing to devotees one’s confidential realizations concerning

bhajana, inquiring from them about their confidential realizations, eating with great love the *prasāda* remnants given by devotees and lovingly feeding them *prasāda* – these are the six symptoms of loving association with devotees.

O *sādhakas*! For sustaining one's bodily journey, it is necessary to be near both devotees and non-devotees. Both householders and renunciants are equal in this regard. But there is one recourse: there may be closeness without association. If reciprocal giving and taking, reciprocal conversing, reciprocal eating and other mutual exchanges are done with a binding affection (*prīti*), then it is considered to be *saṅga*. The food that is given to the hungry, the help that is provided to the poor, and the donation of a religiously-minded donor are all given and received as a duty. There is no mutual *saṅga* between beggar and donor because of a lack of affection. But when these actions are imbued with affection, they are called *saṅga*. Hence, to have loving exchanges with non-devotees is *ku-saṅga*, and to have them with pure Vaiṣṇavas is *sat-saṅga*.

Assume that a mundane person has come to you, and now, considering it your duty, you interact with him as necessary. Do not speak confidentially with him [about one's spiritual realizations], because generally, affection develops by such confidential talks, and if affection develops, then the fault of taking [undesirable] association arises. If a friend or family member comes to you, you can speak what is necessary, but it is better to not affectionately reveal topics that are dear to one's heart. If that same person is a Vaiṣṇava, then the conversation ought to be filled with affection.

By following these directives, there will not be any possibility of opposition from friends. There is no *saṅga* in customary, practical conversations. A *sādhaka* ought to interact with ordinary persons with detachment, just as one interacts in the market with buyers or sellers. However, when interactions are with pure devotees, they are to be loving.

When feeding hungry and suffering persons or professional educators, treat them as guests, but it is not necessary to have a special heartfelt affection for them. Make efforts [to help them], but without a binding affection. Feed only *sādhus* and pure Vaiṣṇavas in

such an affectionate way, and lovingly accept the *prasāda* they give. If one interacts with one's spouse, children, servants and visitors in the above-mentioned way, it will not be considered *asat-saṅga*, and *sat-saṅga* can still be taken. If one does not consider all these points and give up bad association, there is no hope of attaining *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's instructions regarding saṅga-tyāga

It is proper for renounced Vaiṣṇavas to accept whatever alms they have collected through *madhukarī* (begging small amounts of food) from the homes of devotee householders. They should always remember the difference between material *bhikṣā* (begging) and *madhukarī-bhikṣā*. Householder Vaiṣṇavas are to accept *prasāda* and grains only in the homes of devotee householders who possess good character. One is to be careful not to honour *prasāda* at the house of non-devotees and persons of bad character. There is no need for further instruction on this matter. A living entity who possesses spiritual merit (*sukṛti*) develops faith in *bhakti* by a mere few words. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, some intelligence has already arisen in him. Through this intelligence, he can easily understand the essence of the *ācāryas'* instructions. Therefore, such people require concise directives. But persons without spiritual merit lack faith. There is no point in giving them additional instructions. Therefore, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given only a few words of instruction for *sādhakās*.



SĀDHU-VṚTTI

Adopting the Virtuous Conduct of Pure Devotees

Sādhus are of two types: *gr̥hasthas* (householders) and *gr̥ha-tyāgīs* (renunciants). Hence, their *vṛtti* is also of two types: that of a householder Vaiṣṇava and that of a renunciant Vaiṣṇava. We will individually examine these two types of *vṛttis*. In addition to these two, there are some modes of conduct that are beneficial for both types of *sādhus*. These will be described separately.

The word *vṛtti* has two meanings: propensity (*pravṛtti*) and life-style (*jīvana*). The word *pravṛtti* refers to one's individual nature, or character. The *dharma* of the living entity corresponds to one's *pravṛtti*, or propensity, which arises from one's own nature. [In other words, *dharma* is not determined by birth.]

prāyaḥ svabhāva-vihito
nṛṇām dharmo yuge yuge
veda-dṛgbhiḥ smṛto rājan
pretya ceha ca śarma-kṛt

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.11.31)

O King, *brāhmaṇas* who are well versed in the Vedas recognize that in each age, the *dharma* prescribed in accordance with one's nature is auspicious, both in life and death.

In the various *yugas*, sages who are fully conversant with the Vedas have generally systematized *dharma* according to people's nature. This *dharma* is auspicious for all persons, in both this world and the next. Those who take shelter of their natural tendency (*vṛtti*) and follow their own individual duty (*sva-dharma*) attain, in due

course of time, devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is free from the modes of material nature, after transcending their *karma* according to their acquired nature. Otherwise, if they deviate from their individual duty, they will not be able to make continual advancement. This is the teaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.32):

*vr̥tṭyā svabhāva-kṛtayā
vartamānaḥ sva-karma-kṛt
hitvā svabhāva-jaṁ karma
śanair nirguṇatām iyāt*

A person who maintains his occupational duty (*sva-dharma*) by taking shelter of his innate propensity will gradually become detached from these activities and situated beyond the material modes.

The word *nirguṇatā* in the above verse indicates *bhakti* in accordance with the general use of word *nirguṇa* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*tasmād deham imam labdhvā
jñāna-vijñāna-sambhavam
guṇa-saṅgam vinirdhūya
mām bhajantu vicakṣaṇāḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.33)*

Therefore, having taken birth in the human species, those who possess intelligence, should completely rid themselves of all association with the modes of material nature and perform *bhajana* of Me.

The words *nirguṇam madapāśraya* [spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.25.26] establish that whatever act is performed with *bhakti* is called *nirguṇa*, or transcendental to the modes of material nature.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.34–35) states:

*rajas tamaś cābhijayet
sattva-saṁsevayā muniḥ
sattvaṁ cābhijayed yukto
nairapekṣyeṇa śānta-dhīḥ*

By engaging himself in only the mode of goodness, he shall obtain victory over the modes of passion and ignorance. Then, that wise sage, being established in the performance of *bhakti*, shall obtain victory over even the mode of goodness by neglecting all the modes.

The means to attain the stage of nirguṇa

The four *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*) and the four *āśramas* (*brahmacarya*, *grhastha*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa*) exist in accordance with the above thirty characteristics, as mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.18.42):

*bhikṣor dharmah śamo 'himsā
tapa īkṣā vanaukaśaḥ
grhiṇo bhūta-rakṣejyā
dvijasyācārya-sevanam*

Tranquility (i.e. control of the mind) and non-violence are the *dharma* of a *sannyāsī*, austerity and spiritual understanding are the duties of a *vānaprastha*, giving protection to all living entities and performing sacrificial worship (*yajña*) are the duties of a *grhastha*, and serving one's *guru* is the duty of a *brahmacārī*.

The respective *dharmas* pertaining to the individual *varṇas* are as follows: the *dharmas* of the *brāhmaṇas* are studying, teaching, performing *yajñas*, having others perform *yajñas*, giving in charity and accepting charity. The functions of the *kṣatriyas* are maintaining one's life through protecting the citizens by awarding punishment, taxation, etc. The functions of the *vaiśyas* are farming, rearing cows, engaging in business, etc. And the sole occupation of the *śūdras* is serving the *brāhmaṇas*. The livelihood of those of mixed castes is the current occupation by which their family members maintains themselves.

The regulation to make the mind and body favourable for bhajana

The conclusion of all these principles of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is that *hari-bhajana* is the only objective for the people of this world. However, it is impossible to engage in *bhajana* until the gross and subtle bodies have been made favourable for that. Therefore, the

foremost duty of human beings is to make these two external bodies favourable for *bhajana*. To maintain the gross body, it is necessary to accumulate such things as a house, grains, water and so on. For the subtle body to prosper, true knowledge (*sad-vidyā*) and a righteous mode of conduct (*sad-vṛtti*) are needed. For this reason, it is necessary to adopt a means by which these two necessities can be procured and our *bhagavad-bhajana* can continue.

After the gross and subtle bodies are made completely favourable for *bhakti* and are brought to the state of *nirguṇa* – that is, the state in which they are free from the modes of material nature – this task [of *bhagavad-bhajana*] becomes simple. But how can we bring people to this stage?

There is one solution: whatever nature and desires arise in the living entities as a result of their reaping the fruits of their activities since time immemorial are a mixture of the three modes of material nature: goodness (*sattva*), passion (*raja*) and ignorance (*tama*). It is necessary that one first increase goodness, and by that, subdue passion and ignorance, making goodness the most prominent quality. At that time, one will be led by the mode of goodness (*sattva-guṇa*). When *sattva* is completely under the control of *bhakti*, it becomes transcendental to the modes (*nirguṇa*). In other words, when *sattva-guṇa* is endowed with *bhakti*, it is called *nirguṇa*. By adopting this process, one's body and mind will gradually become favourable for *bhagavad-bhajana*.

The necessity of *varṇāśrama-dharma*

As long as a person still has the qualities and faults of his nature, his primary duty is to observe *varṇāśrama-dharma*. The main purpose of *varṇāśrama-dharma* is to make those who follow it gradually attain the state of *nirguṇa* and thus become qualified for *bhagavad-bhajana*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu quoted the following verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.2–3) to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī:

mukha-bāhūru-pādebhyaḥ
puruṣasyāśramaiḥ saha
catvāro jajñire varṇā
guṇair viprādayaḥ pṛthak

ya eṣāṁ puruṣāṁ sākṣād
 ātma-prabhavam īśvaram
 na bhajanty avajānanti
 sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ

[Śrī Camasa said:] The *brāhmaṇas* came into existence from the face of the primordial Śrī Viṣṇu, the *kṣatriyas* from His arms, the *vaiśyas* from His thighs, and the *sūdras* from His feet. These four *varṇas* were born along with their particular characteristics, as were the four specific *āśramas*. A person living among these *varṇas* and *āśramas* may become intoxicated by his high social position (*varṇa*) and spiritual position (*āśrama*), and fails to worship his worshipful deity, Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu, or even disrespects Him. Such a person falls down from his position in the system of *varṇa* and *āśrama*, loses all his prestige, and takes birth in the lower species.

The purpose of *varṇa* (occupational division) and *āśrama* (stage of life) is for a person to gradually develop and finally come to the point of performing *bhagavad-bhajana*. If even after observing *varṇāśrama-dharma* properly, one does not develop a taste for *bhagavad-bhajana*, this leads to falldown from *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

Śrīla Rāya Rāmānanda cited the following verse to Mahāprabhu regarding the goal (*sādhya*) and the means to attain it (*sādhana*):

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

Viṣṇu Purāṇa (3.8.9)

Śrī Viṣṇu is worshipped only by carrying out one's prescribed duties in *varṇāśrama*. There is no other way to please Him.

In response, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu designated this an external injunction and instructed Śrīla Rāya Rāmānanda to speak a principle higher than this. He is thus insinuating that *varṇāśrama-dharma* is necessary only to regulate the gross and subtle bodies. If a person remains satisfied with the regulations of *varṇāśrama-dharma* and does

not engage in *bhagavad-bhajana*, then his observance of *varṇāśrama-dharma* is useless. Therefore, although for the conditioned souls the process of *varṇāśrama* is favourable for *bhajana* to a certain extent, still, it is an external *sādhana*; it is not the highest and most beneficial *sādhana*:

*dharmah svanuṣṭhitaḥ pumsām
viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratim
śrama eva hi kevalam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.8)

If, even after executing *varṇāśrama-dharma* precisely, a human being does not develop a taste in his heart for hearing and chanting the glories of Śrī Bhagavān and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, his endeavour has been useless labour.

Varṇāśrama is to be followed until the body is given up

From this, one should not conclude that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has ordered us to abandon *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Had this been the case, then during His time as a householder, He would not have instructed the living entities by completely following the principles pertaining to the *grhastha-āśrama*, and during His time as a *sannyāsī*, by following the principles of the *sannyāsa-āśrama*.

As long as one possesses a material body, *varṇāśrama-dharma* must be observed, but in such a way that it remains fully subordinate to *bhakti*. *Varṇāśrama-dharma* is the foundation of *parodharma*, or the supreme occupational duty. When a person's *parodharma* is fully matured and he achieves his goal, he gradually acquires a mood of disregard for the means (that is, the regulations of *varṇāśrama-dharma*) by which he attained his goal. At the time of giving up one's body, the remaining regulations are completely left.

The purport of the second half of the above-mentioned verse quoted by Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya – *viṣṇur ārādhyate panthā nānyat tat-toṣa-kāraṇam* – is that for worldly persons, *varṇāśrama-dharma* is the only way to lead one's life in a way that is favourable for *bhagavad-bhajana*. There is no other method that is both favourable

for *hari-bhajana* and by which one can earn one's livelihood so easily. Therefore, it can be said that observing *varṇāśrama-dharma* is the only way a devotee can make a livelihood.

Varṇa is not determined by birth, but rather by nature

Humans are generally divided into several categories: *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya*, *sūdra*, *saṅkara* (mixed caste) and *antyaja* (outcaste). Although *varṇāśrama-dharma* is not discernible in some countries, it exists there in the form of a bud. A person's nature will be reflected in his tendencies (*vṛtti*) and how he earns his living. To adopt others' tendencies and means of earning a livelihood is harmful. It may even cause huge obstacles to appear on the path of *hari-bhajana*. But a question arises here: how can the *varṇa* of a person be ascertained? How can his *dharma*, his means of earning a livelihood, and other such considerations be properly established as long as his *varṇa* has not been correctly determined? Nowadays, *varṇa* is generally decided according to birth, but such a method is not in compliance with the scriptures and is illogical. The proper method is to determine one's *varṇa* according to one's nature (*svabhāva*). This method has been established by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.35) in clear words:

*yasya yal lakṣaṇam proktaṁ
puṁso varṇābhivyāñjakam
yad anyatrāpi dr̥ṣyeta
tat tenaiva vinirdīśet*

It is to be understood that a person belongs to that *varṇa* for which his natural characteristics are symptomatic, even if he has taken birth in different *varṇa*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī comments on the above-mentioned verse:

*śamādibhir eva brāhmaṇādi-vyavahāro mukhyaḥ, na jāti-
mātrādity āha—yasyeti | yad yadi anyatra varṇāntare 'pi dr̥ṣyeta
tad-varṇāntaram tenaiva lakṣaṇa-nimittenaiva varṇena vinirdīśet,
na tu jāti-nimittenty arthaḥ |*

The characteristics of *brāhmaṇas*, such as self-control, are the most important factor [in determining their *varṇa*], not just birth. This

is expressed in the above *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse beginning with *yasya*. If this conduct is found in a person of a different *varṇa*, he is to be designated a *brāhmaṇa* on the basis of that characteristic.

This type of eternal *varṇāśrama-dharma* should always be followed. It is generally useful and it is favourable for *bhakti*. Those in the four *varṇas* and the *śaṅkara-varṇa* (persons outside the four *varṇas*) must endeavour to increase their *sāttvika* nature. When good fortune arises for a person belonging to the classes outside Vedic culture, he will, as a result of his previous *sukṛti*, follow the conduct befitting the *śūdra-varṇa* (artisans and labourers) and develop the mode of goodness.

Everyone should associate with *sādhus* and thus make *bhakti* the prime concern of life, transforming the mode of goodness that has been cultivated into a state of transcendence to the modes (*nirguṇa*). This is the only way to gradually progress in *sanātana-dharma*. The presence of *bhakti* makes the people of all castes superior even to *brāhmaṇas*. But in the absence of *bhakti*, even a *brāhmaṇa*'s life has no value.

It is necessary for us to adopt the behaviour of our previous *mahājanas*. But there is one matter worthy of special consideration: Among the many past and present *ṛṣi* and *maharṣi* preceptors, whose behaviour should be followed? One *mahātmā* has said that the path of the *mahājanas* should be traversed after examining all of its aspects, both future and past.

The conclusion is that it is appropriate to adopt the conduct of recent *mahājanas* after examining the previous and other recent *mahājanas*. For example, before the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, there were many *ṛṣi* and *maharṣi mahājanas* whose behaviour was considered to be the behaviour of the previous *mahājanas*. The behaviour of the *mahātmās* who have come since the appearance of Śrīman Mahāprabhu is considered the behaviour of the recent *mahājanas*. Therefore, it is the behaviour of the recent *mahājanas* that is superior and worthy of being followed. The conduct of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and the devotees who follow Him, which they practised in order to instruct the living entities, should be thoroughly followed by all.

The behaviour and conduct of gṛhasthas

What is *sad-vṛtti*, or proper behaviour? The conduct of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His *bhaktas* is the ideal example by which we can properly understand this. For this reason, their conduct is briefly described below:

(a) In relation to marriage and the maintenance of a family

A householder, along with his wife, is to practise *bhagavad-bhajana* while performing whatever worldly duties are favourable for *bhajana*. Sons and daughters born in the course of following such worldly duties should be nourished and protected and accepted as Kṛṣṇa's servants and maidservants. Because money is required for maintaining a family, it should be collected through suitable means that are lawful and in accordance with *dharma*.

(b) In relation to knowledge and education

It is necessary to be educated at an appropriate age, but the study of books or scriptures that are averse to Kṛṣṇa should not be undertaken. The purpose of knowledge is to enter *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*, not to acquire money or prestige.

(c) In relation to serving guests

Serving guests is the primary responsibility of householders, and they are to be honoured in accordance with one's capacity and without duplicity. Guests are of two types: ordinary guests and devotee guests. Being fully conversant with the difference between them, one should appropriately honour ordinary guests and affectionately serve devotee guests.

(d) In relation to virtuous qualities

Householders ought to behave with everyone in a simple manner and without duplicity. In this way, they should always perform *bhagavad-bhajana*.

The foremost duty of householders is to serve their *guru-jana* (superiors and spiritual masters), for by doing this, Bhagavān is

satisfied. They are to receive instructions on *vairāgya-dharma*, or the duties of a renunciant, but they must not adopt the dress of a renunciant and deceitfully act as if they are renounced. Renunciation must be genuine, not artificial. A householder is to maintain firm faith in *bhakti* and accept only those sense objects that are required to maintain his life according to his needs, while remaining unattached to them. Internally, it is necessary to endeavour to allow the immaculate current of *bhakti* to flow, while externally continuing to behave according to social customs. By doing so, one can attain the mercy of Bhagavān within a short time.

It is necessary for all householders to possess the quality of being compassionate to others. Among all the types of compassion in this world, engaging the living entities in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* is topmost. Householders will themselves engage in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and also endeavour to bring others to this path. The foremost way to bring others to this path is to instruct them to constantly chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Detrimental association (*ku-saṅga*) should always be avoided. In the association of pure devotees, one is to hear and chant Bhagavān's names forms, qualities and pastimes. But *bhakti* is spoiled by participating in the *kīrtana* of non-devotees. By doing so, the bondage of material existence tightens even more.

(e) *Gṛhasthas* are to be completely dependent upon the desire of Bhagavān.

(f) They should take special care to renounce the association of non-devotees, women, and those who are overly fond of women.

(g) *Sad-gṛhasthas*, or householders who properly and sincerely follow the path of *bhakti*, are to chant 100,000 names (one *lākha*) of *harināma* every day. Pure Vaiṣṇavas will honour *prasāda* only at the house of such householders.

(h) Knowing the difference between pure Vaiṣṇavas and *smārtas* [*brāhmaṇas* who rigidly adhere to the *smṛti-śāstras*, which codify religious behaviour], householders are to serve the pure Vaiṣṇavas affectionately. Although there is no external difference between the activities of pure Vaiṣṇavas and *smārtas*, there is a gulf of difference in

their inner faith. Hence, to consider them both in the same category will lead to degradation. It is necessary, therefore, for a householder to properly understand this and interact with them accordingly.

The true dharma of householders

While speaking about the true duty of householders, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:

*prabhu kahen,—‘kṛṣṇa-sevā’, ‘vaiṣṇava-sevana’
‘nirantara karo kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana’*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.104)

This means that the actual duty (*dharma*) of householders is to maintain one’s body by collecting whatever money is necessary through lawful means and, with the help of family members, serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas and engage in the constant performance of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. Regarding the service of Vaiṣṇavas, it should be known that non-duplicitous (*niṣkapaṭa*) Vaiṣṇavas are of three types: (1) *uttama* – advanced, (2) *madhyama* – intermediary and (3) *kaniṣṭha* – neophyte. Service to these three types of Vaiṣṇavas is alone *vaiṣṇava-sevā*. It is improper to invite a gathering of Vaiṣṇavas. Whenever a Vaiṣṇava comes, he should be affectionately served in an appropriate manner. If one assembles many Vaiṣṇavas, the chances of making offences are greater:

*bahuta sannyāsī jadi āise eka ṭhāi
sammāna korite nāri, aparādha pāi*

Śrī Caitanya-caitāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.197)

If many *sannyāsīs* come together in one place, all of them cannot be honoured and offences will be committed.

It is the duty of householder Vaiṣṇavas to be merciful toward the wretched and distressed, who are to never attempt suicide, whether out of anger or with the aim of attaining a virtuous goal. Suicide is an act in the mode of ignorance, and as long the quality of ignorance is dominant in a person, he is unqualified to receive the mercy of Bhagavān.

In the realm of *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*, the consideration of junior and senior exists, but not caste and familial lineage. In worldly *dharma*, the qualification to perform certain activities is in accordance with one's *varṇa*, but there are no such distinctions in relation to *bhagavad-bhajana*.

*nīca-jāti nahe kṛṣṇa-bhajane ajogya
sat-kula-vipra nahe bhajanera jogya
jei bhaje, sei baḍo, abhakta—hīna, chāra
kṛṣṇa-bhajane nāhi jāti-kulādi-vicāra
Śrī Caitanya-caitāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.66–67)*

Birth in a low family is no disqualification for the execution of *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. And birth in a family of *brāhmaṇas* is no qualification for it. Anyone who performs *bhajana* is exalted, whereas one who does not is condemned and abominable. In the discharge of *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*, there is no consideration of the status of one's family lineage or socio-cultural background.

Gṛhastha Vaiṣṇavas should be satisfied with whatever they have secured with little endeavour for their daily requirements:

*sabā haite bhāgyavanta—śrī-śāka, vyañjana
punaḥ punaḥ jāhā prabhu karena grahaṇa
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Antya-khaṇḍa 4.293)*

Most fortunate of all the preparations were the spinach and vegetables, because the Lord accepted them again and again.

Knowing Kṛṣṇa to be Sarveśvara, or the Master of all, householder Vaiṣṇavas are to eagerly perform one-pointed *bhagavad-bhajana*. Additionally, they must not disrespect the demigods worshipped by *smārtas* and other philosophical schools (*sampradāyas*).

To act with compassion even at the cost of giving up self-interest is the duty of householders

Householder Vaiṣṇavas should faithfully serve *tulasī* and chant *harīnāma* while keeping *tulasī* nearby.

Householders who possess *bhakti* are praiseworthy, whereas householders who do not are unfortunate. When householders have worldly dealings, they do so while taking shelter of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. In this regard, the character of a *mahājana* named Kālīdāsa is exemplary:

*mahā-bhāgavata tēho sarala udāra
kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkete cālāya vyavahāra*

*kautukete tēho jadi pāśaka khelāya
'hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa' kori' pāśaka cālāya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 16.6–7)

Kālīdāsa, being a most exalted devotee, was simple and munificent. He would chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* in his normal dealings. As a joke, he would throw dice and exclaim, “Hare Kṛṣṇa! Hare Kṛṣṇa!”

No Vaiṣṇava should earn unlawfully or spend wastefully. Those who are employed should not accept bribes.

Householders are to accept a guru endowed with *bhakti* and ideal character

Householders must always be careful to perform activities through which offences in service (*sevā-aparādha*) will not arise. If one commits an *aparādha* to a Vaiṣṇava because of the influence of illusion, then one should fall at the feet of that Vaiṣṇava and immediately beg for forgiveness, otherwise the result of that *aparādha* will be terrible.

The primary activity of householders is to serve devotees, for serving devotees increases one’s *bhakti*:

*bhakta-pada-dhūli, āra bhakta-pada-jala
bhakta-bhukta-avaśeṣa,—ei tina sādhaner bala*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 16.60)

The dust of the lotus feet of devotees, the water that washes their lotus feet and their remnant *prasāda* give immense strength to the *sādhakas* in their practice of *bhakti*.

The duty of householders before becoming completely dedicated devotees

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.27–28), Śrī Kṛṣṇa has spoken about how a householder devotee is to behave as long as he is not completely dedicated and his desires for sense gratification have not been thoroughly destroyed:

*jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu
nirviṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān
parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ*

*tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ
śraddhālur dṛḍha-nīścayaḥ
juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān
duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan*

A *sādhaka* who has developed faith in narrations about Me, and who is disgusted with all kinds of fruitive activity, may still be unable to give up material enjoyment and the desire for such enjoyment. Knowing that such so-called pleasures are actually sources of misery, he should condemn himself while attempting to enjoy them. Thereafter, in due course of time, he may be able to worship Me with love, faith and fixed determination.

After developing faith (*śraddhā*), a householder is to accept initiation into *kṛṣṇa-mantra*, because only the faithful are qualified to become devotees. They must possess the following twenty-six qualities:

*kṛpālu, akṛta-droha, satya-sāra sama
nirdoṣa, vadānya, mṛdu, śuci, akiñcana
sarvopakāraka, śānta, kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa
akāma, nirīha, sthira, vijita-śaḍ-guṇa
mita-bhuk, apramatta, mānada, amānī
gambhīra, karuṇa, maitra, kavi, dakṣa, maunī*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.78-80)

Vaiṣṇavas are merciful, not obstinate, completely truthful, non-biased, without fault, benevolent, even-tempered, clean and possessionless. They work to bring about the auspiciousness of all and are peaceful, surrendered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, without material desires, indifferent to material gain and steady. They have conquered the six material qualities (lust, anger, greed, etc.), they eat only as much as they require and they are sober, respectful, without false prestige, grave, compassionate, friendly, poetic, masterful and silent.

Householder Vaiṣṇavas should associate with *sādhus*, because *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* is manifested and nourished in such association.

Although *sādhana-bhakti* consists of sixty-four limbs, and one ought to follow those limbs according to one's capacity, an effort must be made to specifically follow ninefold devotional service (*navadhā-bhakti*) and fivefold devotional service (*pañcadhā-bhakti*):

sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana
sakala-sādhana-śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga
kṛṣṇa-prema janmāy ei pāñcer alpa saṅga

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.128, 129)

One is to associate with devotees, chant *harināma*, hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, reside in Mathurā-maṇḍala and serve the deity with great faith. Of all the types of *sādhana*, these five limbs are best, for even slightly performing one of them awakens *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

One is to gradually diminish his state of performing *vaidhī-bhakti* and enter *rāgānuga-bhakti*. After deep attachment to Bhagavān has manifested, many *vidhis* (rules) go far away of their own accord. In that stage, there is no need to perform purificatory activities or any other such things. Although the mind of a person who has entered *rāga-mārga* is never inclined to perform sinful acts, if by chance he does so due to the influence of ignorance, Bhagavān will mercifully purify him.

Householders should endeavour for *jñāna* that is related to *bhakti* or for *vairāgya* that is caused by *bhakti* and not for any other *jñāna* or *vairāgya*.

*jñāna-vairāgyādi bhaktir kabhu nahe aṅga
ahiṁsā-yama-niyamādi bule kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅga*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.145)

Jñāna and *vairāgya* are not limbs of *bhakti*. Non-violence, control of the mind and senses, the observance of certain regulations and so on are intrinsically present in *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*.

Householder Vaiṣṇavas must give up the ten types of *nāma-aparādha* and constantly chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* with faith. By this, one achieves *kṛṣṇa-prema*:

*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-līlā 4.70–71)

Among all forms of *bhajana*, the nine limbs of *bhakti* are best, for they have the great power to bestow both *kṛṣṇa-prema* and Kṛṣṇa. Among the nine processes of *bhakti*, chanting *harināma* is foremost. If one chants without committing any offences, one easily receives the treasure of pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

Householders should cultivate pure *bhakti* and not depend entirely on following the regulations of their individual *dharma*. *Bhakti* is not attained by remaining purely dependent on drinking milk or eating fruits. Rather, *Bhakti-devī* manifests by respectfully cultivating pure *bhakti*.

Householders must not possess the conception of being *brahma* (the featureless aspect of the Absolute) or *Bhagavān* (the Supreme Personality of Godhead), for this conception is offensive. The living entity is the servant of *Bhagavān*, not *Bhagavān* Himself.

Householder Vaiṣṇavas should follow the character of *Mahāprabhu* and His householder devotees. Whatever is done to achieve loving affection for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prīti*) is topmost, and all activities performed to fulfil desires other than the desire to please Kṛṣṇa will only strengthen material bondage. For devotees, remaining

as householders or renouncing their home is one and the same. Rāya Rāmānanda, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, Śivānanda Sena, Satyarāja Khān and Śrī Advaita Prabhu perfectly exemplified how to live as householders and follow the path of pure *bhakti*.

The only difference between householders and renunciants is how they maintain their life. If the *grhastha-āśrama* is favourable for one's *bhajana*, then it is inappropriate to renounce one's home. Adopting a mood of detachment, one should remain a householder. A householder devotee receives the eligibility to renounce his home when that home becomes unfavourable for *bhagavad-bhajana*. At that time, whatever detachment (*vairāgya*) arises is true detachment and is favourable for *bhakti*. With this consideration alone in mind, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita did not leave his home, and Svarūpa Dāmodara accepted *sannyāsa*. We can see this consideration in the life of all devotees. Those who have left their homes with this consideration in mind have advanced in the realm of *sādhana* very quickly.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu instructed Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī on the behaviour of renunciant Vaiṣṇavas. These instructions must be followed by each and every renunciant Vaiṣṇava:

*vairāgī koribe sadā nāma-saṅkīrtana
māgiyā khāiyā kare jīvana rakṣaṇa
vairāgī haiyā jebā kare parāpekṣā
kārya-siddhi nahe, kṛṣṇa karena upekṣā
vairāgī haiyā kare jihvāra lālasa
paramārtha jāya, āra haya rasera vaśa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 6.223–225)

A renunciant *sādhū* should ceaselessly chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* and maintain his life by begging alms. It is necessary for him to be independent, for without being independent, he cannot attain perfection in anything. Even Kṛṣṇa neglects those who are dependent on others. One should protect oneself from becoming eager to taste palatable food, because through this the *sādhaka* is controlled by taste, which in turn destroys his *bhajana*.

śāka-patra-phala-mūle udara bharāṇa
jihvāra lālase jei iti-uti dhāya
śiśnodara-parāyāna kṛṣṇa nāhi pāya
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 6.226–227)

One is to maintain one's body with vegetables, greens, fruits and roots and always chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Those who neglect this run here and there in order to satisfy their tongue. Such persons, being devoted to the genitals and tongue, can never attain Kṛṣṇa.

grāmya-kathā nā śunibe, grāmya-vārtā nā kahibe
bhālo nā khāibe āra bhālo nā paribe
amānī mānada haiyā kṛṣṇa-nāma sadā labe
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā mānase koribe
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 6.236–237)

Renunciant Vaiṣṇavas should neither hear nor speak gossip (*grāmya-kathā*), nor should they eat palatable foods or wear fine clothes. Not expecting any respect for themselves, they should offer respect to others while constantly chanting the name of Bhagavān with *prema* and serving Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa within their mind.

A *sannyāsī* should never reside in the same village as his family members. It is strictly prohibited for them to see men and women who are attached to sense objects. They ought not to have any contact or conversations with women, even by mistake. Śrīman Mahāprabhu gives instruction on this topic is as follows:

prabhu kahe,—vairāgī kare prakṛti sambhāṣaṇa
dekhite nā pārō āmi tāhāra vadana
durvāra indriya kare viśaya-grahaṇa
dāru prakṛti hare munerapi mana
kṣudra-jīva saba markāṭa-vairāgya koriyā
indriya carāiyā bule 'prakṛti' sambhāṣiyā
prabhu kahe,—mora vaśa nahe mora mana
prakṛti-sambhāṣī vairāgī nā kare darśana
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 2.117, 118, 120, 124)

*āmi to' sannyāsī, āpanāre virakta kori' māni
darśaa dūre, 'prakṛti'ra nāma jadi śuni
tabahi vikāra pāya mora tanu-mana
prakṛti-darśane sthira haya kon jana?*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 5.35–36)

The purport is that *sādhus* who have accepted renunciation should not converse or have any other type of dealings with women. The senses are very powerful and always want to enjoy sense objects, one way or another. If the mind of great *ṛṣis* and *munis* becomes restless by even looking at the form of a woman made of stone, wood or any other material, then what is the effect of actually associating with women intimately? There is no need to discuss this. Wearing the dress of a *sādhū* and adopting the renunciation of a monkey (*markaṭa-vairāgya*), the extremely fallen living entity, being devoid of *sādhana* and *bhajana*, remains busy speaking with women in order to satisfy his senses. Who can keep his mind steady upon seeing a woman?

Sannyāsīs are not to beg alms from the houses of persons engrossed in sense enjoyment (*viśayīs*), for by doing so, the consciousness becomes contaminated, and one can never perform *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with an impure consciousness.

It is improper for a renunciant Vaiṣṇava to construct a *maṭha*, meeting place or any other such building, because by doing so, household behaviour will again arise within him. It is desirable for him to be absorbed in remembering Kṛṣṇa while worshipping a *govardhana-śilā* and so forth in a simple manner.

*eka kūñjā jala, āra tulasī-mañjarī
sāttvika-sevā ei—śuddha-bhāve kori
dui dike dui patra madhye komala mañjarī
ei mata aṣṭa-mañjarī dibe śraddhā kori*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 6.296–297)

For such worship, a jug of water and the soft blossom of the *tulasi* plant is needed. When performed with heart, this service is in the mode of goodness. The blossoms should have leaves on each side of the flower. In this way, you should offer eight blossoms with faith.

In special situations, devotees can accept *sannyāsa* in accordance with the regulations prescribed for *varṇāśrama-dharma* (*vaidha-sannyāsa*). There is no rule that everyone must follow this system [of accepting *vaidha-sannyāsa*]. At the time of retiring from household life, Vaiṣṇavas born in a *brāhmaṇa* family can accept *vaidha-sannyāsa* according to their *āśrama*, but not that portion that is unfavourable for *bhakti*.

Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs* must not accept the dress of Māyāvādīs and must always avoid bad association. They are not to use oil or any objects used in luxurious living, and they should remain far from the singing and dancing of women.

The singing of women and Mahāprabhu's ideal

One day, Śrīman Mahāprabhu was heading to Yameśvara Garden in Purī. Some distance from the road, a local village girl was sweetly singing a beautiful verse from the divine poem *Gīta-govinda* by Śrī Jayadeva, the renowned bard. The verse contained a charming and sweet description of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form, and the girl's voice was like the singing of a cuckoo bird. Mahāprabhu became agitated in *prema* upon hearing that song, completely oblivious to whether it was sung by a man or woman. Intoxicated by transcendental *bhāvas*, He anxiously ran to embrace the person who was pouring nectar into His ears. With great eagerness, He ran straight toward the source of the sound, paying no attention to the path. Thorny bushes cut His entire body till it bled, and thorns pierced His feet, but still He continued running. Seeing this, Govinda ran closely behind Him. Before Mahāprabhu reached the *deva-dāsi*¹, Govinda caught hold of Him and said, "Prabhu, it is a woman singing! Where are You going?"

Upon hearing "woman", Mahāprabhu came to external consciousness. He returned from that place, and in a voice trembling with gratitude, He said, "Govinda! Today you have saved Me. If I had touched that woman, even out of forgetfulness, My life air would certainly have left this body. I am eternally indebted to you for this favour."

1 A woman whose profession is to sing and dance for Lord Jagannātha in the Purī temple.

The conclusion is that renunciant Vaiṣṇavas should remain far from intimately associating with women.

The eating and sleeping of a renunciant Vaiṣṇava

In the days of His concluding pastimes, Śrī Mahāprabhu was absorbed day and night in the same mood of separation that the distressed *viyoginī* Śrīmatī Rādhikā was absorbed in when Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā. His renunciation reached its utmost pinnacle. He was oblivious to hunger and thirst, and day and night, streams of tears would flow from His eyes. His body, which was softer than a flower, had become dry like a thorn. Devotees were greatly aggrieved to see His extremely emaciated body lying on dried banana leaves. But who could say anything to Him?

Jagadānanda was one of Mahāprabhu's *premī-bhaktas*. He would feel great pain upon witnessing Him perform such severe austerities. Finally, he bought a beautiful piece of cloth from the market and had it dyed saffron. He then had a comfortable mattress and pillow made with it. He stuffed them with cotton and gave them to Govinda, saying, "Brother! Lay these out before Mahāprabhu."

Govinda reluctantly did so. As soon as Mahāprabhu saw a mattress and pillow, He ordered Govinda to immediately throw them out. He angrily told Svarūpa Dāmodara, "All of you are determined to destroy My *dharma*. Jagadānanda desires for Me to enjoy sense objects, despite My being a *sannyāsī*. Today a mattress and pillow are required, and tomorrow a bed will be required. The day after that, a masseur will be needed to rub My feet and massage Me with oil. This does not befit a *sannyāsī*. All a *sannyāsī* needs is some simple food to maintain his body. And for sleeping, the earthen ground is sufficient. None of you should do anything to spoil My *sannyāsa-dharma*." Everyone became silent.

But Jagadānanda was discontented. He consulted with Svarūpa Dāmodara, and the following day, he gathered some dried banana leaves, which he tore into small pieces with his nails. He then stuffed them into a thin mattress and into a pillow case that had been made from Mahāprabhu's clothing. After many requests and prayers, Mahāprabhu agreed to use them.

In this way, each and every activity of Mahāprabhu is exemplary for renunciant Vaiṣṇavas.

The necessity for both householders and renunciants to accept initiation into kṛṣṇa-nāma and kṛṣṇa-mantra, and the necessity of accepting a guru

Now the proper conduct (*sad-vṛtti*) for Vaiṣṇavas, whether householder or renunciant, is being explained. There is no religious duty in this Kali-yuga other than the chanting of *śrī kṛṣṇa-mantra* and *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Hence, it is extremely necessary for all to accept initiation (*dīkṣā*) into *śrī kṛṣṇa-mantra*:

*kṛṣṇa-mantra haite ha'be saṁsāra-mocana
kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pā'be kṛṣṇera caraṇa
nāma binā kali-kāle nāhi āra dharma
sarva-mantra-sāra nāma,—ei śāstra-marma*

*kṛṣṇa-nāme je ānanda-sindhu-āsvādana
brahmānanda tā'ra āge khātodaka-sama*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.73, 74, 97)

*sadā nāma la'be, jathā-lābhetē santoṣa
ei-mata ācār kare, bhakti-dharma-poṣa*

*jñāna-karma-yoga-dharme nahe kṛṣṇa vasa
kṛṣṇa-vaśa-hetu eka—prema-bhakti-rasa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 17.30, 75)

This means that *kṛṣṇa-mantra* destroys material bondage, and through *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, one attains the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is the essence of all *mantras*. The bliss of attaining the impersonal *brahma* is but a drop compared to the bliss attained upon accepting shelter of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Therefore, being satisfied with whatever one gets to maintain one's life, one ought to constantly perform *kīrtana* of *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Following in this way, one must also propagate *bhakti-dharma*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot be controlled by *jñāna-yoga*, *karma-yoga* or other processes; He can only be controlled through *prema-bhakti*.

In regard to accepting a guru, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 8.128, 221, 229) mentions:

*kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
 jei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei guru haya
 rāgānuga-mārgē tā're bhaje jei jana
 sei jana pāya vraje vrajendra-nandana
 siddha-dehe cinti' kare tāhāi sevana
 sakhī-bhāve pāya rādhā-kṛṣṇera caraṇa*

One who thoroughly knows *kṛṣṇa-tattva* and performs *bhajana* of Kṛṣṇa through *rāga-mārga* is alone a bona fide *guru*, be that person a *brāhmaṇa*, *sannyāsī* or *śūdra*. By performing *bhajana* under the guidance of such a bona fide *guru*, one will very quickly attain service to Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. A *sādhaka* who, at the time of *sādhana*, meditates upon and serves according to his *siddha-rūpa* – that is, knowing himself to be a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā – very quickly attains the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the mood of a *sakhī*.

The necessity for grhasthas and tyāgīs to give up bad association

The *sādhaka* must always associate with a *sādhū* who is *svajātīya-āsaya-snigdha*, or one who is affectionately disposed toward him, of the same mood for which he aspires, and more advanced. In his discussion with Rāya Rāmānanda Prabhu, Śrīman Mahāprabhu asked, “*śreyo-madhye kona śreyah jīver haya sāra?* – of the many types of good fortune in this world, which is best?” Rāya Rāmānanda replied, “*kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅga binā śreyah nāhi āra* – there is no good fortune other than the association of *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 8.251).

No association other than the association of a devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is beneficial. For association to qualify as *saṅga*, the following considerations are applicable.

One is not to associate with a Vaiṣṇava who has a faulty conception of *siddhānta*, even if he is within one of the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*. This point is worthy of consideration. When Śrīman Mahāprabhu

spoke in Uḍupī with the then current *ācārya* of the Madhvācārya *sampradāya*, He said:

*prabhu kahe,—karmī, jñānī—dui bhakti-hīna
tomār sampradāye dekhi sei dui cihna*

*sabe eka guṇa dekhi tomāra sampradāye
'satya-vigraha īśvare' karaho niścaye*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 9.276–277)

Both *karmīs* and *jñānīs* are bereft of *bhakti*, and I am observing these symptoms present in your *sampradāya*. Your *sampradāya* has one virtue: it accepts the deity form of Bhagavān.

It is inappropriate to stay in a place where there is apparent *rasābhāsa* (an inappropriate combination of mellows) and opposition to the principles of *bhakti*:

*bhakti-siddhānta-viruddha, āra rasābhāsa
śunite nā haya prabhur cittera ullāsa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 10.113)

In other words, if any person desired to recite to Mahāprabhu a verse or song they had written, Svarūpa Dāmodara would first examine that composition and decide whether or not Mahāprabhu would be satisfied to hear it. This is because Mahāprabhu would become unhappy upon hearing anything that contained *rasābhāsa* or which was against the principles of *bhakti*.

The necessity for both householders and renunciants to be compassionate to others and serve sādhus

One is to constantly endeavour to imbibe all the good qualities necessary to perform *bhajana*. The behaviour of Vaiṣṇavas has been described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 7.72)*:

*mahānubhāvera citter svabhāva ei haya
puṣpa-maya komala, kaṭhina vajra-maya*

The heart of a Vaiṣṇava is soft like a flower and hard like a thunderbolt.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 8.39) has also described their compassion:

*mahānta-svabhāva ei—tārite pāmara
nija kārya nāhi tabu jāna tā'ra ghara*

It is the nature of *mahāpuruṣas* (great personalities) to visit the homes of the fallen for the sake of delivering them. In doing this, they do not possess even the slightest tinge of selfishness.

How a vow should be taken:

*prabhu kahe,—kaho tumi, nāhi kichu bhaya
jogyā haile koribo, ajogyā haile naya*
Śrī Caitanya-caitāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 11.4)

[After Sarvabhauma pleaded with the Lord to bestow mercy upon King Pratāprudra] Mahāprabhu said, “Do not be afraid. Speak. I will do it if it is possible, otherwise not.”

One should deal affectionately with Vaiṣṇavas, for by this Kṛṣṇa is satisfied:

*prabhu kahe,—tumi kṛṣṇa-bhakata-pradhāna
tomāke je prīti kare, sei bhāgyavān*
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 11.26)

Mahāprabhu said, “You are chief among the devotees of Kṛṣṇa. One who is affectionate to you is most fortunate.”

The mood of strong determination of a devotee who is endowed with loving attachment to the Lord has been described as follows:

*kintu anurāgī loker svabhāva eka haya
iṣṭa nā pāile nija prāṇa se chādaya*
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 12.31)

[Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu said to Śrīman Mahāprabhu:] The nature of devotees endowed with loving attachment is such that they are willing to give up their body if they are unable to attain their worshipful object.

Giving instructions only after practising them oneself and the necessity of purity of heart

Instructing others through good character:

*tumi bhālo koriyācho, sikhāho anyere
ei-mata bhālo karma seho jeno kare*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 12.117)

[Mahāprabhu said:] You have performed very good service. Teach the same to others, and through this they, also, will come to serve nicely.

It is necessary to make earnest efforts in *bhajana* and *sādhana*:

jatnāgraha binā bhakti nā janmāya preme

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 24.171)

Kṛṣṇa-prema can never arise without making special efforts in *bhajana-sādhana*.

The association of logicians is to be completely given up:

*tārkika-śṛgāla-saṅge bheu bheu kori
sei mukhe ebe sadā kahi 'kṛṣṇa hari'*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 12.183)

[When by the mercy of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the heart of Sarvabhauma Bhattācārya was transformed and he became blissful due to *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, he said:] I was howling like a jackal in the association of logicians; I was wasting my time in useless logic and argument. But now, with the same mouth, I am constantly chanting the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Hari.

Feeling distress upon witnessing the distress of others:

*jīver duḥkha dekhi' mora hṛdaya bidare
sarva-jīver pāpa prabhu deho' mora śire*

*jīver pāpa laiya mui karō naraka bhoga
sakala jīvera, prabhu, ghucāho bhava-roga*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.162–163)

[Vāsudeva Datta Ṭhākura prayed to Śrīman Mahāprabhu:]
Prabhu! My heart breaks upon seeing the miseries of these living entities. I therefore pray that You give all their sins to me. I will suffer in hell on their behalf, and You please destroy their disease of material existence.

The necessity of possessing a pure heart:

*sahaje nirmala ei 'brāhmaṇa'-hrdaya
kṛṣṇera bosite ei jogya sthāna haya
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.274)*

[Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] O *brāhmaṇa*, the heart of a *brāhmaṇa* is naturally pure; it is an appropriate place for Kṛṣṇa to sit.

It is necessary to give up the fault of enviousness

It is necessary to give up the tendency to be irritated upon witnessing the advancement of others:

*mātsarya-caṇḍāla kene ihā bosāilā
parama pavitra sthāna apavitra kailā
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 15.275)*

You have made the *caṇḍāla* (outcaste) of envy sit in this place, which is suitable for Kṛṣṇa. By doing so, this very pure place has become contaminated.

The devotees' firm faith in Mahāprabhu:

*prabhu lāgi' dharma-karma chāḍe bhakta-gaṇa
bhakta-dharma-hāni prabhur nā haya sahana
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 16.148)*

Devotees give up all types *dharma* and *karma* for Mahāprabhu. Moreover, the Lord cannot tolerate any harm caused to the *dharma* of His devotees.

It is of vital importance to completely give up faults:

*se kene rākhibe tomāra śeṣa viṣaya-bhoga?
roga khaṇḍi' sad-vaidya nā rākhe śeṣa roga
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 20.91)*

[Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] Sanātana! Why have you kept this insignificant quilt when Kṛṣṇa has made you renounce all sense objects? A qualified doctor treats a disease at the very root and does not allow even a trace of it to remain.

Faith, surrender and non-partisanship are essential

It is necessary to have faith in the principles of *bhakti*:

*‘śraddhā’-śabde—‘viśvāsa’ kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.62)

The meaning of the word *śraddhā* is to have the firm determination, or firm faith, that all obligatory activities (*karma*) are performed simply by performing *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

The necessity of surrender (*śaraṇāgati*):

*śaraṇa lai yā kare kṛṣṇe ātma-samarpaṇa
kṛṣṇa tāre kare tat-kāle ātma-sama*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.102)

When a person surrenders at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by taking shelter at the lotus feet of *śrī guru*, Kṛṣṇa quickly accepts him as one of His own.

The repentant abandonment of wickedness:

*paramārtha-vicār gelo, kori mātra vāda
kāhā mui pā’bo, kāhā kṛṣṇera prasāda*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 25.43)

My spiritual discernment – my faith in Bhagavān – has been destroyed by unnecessary argument. How will I attain Kṛṣṇa’s mercy now?

Indifference [to materiality] is always necessary:

‘nirapekṣa’ nahile ‘dharma’ nā jāya rakṣaṇe

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.23)

One cannot protect *dharma* without becoming indifferent.

It is appropriate to be afraid of committing *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*:

*mahāntera apamāna je deśa-grāme haya
eka janāra doṣe saba grāma ujāḍaya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.164)

As a result of one person's offence alone, the country or place where Vaiṣṇavas are offended is destroyed.

It is imperative to forgive:

bhakta-svabhāva,—ajña-doṣa kṣamā kare

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.213)

It is the nature of devotees to forgive the faults of the ignorant.

dīne dayā kare—ei sādhu-svabhāva haya

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.237)

It is the nature of *sādhus* to be merciful to the fallen.

*prabhu bole,—vipra saba dambha parihari'
bhaja giyā kṛṣṇa, sarva-bhūte dayā kori'*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 13.182)

Mahāprabhu said: O *brāhmaṇa*! Give up all kinds of pride and perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*.

It is essential to follow the principles oneself, preach to others and honour the Vaiṣṇavas

It is the duty [of every *sādhaka*] to first practise *bhakti* himself and then preach it:

*'ācāra', 'pracāra' nāmer karaho 'dui' kārya
tumi—sarva-guru, tumi—jagatera ārya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.103)

[Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] “Haridāsa! You are practising and preaching, both. Therefore, you are most exalted in this world and are a spiritual master for the whole world.

It is imperative to maintain moral conduct:

*tathāpi bhakta-svabhāva—maryādā-rakṣaṇa
maryādā-pālana haya sādharma bhūṣaṇa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.130)

Yet it is the nature of devotees to maintain proper religious and moral conduct, which is like an ornament for them.

It is necessary to regard Vaiṣṇavas as being situated on the transcendental platform:

*prabhu kahe,—vaiṣṇava-deha ‘prākṛta’ kabhu naya
‘aprākṛta’ deha bhakter ‘cid-ānanda-maya’*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.191)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu said: The body of a Vaiṣṇava is never material; it is transcendental and full of spiritual bliss.

The duty of everyone is to give up sense objects, prestige and gossip, and serve Bhagavān

It is essential to conclude all of one’s material activities and engage oneself in worship in solitude (*nirjana-bhajana*):

*eka-vatsar rūpa-gosāir gauḍe vilamba hailo
kuṭumbera sthiti-artha vibhāga kori’ dilo*

gauḍe je artha chilo, tāhā ānāilā

kuṭumba-brāhmaṇa-devālaye bāṭi’ dilā

saba manaḥ-kathā gosāi kori’ nirvāhana

nīscinta haiyā śighra āilā vṛndāvana

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.214–216)

Before coming to Vṛndāvana, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī distributed among his family members, the *brāhmaṇas* and temples, all the wealth he had accumulated. After attending to and concluding these concerns, he quickly became free from anxiety and came to Vṛndāvana.

It is necessary to abandon the desire for prestige:

*mahānubhavera ei sahaja 'svabhāva' haya
āpanāra guṇa nāhi āpane kahaya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 5.78)

The nature of Vaiṣṇavas is that they do not praise themselves.

It is necessary to not revere mundane literary compositions:

*grāmya-kavir kavitva śunite haya duḥkha
vidagdha-ātmīya-vākya śunite haya sukha*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 5.107)

[Svarūpa Dāmodara said:] Mahāprabhu feels pain upon hearing the compositions of poets who write about topics related to mundane men and women. But He feels joy upon hearing compositions of devotee poets who are expert in *tattva-jñāna* (knowledge of spiritual truths) and are experienced in [teachings in] the line of pure devotees.

It is prohibited to disobey one's guru, to be proud of one's knowledge and to defeat others in debate

Disobeying the order of *guru* is the most frightening offence to the holy name (*nāma-aparādha*):

*guru upekṣā kaile aiche phala haya
krame īśvara-paryanta aparādhe ṭhekaya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 8.99)

The result of disobeying *guru* is so fearsome that eventually it results in an offence to Bhagavān.

It is proper to give up the desire for liberation and the pride of knowledge:

*rāmadāsa jadi pratham prabhure mililā
mahāprabhu adhika tāre kṛpā nā korilā
antare mumukṣu tēho, vidyā-garvavān*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 13.109–110)

Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not bestow special mercy on Rāmadāsa in their first meeting, because the indwelling Lord knew that Rāmadāsa had a desire for liberation in his heart and was proud of his knowledge.

Humility is extremely necessary:

*premera svabhāva, jāhā premera sambandha
sei māne,—‘kṛṣṇe mora nāhi prema-gandha’*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 20.28)

The nature of *prema* is such that the more it manifests in a person’s heart, the more he thinks he does not possess even a scent of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

It is proper to give up the desire to be victorious in debate:

*‘digvijaya koribo’—vidyāra kārya nahe
īśvare bhajile, sei vidyā ‘satya kahe*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 13.173)

[Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] Knowledge is not for defeating others. Its purpose is to be able to perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*.

Devotees should consider all jīvas as their own, possess firm faith in the path of bhakti and desire auspiciousness even for their enemies

It is necessary to possess the conception that the one Bhagavān is the Lord of all, as well as to possess a mood of kinship toward all living entities:

*śuno, bāpa sabārai ekai īśvara
nāma-mātra bheda kare hinduye yavane
paramārthe ‘eka’ kahe korāṇe purāṇe
eka śudha nitya-vastu akhaṇḍa avyaya
paripūrṇa haiyā boise sabāra hṛdaya*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.76–78)

[Haridāsa Ṭhākura said:] Īśvara is one. The only difference between Hindus and Muslims is in name alone. According to the Koran

and Puranic scriptures, Īśvara is one. Everyone acts according to the inspiration they receive from that pure, eternal, unlimited and boundless Being, who resides in the hearts of all in His complete svarūpa.

*se-prabhura nāma-guṇa sakala jagate
balena sakale mātra nija-sāstra-mate*

*je īśvara, se punaḥ sabāra bhāva laya
himsā korilei se, tāhān himsā haya*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.80–81)

In this world, people glorify His name, qualities and other aspects according to the respective scripture they follow, and Bhagavān accepts their moods. Any harm caused to others is therefore violence to Bhagavān.

Determination is always required on the path of *bhakti*:

*khaṇḍa khaṇḍa hai' deha jāya jadi prāṇa
tabu āmi badane nā chāḍi harināma*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.94)

[Haridāsa Ṭhākura said:] Even if my body is cut into pieces or my life air leaves, I will never abandon my chanting of the holy name.

Vaiṣṇavas should possess compassion, even for their enemies:

*e-saba jīvere kṛṣṇa! karaho prasāda
mora drohe nahu e-sabāra aparādha*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.113)

[Haridāsa Ṭhākura prayed to Bhagavān:] O Kṛṣṇa! Please be merciful to these people. Please do not punish them as a consequence of their hostility toward me.

One should give up pride, the desire for prestige and caste consciousness in regard to Vaiṣṇavas

Duplicity and the desire for prestige are symptoms of pride and should be given up:

*baḍo loka kori' loka jānuka āmāre
āpanāre prakatāi dharma-karma kare*

*e-sakala dāmbhikera kṛṣṇe prīti nāi
akaitava haile se kṛṣṇa-bhakti pāi*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.228–229)

Those who desire to be known as great men in this world perform religious activities. Such proud persons never attain Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Only those who are without deceit attain *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

One should not consider a Vaiṣṇava to belong to a particular caste:

*'adhama-kulete jadi viṣṇu-bhakta haya
tathāpi sei se pūjya'—sarva-śāstre kaya*

*'uttama-kulete janmi',—śrī-kṛṣṇe nā bhaje
kule tā'ra ki koribe, narakete maje*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.238–239)

All the scriptures proclaim that even if a devotee accepts birth in a lower caste, he is worshipful for the entire world. But if one born in a high caste does not perform *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*, he is eligible for hell. His high birth cannot deliver him.

It is important to perform loud *saṅkīrtana*:

*japa-kartā haite ucca-saṅkīrtana-kārī
śata-guṇa adhika se purāṇete dhori*

*śuno vipra! mana diyā ihāra kārāṇa
japi' āpanāre sabe karaye poṣaṇa*

*ucca kori' korile govinda-saṅkīrtana
jantu-mātra śuniyāi pāi vimocana*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.284–286)

[Haridāsa Ṭhākura said:] O *brāhmaṇa*, one receives one hundred times more benefit by performing *kīrtana* loudly than by chanting within one's mind. A person who chants within his mind can deliver only himself, but by loudly performing *kīrtana*, the name of

Bhagavān enters into the ears of many living entities and delivers them too.

One must one abandon a donkey-like understanding of the scriptures, as well as violence to others and offences in service

It is necessary to understand the purports of the scriptures rather than carrying them like a donkey:

*śāstrera nā jāne marma, adhyāpanā kare
gardabhera prāya jeno śāstra bahi' mare
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 1.158)*

[Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] Those who teach the scriptures but do not know their true meaning die carrying the load of scriptures like a donkey.

Giving up being violent to others:

*bhakti-hīna-karme kona phala nāhi pāya
sei karma bhakti-hīna—parahiṁsā jāya
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 1.240)*

No results can be attained by performing activities that are devoid of *bhakti*. Rather, such actions are simply violent acts against others.

One is to abandon offences made in service (*sevā-aparādha*):

*sevā-vigrahera prati anādara jā'ra
viṣṇu-sthāne aparādha sarvathā tāhāra
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 5.121)*

One who possesses an attitude of disrespect toward those who embody devotional service, or the devotees, always makes offences at the lotus feet of Bhagavān.

A person is eligible to be addressed as a Vaiṣṇava if internally, his faith remains firm and he is free of false ego

Even if a person externally appears to be a materialist, he is a devotee if he possesses the qualities of a Vaiṣṇava within his heart:

*viṣayīra prāya tāra paricchada-saba
cinite nā pāre keho tiho je vaiṣṇava*

*āsiyā rahilā navadvīpe gūḍha-rūpe
parama bhogīra prāya sarva-loke dekhe*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 7.22, 38)

[In relation to Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] He is secretly residing in Navadvīpa. All his external dealings are just like those of a materialist, and therefore, no one can recognize him as a great Vaiṣṇava. Those who did not receive the good fortune to associate with him see him as a materialist.

One should give up the pride of knowledge:

*ki koribe vidyā, dhana, rūpa, yaśa, kule
ahaṅkāra bāḍī' saba paḍaye nirmūle*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 9.234)

The pride of knowledge, wealth, beauty, fame and high birth is useless if one does not perform *bhagavad-bhajana*.

To subscribe to a mix of philosophies, to be partial, to perform sinful activities and to be blinded by the intoxication of material life are all averse to the qualities of a Vaiṣṇava

A Vaiṣṇava must always remain firmly fixed in following only one doctrine. One is not to try to satisfy the minds of different types of people by speaking on many different doctrines in different places:

*kṣaṇe dante tṛṇa laya, kṣaṇe jāṭhi māre
o khaḍa-jāṭhiyā beṭā nā dekhibe more*

*prabhu bole—o beṭā jakhona jathā jāya
sei mata kathā kahi' tathāi miśāya*

*bhakti-sthāne uhāra hoilo aparādha
eteke uhāra hailo daraśana-bādha*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 10.185, 188, 192)

[In relation to Mukunda, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] He is a *khaḍa-jāṭhiyā*. Sometimes, in an assembly of Vaiṣṇavas, he puts a

straw (*khaḍa*) between his teeth, thus indicating that he considers himself to be a fallen and destitute servant of Bhagavān (Me). But when he visits an assembly of Māyāvādīs, he carries a stick (*jāṭhi*) in his hand – that is, he proclaims Bhagavān (Me) to be formless (*nirākāra*), without distinction (*nirviśeṣa*) and devoid of qualities (*nirguṇa*), and he criticizes Me. In this way, he always seeks an easy situation. Hence, he cannot receive *darśana* of Me, because he has committed an offence at the lotus feet of Bhakti-devī.

One should not be partial to certain Vaiṣṇavas:

*je pāpiṣṭha eka vaiṣṇavera pakṣa haya
anya vaiṣṇavere ninde, sei jāya kṣaya*
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 13.160)

The destruction of a sinner who is partial toward one Vaiṣṇava and criticizes another is inevitable.

Committing sins after accepting initiation into *harināma* is prohibited:

*prabhu bole,—“torā āra nā karis pāpa”
jagāi-mādhāi bole,—“āra nāre bāpa”*
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 13.225)

[Śrīman Mahāprabhu told Jagāi and Mādhāi:] “Whatever sins both of you had committed up till today are nullified. Commit no more sins.” Jagāi and Mādhāi replied, “From now on, we will not commit any sins.”

One is to remain beyond rules and prohibitions:

*jato vidhi-niṣedha—sakali bhakti-dāsa
ihāte jāhāra duḥkha, sei jāya nāsa*
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 16.144)

Rules and regulations are subservient to *bhakti*. He who is distressed by this is destroyed.

*viṣaya-madāndha saba e marma nā jāne
suta-dhana-kula-made vaiṣṇava nā cine*
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 16.147)

Those who are blinded by sense enjoyment cannot understand this mystery. Being intoxicated by their children, wealth and high birth, they are unable to recognize a Vaiṣṇava.

The various regulations and prohibitions mentioned in scriptures are subordinate to *bhakti*. The type of *bhakti* in which one maintains a regard for such rules and prohibitions is called *vaidhī-bhakti*. By continuously following the principles of such *vaidhī-bhakti*, *rāgānuga-bhakti* arises after some time. The regard for rules and regulations is no longer required in *rāgānuga-bhakti*. Rather, the devotee situated in *rāgānuga-bhakti* naturally performs service to Bhagavān, considering Him to be his life and soul (*ātmavat-sevā*). Therefore, such a devotee incurs no loss, even if he happens to disobey some of the rules and regulations [prescribed for *vaidhī-bhakti*]. A person blinded by the intoxication of sense gratification and entrapped in the illusion of his relationship with his children, wife, family members and others is surely ruined, because he does not recognize such Vaiṣṇavas and instead sees fault in them.

One must reject the association of atheists and non-devotees

One should always be careful not to speak to atheists (*pāṣaṇḍīs*):

nagare hoilo kibā pāṣaṇḍi-sambhāṣa
ei bā kāraṇe nahe prema-parakāśa
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 17.19)

[Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] It appears that today I must have certainly spoken to an atheist, because *kṛṣṇa-prema* is not arising in My heart. One should not maintain any type of relationship with non-devotees:

jadi mora putra haya, haya bā kiṅkara
‘vaiṣṇavāparādhi’ mui nā dekhō gocara
Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 19.175)

[Advaita Ācārya said:] Whether a person be my son or my servant, I will not see the face of one who commits offences at the lotus feet of Vaiṣṇavas.

The pre-eminence of devotion to Viṣṇu and the deceitful person's imaginary claim to be a manifestation of Viṣṇu

One should not compare *bhakti* to any or all other pious activities:

*prabhu bole tapaḥ kori' nā karaho bala
viṣṇu-bhakti sarva-śreṣṭha jānaho kevala*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 23.54)

[Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:] Do not endeavour to attain strength through austerity. Know thoroughly that *viṣṇu-bhakti* is topmost.

Deceitful persons who make a show of *dharma* time and again preach by proclaiming themselves incarnations. One should remain careful of such cheaters:

*madhye-madhye mātra kato pāpi-gaṇa giyā
loka naṣṭa kare āpanāre laowāiyā
udara-bharaṇa lāgi' pāpiṣṭha-sakale
'raghunātha' kori' āpanāre keho bole*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 14.82–83)

[Śrī Vrindāvana dāsa Ṭhākura mentions:] Since the time Mahāprabhu bestowed His mercy upon the residents of the Bhaṅga province, *nāma-sankīrtana* has become like their life-air. But time and again sinful persons visit there and preach a bad doctrine that ruins those simple-hearted people. With the selfish motive of acquiring wealth and prestige, some sinful persons cheat others by claiming themselves to be Rāmacandra.

One attains all perfection by taking shelter of *nāma* and leading a life free from sin and duplicity

Devotees must constantly take shelter of *harināma* while living a life free of sin and duplicity. There is no *dharma* superior to this:

*ataeva kali-yuge nāma-yajña sāra
āra kono dharma kaile nāhi haya pāra
rātri-dīna nāma laya khāite suite
tāhāra mahimā vede nāhi pāre dite*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 14.139–140)

Therefore, in this age of Kali, the sacrifice (*yajña*) of *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma* is the only means for the soul to attain benefit. One cannot become free from this ocean of material existence by accepting any *dharma* other than this. Therefore, even the Vedas cannot sing the glories of those who day and night perform *kīrtana* of *kṛṣṇa-nāma* while eating, sleeping and moving about.

In this way, one is to perform *hari-bhajana* while reflecting on the above-mentioned natural qualities of *sādhus* and adopting their mode of conduct. In adopting any other path, one cannot attain as much that is favourable for pure *bhakti* as by adopting *sad-vṛtti* (proper conduct).

Glossary

A

abhidheya – The means by which the ultimate goal is achieved; the practices of devotional life.

ācārya – Spiritual preceptor; one who teaches by example.

āmnāya – The teachings of the Vedas received through *guru-paramparā*.

anarthas – Unwanted desires in the heart, which impede one's advancement in devotional life.

aṅgas – (1) Limbs, divisions, parts; (2) The various practices of devotional life such as hearing and chanting are referred to as *aṅgas*.

aparādhī – One who commits *aparādha*, or offences, against the holy name, the Vaiṣṇavas, the *guru*, the scriptures, the holy places, the deity and so on.

āsakti – Attachment. This especially refers to attachment for the Lord and His eternal devotees.

aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā – The pastimes that Śrī Kṛṣṇa performs with His devotees in eight periods of the day. Practitioners of devotional life who are engaged in *smarana*, or remembrance, meditate on these pastimes. The periods are as follows (times are approximate): (1) *niśānta-līlā* – pastimes at the end of night (3:36 AM – 6:00 AM), (2) *prātaḥ-līlā* – pastimes at dawn (6:00 AM – 8:24 AM), (3) *pūrvāhna-līlā* – morning pastimes (8:24 AM – 10:48 AM), (4) *madhyāhna-līlā* – midday pastimes (10:48 AM – 3:36 PM), (5) *aparāhna-līlā* – afternoon pastimes (3:36 PM – 6:00 PM), (6) *sāyāhna-līlā* – pastimes at dusk (6:00 PM – 8:24 PM), (7) *pradoṣa-līlā* – evening pastimes (8:24 PM – 10:48 PM) and (8) *nakta-līlā* – midnight pastimes (10:48 PM – 3:36 AM).

aṣṭāṅga-yoga – The *yoga* system consisting of eight parts: *yama* (control of the senses), *niyama* (control of the mind), *āsana* (bodily postures), *prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the mind from sensory perception), *dhāraṇā* (steadying the mind), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (deep and unbroken absorption on the Lord in the heart).

avadhūta – An ascetic who often transgresses the rules governing ordinary social conduct.

B

Bhagavān – The Supreme Lord, who possesses, in full, the six fortunes of opulence, religiosity, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation.

bhagavad-anuśilana – The word *anuśilana* refers to constant practice, study or cultivation. When it is performed in relation to devotion to the Lord, it is known as *bhagavad-anuśilana*.

bhagavat-prema – Love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is extremely concentrated, that completely melts the heart and that gives rise to a deep sense of possessiveness in relation to Him.

bhajana – (1) The word *bhajana* is derived from the verbal root *bhaj*, which is defined as follows in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (*Pūrva-khaṇḍa* 231.3): “The verbal root *bhaj* is used specifically in the sense of service. Therefore, when devotional practices are performed with the consciousness of being a servant, it is called *bhakti*.” (2) In the general sense, *bhajana* refers to spiritual practices, especially hearing, chanting and meditating upon the holy name, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

bhajana-mālā – A rosary of beads made from the wood of the sacred *tulasī* plant, which devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa use for private chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*.

bhakti – The word *bhakti* comes from the root *bhaj*, which means to serve (see *bhajana*).

bhakti-tattva – The word *tattva* refers to a truth, a reality or a philosophical principle. Those related to devotional life are known as *bhakti-tattva*.

bhāva – Spiritual emotions, love, sentiment.

bhāva-bhakti – The initial stage of perfection in devotion

brahma – The impersonal, all-pervading feature of the Lord, which is devoid of attributes and qualities. It is also sometimes known as Brahman.

brāhmaṇa – The priestly class amongst the four castes (*varṇas*) within the Vedic social system (*varṇāśrama*).

D

daiva-varṇāśrama – The Vedic social system, organized into four occupational divisions (*varṇas*) and four stages of life (*āśramas*), as it relates to Vaiṣṇava devotional practices.

dāsyā-rasa – One of the five primary relationships with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in which the devotee's love for the Lord is expressed in the mood of a servant.

devatās – Demigods, who reside in the heavenly planets and are entrusted with specific powers for the purpose of universal administration.

dikṣā-guru – The initiating spiritual master. One who gives a *mantra* in accordance with the regulations of scripture to a qualified candidate for the purpose of worshipping the Lord and realizing Him through that *mantra* is known as a *dikṣā-guru* or *mantra-guru*.

G

gaura-nāgarī – In the transcendental loving affairs of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *nāgara*, the predominating hero in the position of the enjoyer, and Śrī Rādhā as well as Her bodily manifestations, the *sakhīs*, are *nāgarīs*, the predominated heroines in the position of the enjoyed. Although Śrī Gaura is Kṛṣṇa Himself, He adopts the mood of the *nāgarī*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, in order to experience the nature of Her love for Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, Śrī Gauraṅga is not in the mood of a *nāgara*. The *gaura-nāgarīs* conceive of Śrīman Mahāprabhu as a *nāgara*

and themselves as *nāgarīs*. This is completely opposed to both the mood of Mahāprabhu and the cultivation of *śuddha-bhakti-grhastha* – Household life, and the second stage of life (*āśrama*) within the Vedic social system (*varṇāśrama*).

Gosvāmī – One who is the master of his senses; a title for those in the renounced order of life.

gopīs – The young cowherd maidens of Vraja, headed by Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the mood of amorous love. This may also refer to the elderly *gopīs*, headed by mother Yaśodā, who serve Kṛṣṇa in the mood of parental affection.

go-dāsa – One who is enslaved by the urges of the material senses.

guṇa – Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities, which are heard, described and meditated upon by devotees as part of their devotional practice.

guru-rūpā-sakhī – The spiritual master in his eternal spiritual form as a female maidservant of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

H

hari-kathā – Narrations of the Lord's pastimes and personal nature.

harināma-sankīrtana – Congregational chanting of the Lord's holy names.

J

jīva – The eternal, individual living entity.

jñāna – (1) Knowledge; (2) The pursuit of knowledge with the intention of merging the soul's individual identity with the impersonal aspect of the Lord.

K

Kali-yuga – The current age of hypocrisy and quarrel that began 5000 years ago.

kāma – (1) Lust to gratify the urges of the material senses; (2) The *gopīs'* transcendental desire to enjoy amorous pastimes with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

kaniṣṭha-adhikārī – the neophyte practitioner of devotional life.

- karma*** – (1) Any activity performed in the course of material existence; (2) Reward-seeking activities; pious activities leading to material gain in this world or in the heavenly planets after death; (3) Fate; previous actions that yield inevitable reactions.
- kīrtana*** – One of the nine most important limbs of *bhakti*; consisting of either: (1) congregational singing of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s holy names, usually accompanied by music; (2) loud individual chanting of the holy name; or (3) oral descriptions of the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s names, forms, qualities, associates and pastimes.
- kṛṣṇa-kathā*** – Narrations of the holy names, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- kṛṣṇa-pañcamī*** – The fifth day of the waning lunar fortnight.
- kuṇḍa*** – Pond or lake.
- kuñja*** – Grove or bower; a natural shady retreat, the sides and roof of which are formed mainly by trees and climbing plants.

L

- līlā*** – The Lord’s divine sportive pastimes, which are never under the influence of material nature, whether in the creation of the material world or in the matter of transcendental exchanges of love with His devotees. They are all manifestations of His self-willed potencies and therefore, they are known as *līlā*, or divine sport.

M

- madhura-rasa*** – One of the five primary relationships with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in which the devotee’s love for the Lord is expressed in the mood of a beloved.
- madhyama-adhikārī*** – The practitioner of devotional life who has reached the intermediate stage of spiritual development.
- mahābhāva*** – The highest stage of divine love.
- mahājanas*** – Great personalities who teach the highest ideal and who by their conduct set an example for others to follow.
- mahā-prasāda*** – The remnants of food offered to the deity; it may also refer to the remnants of other articles offered to the deity such as incense, flowers, garlands and clothing.

mānasa-sevā – Service rendered within the mind to one’s worshipful deity.

maṭha – A monastery or temple.

Māyāvāda – The doctrine of illusion; a theory advocated by the impersonalist followers of Śaṅkarācārya, which holds that the Lord’s form, this material world and the individual existence of the living entities is *māyā*, or false.

muni – A sage, ascetic or spiritual scholar.

N

nāma – The holy name of the Lord, which is chanted by devotees as part of their devotional practice.

nāma-aparādha – Offences against the holy name, of which there are ten types.

nāma-haṭṭa – A system of sharing *bhakti* where devotees hold programmes in their homes.

nirviśeṣa-vādīs – Those who advocate the doctrine that ultimately the Lord is devoid of personal qualities and that merging into the undifferentiated *brahma* is the ultimate spiritual perfection of the living entity.

niśkiñcana – The state of having renounced all one’s material possessions.

niṣṭhā – Firm faith that results in steadiness in one’s devotional practices.

P

pālya-dāsī – Maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The word *pālya* means to be nourished, cared for and protected, and the word *dāsī* means a female servant.

paramahansa – Topmost, “swan-like” devotee.

praṇāma – Obeisance.

praṇanātha – Literally, “the Lord of one’s life”; it has the sense of one who is infinitely more dear than life itself.

prajohana – The ultimate goal of devotional life, i.e. unadulterated love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

prema-bhakti – A stage of devotion that is characterized by the appearance of divine love (*prema*); the perfectional stage of devotion.

premamayī – Saturated with divine love.

prema-dharma – The religion of divine love as propagated and practised by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

prema-avatāra – Incarnation of love, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

R

rāga-marga – Path of spontaneous attachment (*rāga*).

rāgānuga-bhakti – An elevated stage of devotion that is motivated by spontaneous attraction or love.

rāgātmikā-bhakti – The spontaneous devotion that resides exclusively within the hearts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eternal devotees in the spiritual world.

rasa – (1) The spiritual transformation of the heart which takes place when the perfectional state of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, known as *rati*, is converted into “liquid” emotions by combining with various types of transcendental ecstasies; (2) Taste, favor.

rasika – One who relishes the mellows of devotion (*rasa*) within one's heart.

ruci – Taste. The awakening of taste for hearing, chanting and other such devotional practices means that one has greater liking for these activities than any type of material activity.

rūpa – Form, shape, appearance; in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, this refers to His transcendental, eternal form.

S

sad-guru – Authentic spiritual master.

sādhaka – One who follows a spiritual discipline with the objective of achieving pure devotion for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

sādhana-bhakti – Stage of devotional life in which a spiritual discipline is performed for the purpose of bringing about the manifestation of ecstatic, pure love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*bhāva*).

sādhū – (1) A highly-realized soul who knows life’s aim (*sādhyā*), who is himself practising *sādhana*, and who can engage others in *sādhana*; (2) A saintly person or devotee.

sādhū-saṅga – The association of highly advanced devotees who possess pure devotion for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

sahajiyā – One who considers the stages of advanced devotion to be easily achieved and who thus sometimes imitates the external symptoms of spiritual ecstasy associated with those stages.

sakhya-rasa – One of the five primary relationships with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in which the devotee’s love for the Lord is expressed in the mood of a friend.

samādhi – Literally, *sama* means “equal” and *dhī* means “complete absorption of the intelligence”; a person in *samādhi* has the same level of consciousness as his worshipful deity, and on that platform he is doing service.

sambandha – The principle regarding the mutual relationship between the Lord, the living entities and the material energy.

sambandha-jñāna – Knowledge regarding *sambandha-tattva*, the mutual relationship between the Lord, the living entities and the material energy. The word *sambandha* means connection, relationship or binding.

sampradāya – A school of thought.

saṁskāra – Previous impressions on the heart.

sannyāsa – Renounced ascetic life, and the fourth stage of life (*āśrama*) within the Vedic social system (*varṇāśrama*).

śānta-rasa – The first of the five primary relationships with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in which the devotee’s love for the Lord is expressed in a mood of neutrality.

śaraṇāgati – Full surrender to Śrī Kṛṣṇa or His representative, the spiritual master.

śāstra – Scripture.

siddha-bhakta – A devotee who has achieved spiritual perfection.

siddhānta – a philosophical doctrine, or precept, a demonstrated conclusion, an established end, or an admitted truth.

śikṣā-guru – One who gives instructions about how to progress on the devotional path.

smaraṇa – Remembrance and meditation upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s names, form, qualities and pastimes.

śraddhā – Faith.

śrī-nāma-saṅkīrtana – Congregational chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s holy names.

śṛṅgāra-rasa – Another name for *madhura-rasa*, the mellow of devotion where the devotee’s love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is expressed in the mood of a lover.

śuddha-bhakti – Pure devotion; that is, devotion that is unmixed with fruitive action or monistic knowledge and devoid of all desires other than the desire to provide Śrī Kṛṣṇa with pleasure.

sukṛti – Pious activity that, upon sufficient accumulation, can produce faith in transcendental entities such as the words of the scriptures and saintly persons and the process of devotional life.

svarūpa-śakti – Bhagavān’s divine potency is known as *svarūpa-śakti*. It is called *svarūpa-śakti* because it is situated in His own form (*svarūpa*).

svarūpa-siddha-bhakti – All endeavours of the body, mind and words related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and performed exclusively and directly for His pleasure without any intervention are known as *svarūpa-siddha-bhakti*.

T

tattva – Truth, reality, philosophical principle; the essence or substance of anything (e.g. the truths relating to *bhakti* are known as *bhakti-tattva*).

tulasī-mala – Necklace of beads composed of wood from the sacred *tulasī* plant. It is worn by all devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

tyāgī – Renunciant.

U

uttama-bhakti – Topmost devotion. This is described in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11) as follows: “The cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or in other

words the uninterrupted flow of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed through all endeavours of the body, mind and speech, and through the expression of various spiritual sentiments (*bhāvas*), which is not covered by *jñāna* (knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation) and *karma* (reward-seeking activity), and which is devoid of all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is called *uttama-bhakti*, pure devotional service.”

uttama- or *mahā-bhāgavata* – Topmost devotee, who has attained perfection in his devotion unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

V

vaidhī – Devotion that is prompted by the rules and regulations of the scriptures.

vairāgya – Renunciation; asceticism.

varṇāśrama – The Vedic social system, which organizes society into four occupational divisions (*varṇas*) and four stages of life (*āśramas*).

vātsalya-rasa – One of the five primary relationships with Śrī Kṛṣṇa in which the devotee’s love for the Lord is expressed in the mood of parenthood.

vipralambha – The love felt when separated from one’s beloved.

viṣayī – Sense enjoyer.

vraja-rasa – Devotional mellows (*rasas*) with which Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eternal devotees serve Him in the eternal abode of Vraja, or Vṛndāvana.

vraja-parikaras – Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eternal devotees who reside in the transcendental abode of Vraja, or Vṛndāvana.

Y

yukta-vairāgya – Appropriate renunciation; renunciation that is suitable for entrance into devotional life.

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