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THE JOURNEY TO PREMA

~ A Course in the Science of Bhakti-Yoga ~

Lesson 21

Please Chant:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

IN THIS LESSON:

- The Sweetest Pudding
- Cleaning Kṛṣṇa's Locker
- Daśa-mula: The Ten Root Teachings
- Ontology and Metaphysics
- Our Sampradāya
- Rasa: The Extraordinary Pleasure of Prema

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His Divine Grace
Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja
(Affectionately called Śrīla Gurudeva)



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THE JOURNEY TO PREMA

Dear servant of God,

Please accept our sincere respects as we bow down to offer them to you. All glories to Śrīla Gurudeva!

Welcome back to another leg of our journey to prema. We're so glad to have you here with us as we travel along together toward our greatest treasure and life's ultimate goal.

We're going to start out this month's lesson with a look at the fact that there are very few of us who are actually wise and dedicated enough to follow the bhakti path, even though, in comparison, it is by far the easiest of all the yoga paths and the only one that can lead us to prema, the position of pure happiness.

In the last few lessons, we've spent a great deal of time examining what pure (śuddha) bhakti is, and in addition, as a part of this analysis, we've looked at all of the other levels as well. Last month, we explained the type of bhakti that Lord Caitanya prayed for, ahaitukī-bhakti, and in doing so, we began a discussion on how we can act in ways that will allow us to move toward this topmost level of bhakti.

For most of us, understanding this process is of great value, for upon an honest examination of our hearts, and the motives behind our actions, we will find that we are not yet able to fully abandon all of our material attachments and desires in order to perform pure bhakti. This is why, beginning in the second section of this lesson, we will allow our inmate contributor to share some of his understandings on how we can live and conduct all of our activities in ways that will allow us make progress on our journey, even before we reach the topmost levels of bhakti.

After that, we're going to take a look at how our great ācārya, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, has broken down the teachings of Lord Caitanya, into ten basic truths, and, in doing so, we'll examine how we've already shared almost all of these truths with you. Of course, we'll also take this opportunity to introduce the other truths as well.

The Sweetest Pudding—and yet— So Few Try to Taste It

In the past, we've mentioned that very few people in this world fully dedicate themselves to following the bhakti path. The reasons for this are many, and yet every single excuse we can possibly come up with for wasting our time in the pursuit of all other goals stems from one basic truth, which has been given to us by **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura** in this way:

The only path of deliverance from the clutches of māyā is the performance of love-drenched service (bhakti) to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The jīva has been put under māyā's control simply because he is offensive to the Supreme Lord, and the root of all offenses is forgetting that, "I am Kṛṣṇa's servant."

In consideration of these truths, we can easily come to understand why our ācāryas have explained that the seed of all of Lord Caitanya's teachings is:

**jīvera svarūpa haya
kṛṣṇera nitya dāsa**

***The jivas original identity is that of being
Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant.***

It is only by reinstating ourselves in this role that we can overcome the illusions that keep us trapped in māyās prison house. And even though this is a simple fact, that can be clearly stated, most of us are unable to accept it as true and adjust our lives accordingly.

In the Bhagavad-Gita, **Śrī Kṛṣṇa** tells us:

Among thousands of men, one may endeavor for perfection. And among those who do so, it is even rarer for one to know Me. (B.G. 7.3)

This same truth is stated in even more detail in the **Śrīmad Bhāgavatam**, where we find:

O Lord! There are as many jivas in this world as there are grains of sand. Only a few of these are human beings, and

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amongst these, only a few direct their efforts toward the search of a higher goal. Of those who seek a higher goal, only a few rare individuals are truly dedicated to seeking liberation from this world. Out of thousands of these, hardly one is actually able to attain liberation. Amongst the liberated souls, it is difficult to find a single, peaceful, great soul who is fully dedicated to the Supreme Lord. Therefore, such devotees are very rare. (S.B. 6.14. 3-5)

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In translating the last verses, **Śrīla Gurudeva** gives us additional insight into what is being taught, by these words:

Among all liberated persons, it is extremely rare to find a most peaceful devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa (the majestic form of the Lord). And even more rare than this is one who has realized the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The bliss derived from tasting the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is millions of times greater than the bliss of one who is existing within brahma, the impersonal aspect of the Lord. (S.B. 6.14.5)

In consideration of what **Śrīla Gurudeva** has taught us, we will spend a moment discussing the bliss that is tasted by those who enter into the brahma aspect of the Lord.

Although many who seek this type of mukti, or liberation, feel they will lose their own personal identity as they "merge" with the Lord, this will never be the case. Early in the Bhagavad-Gita, when **Śrī Kṛṣṇa** is explaining to Arjuna why he has no reason to avoid his duty, He tells him that the soul cannot be killed, and during this part of their conversation, **Śrī Kṛṣṇa** says:

Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be. (B.G. 2.12)

By these words, our eternal individuality is established, and yet, if we are so unfortunate that we are misled into seeking to enter into brahma, it will be almost as if we have lost our individuality. This is because, in this terrible state, there is no variety, and thus, with no distinguishing characteristics to identity either ourselves or others by, we will seem to be part of a unified oneness.

All of our ācāryas have explained this to be a hellish state that is never to be sought, and yet, the Vedas also describe the fact that, for those who attain this state, there is a certain type of bliss to be tasted there. So what is this bliss; and why do we wish to avoid it?

This world is full of misery. The Vedas describe three sources from which our miseries flow.

- 1) Miseries produced by the mind or material body;
- 2) Miseries produced by others; and
- 3) Miseries produced by such things as natural disasters.

All of these sources of misery do not exist for those who are situated in brahma, and thus, for them, the absence of misery provides a very dry and insignificant type of bliss.

In brahma, one does not get sick or old. One cannot feel the pains of the body or be disturbed by the impulses of the mind, such as hate, anger, and envy. One cannot be bothered by others, bitten by a mosquito, or face hunger or fear due to the struggles of survival one encounters after a hurricane or tornado. And thus, in this environment, one can taste a very tiny level of bliss. This bliss, however, is based solely upon a freedom from misery, and nothing more.

But there is an even less fulfilling aspect of this bliss of negation. When we are in this state, the total lack of variety causes us to enter into a level of consciousness where we are not even able to truly experience the minor bliss that comes with freedom from misery. This fact is explained to us by **Śrīla Gurudeva**. He describes the state of one who is situated in this way:

The soul exists, but there is no activity in his being. He is completely unconscious. His existence is not fully gone. Existence is there, but he cannot realize anything. (Morning

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We can imagine what it would be like to be in so much pain that we are unable to even go to sleep. In that state, we may be thinking, “Oh, how good it would feel if I could just get some sleep!” But then, when we actually lose consciousness and fall asleep, are we actually “feeling” the relief?

In his commentary on verse 7.3 of the Gītā, where Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells us how rare it is to understand all of the truths about Him, Śrīla Gurudeva cites a quote which clearly shows us the vast difference between the sleep-like bliss of Brahma and the unlimited happiness we experience from the sweet taste of bhakti and the personal form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

Even when the bliss of brahma is multiplied by the number of days in the lifespan of Lord brahmā, it cannot be compared to a single particle of the pleasure one attains in tasting the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu)

In our last lesson, we discussed the four goals of life that most everyone strives for. In doing so, we told you that one of those goals, mukti, refers to the state of existing in brahma that we have just discussed. In addition to this worthless goal, many strive for sense gratification (kāma), the acquisition of wealth/economic development (artha), and/or they live only to properly perform their religious and social duties (dharma).

The happiness that one can attain through all of these goals is totally insignificant, as is proven within the following quotes.

Compared to the ocean of spiritual bliss that one tastes from the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s names, the pleasure derived from the impersonal brahma is like the shallow water in a canal. (C.C. Ādi 7.97)

Religiosity (dharma), economic development (artha), sense gratification (kāma), and liberation from the cycle of birth and death (mukti) are known as the four goals of life, but compared to prema, the fifth and highest goal, these appear as insignificant as straw in the street. (C.C. Ādi 7.84)

For a devotee who has actually developed spiritual emotions (bhāva), the pleasures derived from dharma, artha, kāma, and mukti appear like a drop of water compared to the sea. (C.C. Ādi 7.85)

My dear Lord, O master of the universe, since I have directly seen You, my spiritual bliss has taken the shape of a great ocean. Being situated in that ocean, I now realize that all other so-called happiness is like the water contained in the hoof print of a calf. (Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya 14.36)

It is interesting to note that the bliss of chanting the Holy Names, of experiencing spiritual emotions, and of attaining prema are compared to the ocean and the sea, while the pleasure available from anything else are compared to a shallow creek, the water in the hoof print of a calf, and even a single drop.

For those of us who have not yet experienced any of these spiritual pleasures, we may want to doubt the truths of these comparisons, but we should avoid this mentality at all costs. This is because the bhakti path is built on a foundation of faith in the evidence of the Vedas, and when we begin to question these truths, we place our progress toward this bliss in serious jeopardy.

As we’ve discussed from the outset of this course, **we must have faith**, for it is only this quality that will allow us to confidently, enthusiastically, and patiently move ever forward on our journey to prema. And if we do this, then we will find that we will begin to develop a taste, first for our practices, and then for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and as we begin to experience this taste, as we become convinced that it is the sweetest of all puddings, we will develop a strong desire to share this sweetness with others, while at the same time, we will wonder why so few are trying to taste it.

Cleaning Kṛṣṇa’s Locker

In Lesson 17, we discussed the many various forms of bhakti like activities that we often engage in while mistakenly thinking

that we are practicing bhakti. Then, in Lesson 18, we focused on the topmost type of bhakti, uttamā-bhakti. In last month’s lesson, we told you a great deal about the type of bhakti that Lord Caitanya has instructed us to pray for, ahaitukī-bhakti, and we also shared some critical teachings, given by Kṛṣṇa Himself, that explain how we can conduct ourselves in ways that will lead us toward this topmost bhakti, even while we are at the point where we are not yet able to practice it ourselves.

Learning about this type of bhakti, which Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has referred to as “subsidiary devotional practices” is very valuable, and thus, as we mentioned in our opening of this lesson, our inmate contributor will now share his understandings of how we can follow the Lord’s instructions to meditate on Him while we go about performing our daily duties in this world.

Hello my dear friends, this is X28 again. By the mercy of the devotees who are dedicated to this Prison Outreach Program, I am engaged in the service of trying to share some of the truths I’ve learned with you. I want you all to now that I am a fallen fool who is totally incapable of bringing any spiritual truths to you, and yet, as I write in service of the servants of Śrīla Gurudeva and offer these words to him, by his mercy he may empower them to be properly understood and to enter your hearts.

I do not claim to have full and proper understanding of these truths, but I take great encouragement from the fact that, as was mentioned in Lesson 17, **Śrīla Prabhupāda has taught us to examine the Vedas from various angles of vision**, and our great ācārya, **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura** has expanded on this concept even further by sharing this same teaching in a way that is quite appropriate for this course.

We love to read a book which we have never read before. We are anxious to gather whatever information is contained in it, and with such acquirement our curiosity stops... in fact, most readers are mere repositories of facts and arguments made by other people. But this is not study. The student is to read the facts with a view to create, and not with the object of fruitless retention. Students, like satellites, should reflect whatever light they receive from authors, and not imprison the facts and thoughts just as the magistrates imprison the convicts in jail!

... God gives us truth as He gave it to Vyasa [the compiler of the Vedas], when we earnestly seek for it. Truth is eternal and inexhaustible. The soul receives a revelation when it is anxious for it. The souls of the great thinkers of the bygone ages, who now live spiritually, often approach our inquiring spirit and assist in its development... We must think for ourselves and try to get further truths... In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.21.23), we have been advised to take the spirit of the śāstras, and not the words... Go! Go up to the fountainhead of truth, where no pilgrim needs meet with disappointment of any kind. Vyasa did it and obtained what he wanted. We have all been advised to do. (Lecture: 1869 Dinajpur, West Bengal)

So, my dear friends, although my presentation of how we can act in ways that will lead us toward the topmost bhakti will surely be full of flaws, I honor the words of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, as I try to both create, and to reflect back to you, my own angle of vision regarding how we can meditate on Śrī Kṛṣṇa as we perform the daily duties of our lives.

I’m going to start out this discussion by looking back—way, way, back—to the instructions that Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave to Lord Brahmā at the very beginning of this universe. Of course, we’ve already shared those teachings last month, but here, I will try to incorporate them into the current topic, and, as I go along, I will use other quotes we’ve already shared in this same way.

The first instruction **Śrī Kṛṣṇa** gave was this:

All of the symptoms of prema are awakened by performing that topmost bhakti that is beyond the influence of the gunas (uttamā-bhakti). The full awareness/knowledge that exists

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

within the pure soul arises through the cultivation of spiritual knowledge and the performance of the various bhakti practices. (Śrī Brahma Saṁhitā text 58)

This topmost bhakti can certainly be attained by one who uses his own intelligence to constantly remember Me by means of following the behaviors of the ācāryas and studying the evidence contained in the scriptures. (Śrī Brahma Saṁhitā text 59)

It should come as no surprise to us that the system we must follow in order to rise to the platform of the topmost level of bhakti is based upon the underlined statement, which is also the number one rule of bhakti—***Always remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa***—and, as we shall see, this same instruction will remain prevalent on the path that leads us to uttamā-bhakti as well.

In Text 58, we find the instruction to engage in the various bhakti practices, and, in his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī tells us this refers to such things as hearing about the Lord, glorifying Him, and chanting His names, which will of course also cause us to remember Him, but as we engage in what Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has called “subsidiary devotional practices” we must also learn how to keep our minds and hearts involved in His remembrance.

Of course, one of the most important ways that we do this is also included in these first two instructions as well—***we must cultivate spiritual knowledge by studying the evidence contained in the scriptures.***

On this point, I would like to share one of my own angles of vision regarding a statement that is often made, but is, in my opinion, often times misunderstood.

Chant and Be Happy.

I have, over the years, met those who believe that study of the Vedas is totally unnecessary as long as a person chants the Holy Names. In this regard, there is some truth, for the names of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Themselves and full of all Their potencies, and therefore, by chanting alone, we will eventually be led to all truths. However, for me, it is also important to understand that the type and level of our chanting will vastly influence our rate of advancement.

If we chant while we simultaneously commit the offenses to the Names that we shared with you in earlier lessons, then our chanting will lead to very slow progress. For this reason, we are wise to cultivate knowledge of these offenses, and to do our best to avoid them, rather than relying on a simple “chant and be happy” mentality.

Additionally, we should be wise enough to learn about the various types of shadow chanting that were discussed, for this type of chanting will also be hampered by our failure to perform our chanting in a proper way.

Furthermore, if we are really serious about advancing into the deeper levels of meditational chanting that is conducted by our ācāryas, then learning as much as we can about the names, form, qualities, associates, and pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa will be of incredible value to us, so, as is instructed in these verses, by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, we should accompany the happiness of our chanting with the cultivation of knowledge.

For some of us, dedicating ourselves to studying these truths can be challenging and difficult, there is however no doubt that it must be done. This truth is fully expressed in the instructions given by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Lord Brahmā, and, in the following quote, where we find Śrīla Prabhupāda giving us his commentary on this verse from the **Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam**.

The seriously inquisitive student or sage, well equipped with knowledge and detachment, realizes that Absolute Truth by rendering devotional service in terms of what he has heard from the Vedas. (1.2.12)

Śrīla Prabhupāda teaches us this:

... As stated in the Bhagavad-gītā and other Vedic literatures, the Supreme Person is realized by devotional service that is backed

by full knowledge and detachment from material association... Devotional service [bhakti] that is based on the background of full knowledge combined with detachment from material association, and which is fixed by dint of the aural reception of the [Vedic truths], is the only perfect method by which the seriously inquisitive student can realize the absolute truth.

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There are three classes of devotees, namely, first, second, and third class. The third-class devotees, or the neophytes (beginners), have no knowledge and are not detached from material association.

Since this is the status of most all of us who are receiving these lessons (myself included), let’s listen to what Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us we need to do.

A third-class devotee, therefore, has to receive the instruction of devotional service from the authoritative sources... The number one authority is the established personality of a devotee... The third-class devotee therefore has to go to the established devotee in order to learn the instructions of devotional service.

Such a devotee... must preach the cult of devotional service for the all-around benefit of all people...

A sincere devotee must, therefore, must be prepared to hear the Vedic literatures for the benefit of his progress. Without hearing such literatures, one cannot make actual progress. And without hearing and following instructions the show of devotional service becomes worthless and therefore a sort of disturbance on the path of devotional service...

Having shared these teachings, given to us by both Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, we must cultivate this knowledge if we wish to make actual progress on our journey to prema, and we should not dismiss this responsibility based upon a “chant and be happy” approach to what is truly involved in walking the bhakti path.

Returning now to our discussion on how we can perform the “subsidiary devotional practices” that lead to uttamā-bhakti, let’s look at the instruction of **Śrī Kṛṣṇa** where this method of approach is given to Lord Brahmā.

The people of this world are constantly performing activities as they pursue their various goals. By using their activities as a means of meditating on Me, they can attain the topmost level of bhakti. (Śrī Brahma Saṁhitā Text 61: Second stanza)

In his comments on this verse, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī paraphrases Kṛṣṇa as saying:

This world subsists by the constant performance of certain activities. Fill all these activities with meditation on Me.

So now, returning to the title of this section, “Cleaning Kṛṣṇa’s Locker”, let me tell you my angle of vision of how we can apply this to our own daily activities.

One day, as I was moving about the compound where I was housed, a fellow inmate, who was also interested in bhakti-yoga, was out on the porch of his housing unit cleaning out a locker that we use to store our personal belongings in. As I’m always looking for an opportunity to discuss and share the philosophy of the Vedas, I asked him what he was doing, and he replied, “Cleaning my locker.”

I said, “No you are not. You are cleaning Kṛṣṇa’s locker.”

As I was not allowed to stop and speak with him at that time, the only further advice I could share was that by thinking in that way he would be able to help himself remember Kṛṣṇa, but in my mind, there was more to it than just that.

When I read what Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had said about how we meditate on Kṛṣṇa while performing our activities, the verse he quoted from **Śrī Īsopaniṣad** stood out to me.

Everything that exists is controlled and owned by the Lord. Therefore, one should accept only what is necessary for his own maintenance. One should not be attached to anything, for he should know who all things belong to.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

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I was also thinking about what Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī teaches in his comments on this verse.

You should do your duties of the world by the method of worshipping God thereby. If your duties are practiced along with the simultaneous meditation of obeying the command of the Supreme Lord, then it will be a subsidiary spiritual function being helpful for the growth of the tendency toward bhakti. This is because, by working in these ways, and with these understandings, one is, in truth, always seeking the protection of God.

God has told us to practice cleanliness. In the great book of the Vedas that contains the Bhagavad-gītā as one of its chapters, we find a list of our duties given, and amongst these is purity or cleanliness, therefore, my friend could bring his locker cleaning activities to the level of a subsidiary spiritual function by thinking in this way:

“It is my duty to keep Kṛṣṇa’s locker clean. Since it belongs to Him, I will do my absolute best to clean it and I will offer both this activity and the results it brings to Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a means of worshipping Him. Since He is both in control of the results of these efforts, and the rewarder of them as well, I will neither seek nor gain any personal benefit, not even that of recognition for my efforts, nor will I feel that I am responsible for the results of my work. Everything is taking place by His will and under His control, so all I can do is make an attempt to please Him with my efforts.”

Later, as I was preparing to share this with you, I came across two quotes that further confirmed for me that this way a valid and proper approach, even if it did involve a bit of mental gymnastics. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura teaches us:

Devotees perform all their activities, whether mundane, Vedic, or related to the body, with the feeling that, “Bhagavān is my master, and it is for His pleasure that I am offering everything to His feet. (Commentary—Bhagavad-gītā 9.27)

In sharing this teaching with us, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura confirms it by quoting the **Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam**, where we find:

In accordance with the particular characteristics one has acquired due to the activities and experiences of his material lives, whatever one does with his body, mind, senses, intelligence, or purified consciousness, should be offered to the Lord, thinking, “This is for the pleasure of Bhagavān.” (11.2.36)

This same idea, that of cleaning Kṛṣṇa’s locker and offering both the action and the result to Him, can be transformed into everything we do in life, as long as we understand the importance of the first part of this last quote.

You and I are both in prison due to our own activities. The activities we performed in this life were driven by the activities we performed in our last life/lives. It was due to the activities and experiences of those lives that we wound up in prison, and thus we are assigned with duties like cleaning a locker or scrubbing a shower, and yet, although we may not like to accept such services, seeing them as menial or below us, we must accept them and enthusiastically perform them.

We can think of it in this way. If the owner of a large company has one employee who has a very high position, with great responsibilities, fails to take his job seriously and performs it poorly, the owner will be displeased, despite the position the employee has risen to; on the other hand, he will be very pleased to see even the lowest employee, such as the janitor, taking pride in his work and doing the best job that he can.

So here we are, inmates who are often in a position to perform tasks that may not be to our liking, but this in no way denies us the opportunity to offer both our work and its results to the Lord. If we have to clean a shower, we can make Kṛṣṇa’s shower

sparkle. If we repair a roof, we can do our best to ensure that no water leaks through it to damage Kṛṣṇa’s building, and if we have to clean our room, we can do our best to make Kṛṣṇa’s room perfectly spotless.

In a similar way, we can use this system to maintain our health; in other words, to maintain the vehicle that Kṛṣṇa has loaned us so that we can travel around in His world.

The same friend of mine who was cleaning Kṛṣṇa’s locker was also concerned that he was having to do small jobs, like making beds, for others in order to get some lotion that he needed for his dry skin. By adopting the right mind set, he could instead think like this, “Kṛṣṇa has loaned me this body. It is my duty to maintain it. He will be pleased if I do this for Him, so, I will make these beds of His, offer the finished product to Him, and, accepting Him (and not the other inmates) as the one who has provided me with this lotion, I will use it to maintain His vehicle.”

In this same regard, there is another aspect of how we can learn to look at our activities in this world that will perhaps help you meditate on Kṛṣṇa as you go about performing them.

In the Bhagavad-gītā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells us this:

When one faithfully discharges his prescribed duties in this world, while simultaneously deliberating on the underlying spiritual realities [I am not this body, everything belongs to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, etc.], his activities become an offering to the Lord. When this offering is performed solely out of service to the Lord, all of the ingredients of that activity, including the objects used, the performer of the acts, and even the act itself become situated entirely in the spiritual dimension, and thus, any results that are produced, will also be situated in that dimension as well. (B.G. 4.24)

With these truths in mind, we can understand that by seeing all aspects of our activities through the lens of the Vedas, and carrying them out as offerings to the Lord, we can spiritualize every aspect of them. The locker we clean, the shine of the showers walls, the work that goes into our actions, and even we ourselves rise above the material dimension, for they all become situated as offerings at the Lord’s lotus feet, which are Themselves situated in the spiritual dimension.

These truths may seem incredible, but this in no way makes them any less real. No steel, concrete, barbed wire, or prison official can prevent us from transporting ourselves into an entirely separate, and fully superior reality—if we can learn to visualize and accept the fact that, by our own efforts and understandings, we can leave all the confinements of this world behind and enter a dimension where every act is carried out in an effort to benefit the Lord, where every word is a song, and where every step is a dance.

We should not doubt these truths, nor should we feel that we will only begin to be affected by them in advanced stages of our journey to prema. There are many statements in the Vedas that confirm the fact that we can rise entirely above material dimension and the influence of the gunas which control all that takes place there.

In this regard, by remembering the fact that it is the gunas that shape and mold our material personalities, the material bodies that we travel around in, and that drive us to perform material activities, we can understand that, by rising above their influence, by becoming nirguna, everything about us will change, as we will then be shaped by prema, which is the “doer”, the controlling influence of the spiritual dimension.

The fact that this process begins as soon as we commit ourselves fully to our bhakti practices is confirmed by Śrīla Gurudeva in his commentary to Gītā verse 14.26.

How does the above-mentioned person who is transcendental to the three gunas cross beyond them? In response to this question, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “As a result of rendering service to Me

in My bluish-black, two-armed form (Śyāmasundara) with undeviating, one-pointed bhakti-yoga, My devotees easily cross over these gunas and become qualified to experience My original form and personality (svarūpa).” **Only those devotees who have taken shelter of Kṛṣṇa become free from the gunas.** This is verified in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.25.26): Those who take exclusive shelter of Me are nirguna. The Sanskrit words used in this verse means that only a devotee who takes exclusive shelter of Me, being fully dependent on Me, is free from the influence of the gunas.

It is also seen in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.88.5):

Certainly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is directly the Supreme Person, who is beyond the influence of the gunas (nirguna). He is the witness of everyone. Those who worship Him also transcend the gunas (become nirguna).

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura writes; **From the very beginning of the sādhana stage, when one takes shelter of bhakti to the Supreme Lord, Bhagavān begins His treatment of His surrendered devotees. In other words, He starts to make them nirguna.** This means, that in his practice of bhakti, a devotee on the platform of sādhana-bhakti will progress systematically through the different stages: *nīṣṭhā* (steadiness in his bhakti practices), *ruṇi* (taste for his bhakti), and *āsakti* (deep attachment to bhakti and the Supreme Lord). Eventually he achieves *rati* (or *bhāva*, spiritual emotions), and becomes completely free from the gunas. At that time, he has no relationship with illusory objects, such as his body or a house.

Bhakti’s power is so inconceivable that even while still receiving instruction, the devotees transcendental body, mind, and senses (svarūpa) are created by Me in a way that is hidden or invisible. In other words, this process is unknown to the jīva. Similarly, his illusory body, mind, and senses are also removed in a way that is imperceptible. This shows the glory of bhakti.

At that time, after being situated in his own svarūpa in My supreme abode, that pure jīva becomes qualified to taste the bliss of rendering service to Me.

In many places, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura has confirmed that a devotee become free from the gunas even in the stage of sādhana. Although objects such as a leaf, flower, fruit, water, and sandalwood paste appear to be material in the eyes of non-devotees, when the devotee offers them to Kṛṣṇa with devotion, they attain a transcendental nature and become situated beyond the three gunas. How much more is this true of the devotees who fully offer themselves? This is also confirmed in Caitanya-caritamṛta, Antya-līlā (4.191):

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said: “The body of a bhakta (devotee) is never material. It is considered to be spiritual and full of spiritual bliss.”

Using various quotes, Śrīla Gurudeva has confirmed that all aspects of our worship becomes spiritualized if properly offered to the Lord, and thus, by engaging our thoughts and our activities in these ways we can perform the subsidiary devotional practices that will raise our consciousness to the point where we ourselves become free from the influences of the gunas and situated in the spiritual dimension.

As I continue to try to share these quotes and truths with you, I will again go back to the original instructions given to Lord Brahmā, where, in the final verse of Chapter 5 in the Śrī Brahma Samhitā, **Śrī Kṛṣṇa** teaches Lord Brahmā (and us):

O Brahmā! After considering all of these truths, you should use the fiery energy that I have given you to intelligently conduct your duties in this world. While doing so, you should remain constantly aware of the fact that everything in this world is generated from Me and by Me. The animating energy of spirit, the ingredients of matter, the material dimension itself, and even the seed of all these things, all spring from Me. (Śrī Brahma Samhitā Text 62)

In this verse, the teaching that struck me as being one that I

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

could rely on to assist myself in always remembering Kṛṣṇa is His statement that Lord Brahmā should use the fiery energy that the Lord has given him to conduct his duties. This helps me remember that every act I perform is actually carried out by the energies of the Lord. Without these energies, no activities can take place. We, as jīvas, are actually nothing more than spark of consciousness, which, in this verse, are referred to as “the animating spirit”, but even still, this consciousness alone does not provide us with the energy to act.

I know this from personal experience, for I was once in a coma as a result of serious injuries I sustained in an automobile accident. Although my consciousness (the real me) never left my body, the energy to perform activities was temporarily withdrawn. I have some memories of that time, where, although I was somewhat aware of my surroundings, I knew I was totally incapable of any movement, and therefore, when I awoke from the coma, I became extremely aware of the fact that some additional factor, other than the “me” of consciousness, had been restored to me. Later, upon studying these words of Kṛṣṇa, I was able to understand that it was this “fiery energy” that had been withdrawn from me.

Since that time, I am often aware of the fact that everything I am allowed to do in this world, all my activities, are ultimately being carried out not by me, but by the energy which the Lord has empowered His vehicle, this body I reside in with. To put it in a simple way, He provides both the car and the gasoline that allows me to do things, and without both of these ingredients, I cannot go anywhere or do anything.

Before I say some closing words. I would like to point out another aspect of this practice of developing ways to always remember Kṛṣṇa. In his commentary on Kṛṣṇa’s instructions to Lord Brahmā, **Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī** has pointed out that we are not to rely solely upon these subsidiary devotional practices. He expresses this truth in this way:

When [the activities of body, mind, and society] are managed to be performed in a way that is conducive to our endeavor for attainment of bhakti they are called the subsidiary devotional practices. But only those activities that are characterized by the principle of pure worship are called bhakti proper. My meditation is practiced in every act when bhakti proper is practiced in due time...

Thus we can understand that subsidiary devotional practices alone do not constitute the means to reach our goal, in fact, all this really does is keep us headed in the right direction, or, as **Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī** puts it:

...while performing the subsidiary devotional activities in one’s interactions with the ungodly people of this world, a jīva does not become apathetic to God, even while performing those worldly activities. This constitutes the practice of looking inwards, i.e., turning towards the real self.

As mentioned in the second quote above, we must practice “bhakti proper” in due time. In other words, we must set aside as much time as we possibly can to hear about spiritual truths; to chant the Holy Names while exclusively meditating on the names forms, qualities, associates, and pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; to glorify and worship Śrī guru; to worship the Deity; and to engage in the other activities that constitute “bhakti proper.”

This is not to imply that we cannot also conduct such activities as chanting the Holy names while we engage in other activities, in fact, we are encouraged to do so, instead, what is being pointed out here, is that we must not allow all of our time and energy to be caught up in subsidiary devotional practices while we totally neglect the purer and more fully concentrated practice of bhakti proper.

These are the thoughts that I wanted to share with you. Since I do not possess the potency to personally reveal any spiritual truths or understandings to you, I will offer these words to Śrīla Gurudeva and ask him to empower them with his own mercy and

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guidance, for it is only through and by the mercy of Śrī guru and the sādhus that any of us can gain spiritual knowledge and have those truths enter into our hearts. With these facts in mind, I hope that all of you will join me in thanking Śrīla Gurudeva for any true knowledge or understandings that we have gained through this course or any of the other literatures that we have received.

All I can do is hope to serve the group of devotees who kindly conduct all the affairs of this Prison Outreach Program. As they are all very dedicated servants of Śrīla Gurudeva, by serving them, I try to be the servant, of the servants, of Śrīla Gurudeva, who is himself a servant of Śrī Rādhā, who is Herself the topmost servant of the Lord.

I pray, that by the mercy of Śrīla Gurudeva, you develop ways of always remembering Kṛṣṇa and meditating on Him, even as you conduct your worldly affairs, for in doing so, and by offering both your activities and their results to Him, you can raise both you and your activities to a higher dimension, where all objects, activities, and the performers thereof become truly “out of this world”, being situated in it, but not of it, they rise into the spiritual reality.

Thank you for traveling along with me. I will keep you in my prayers, and I ask you to keep all of us who are walking along together on this bhakti path in yours.

Daśa-mula—Ten Roots

As we mentioned at the start of this lesson, our great ācārya, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, has broken down the instructions that were given to us by Lord Caitanya into ten basic teachings. Known as the “daśa-mula” + duh-shuh moo-luh (from “daśa, ten, and “mūla”, root, origin, basis) these great truths have been discussed in the **glossary to Jaiva Dharma** in this way:

In the Āyur-veda, [the portion of the Vedas that deals with] the science of herbal medicine, there are ten roots which, when combined together, produce a tonic which sustains life and counteracts disease. Similarly, there are ten [principles that explain the very basic truths of all that exists, which includes the reason and purpose for the existence of the individual soul]. When these are properly understood and realized, they destroy the disease of material existence and give life to the soul.

The first of these principles is known as pramāṇa + pruh-mān/like mono, the evidence which establishes the existence of the fundamental truths. The other nine principles are known as prameya + pruh-may-uh, the truths which are to be established.

From early on in his course, we began to discuss the importance of relying on valid evidence in our search for the answers to life’s greatest and most important questions. In that lesson, we also discussed logic and argument and we showed how the progress we make on our journey to prema can be accelerated if we fuel all our understandings with the pure and perfect knowledge of the Vedas, as they are delivered to us by the sādhus, while, on the other hand, our progress can be slowed, or even brought to a near standstill, if we allow our understandings to be filtered through the fault-filled logic and arguments of the mind or distorted by interpretations of the Vedas given by non-Vaiṣṇavas, such as māyāvādīs and others who put forth their own faulty conclusions.

So, although we’ve discussed this subject in quite a bit of detail in the past, we’re still going to share some of the quotes which Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura has given us on the subject of pramāṇa, evidence. Then we’ll move on to discuss the nine remaining roots, or fundamental truths which make up the basic teachings of Lord Caitanya, and in doing so, we’ll again be sharing many quotes from Jaiva Dharma with you. However, before we discuss these ten truths, we’d like to point out an interesting fact that should help us to gain an even better understanding of why it is so important to understand that bhakti-yoga is not just a religion based on faith, but it is instead, as pointed out in the sub-titled to this course, a fact based science of

the soul.

Ontology and Metaphysics

Although most of us probably have no idea what the first word we’ve used in the title to this section means, it can, if properly understood and applied, be used to describe an important part of the science of bhakti-yoga.

Webster’s Dictionary defines **ontology** as “**the science that deals with the nature of pure being.**”

This definition, in essence, also speaks of bhakti-yoga because, as we have shown, our pure being is composed of existence, awareness, and bliss, and these qualities can only be fully developed and experienced when we engage ourselves fully in the service of the Lord, which is, in and of itself, the only way to fully express our true nature.

Unfortunately, this English term, ontology, also included an aspect within its meaning that entirely rules out the first of the daśa-mula’s—evidence. We say this because the remaining part of the definition of **ontology** is “**that part of metaphysics which deals with the nature of existence.**”

“But wait,” you may say, “this sounds like the same thing. What’s the difference between exploring the nature of pure being and the nature of existence?”

The problem with this second definition of ontology lies within the other word we’ve used in the title to this section, which, by the way, is another word that most of us probably do not know the meaning of, metaphysics. So again, relying on Webster’s Dictionary, let’s look at the definition of this word as well.

Metaphysics is defined as: **that branch of the study of the principles underlying the nature of the universe which seeks to explain the nature of being and reality; speculative philosophy in general.**

“But wait” you may reply, “this still sounds like the same thing. Aren’t studying ‘the nature of pure being,’ and ‘the nature of existence,’ and ‘the nature of being and reality,’ all so closely related that they basically express the same thing?”

In answer, we can say this, “Yes, these aspects of ontology and metaphysics are included in the science of bhakti-yoga as well, however, the key to the difference between the ontologists and the metaphysicians and the bhaktas lies in the way they go about conducting their search and answering their questions about the nature of the universe, the nature of existence, and the nature of being and reality.

This difference becomes clear when we look back to the words in *italics* in the last **bold** definition given above, for in metaphysics which is the larger field of science that ontology falls within, we find the entire science is that which “**seeks to explain**” these truths, and that all of this falls into the even larger field of **speculative philosophy in general.**”

This is the opposite of bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga does not “seek to explain,” nor does it ever “speculate about anything.” Bhakti-yoga simply relies on evidence.

Referring back to Webster’s Dictionary once again, we find “**speculate**” defined in this way; “**to theorize, make conjectures or guesses about,**” and furthermore, it defines “**conjecture**” as, “**inference based on incomplete or inconclusive evidence.**”

So this defines how most people in this world search for the answers to life’s most important questions, they theorize, they make guesses, and they rely on reasoning and logic, which make up the two definitions of inference found in Webster’s Dictionary, and which, to make things even more shaky, is based, by definition, on incomplete and inconclusive evidence.

For all of us at the International Pure Bhakti Yoga Society, and for all of the other Vaiṣṇavas in this world, these fault filled sources will never be relied on. We cannot even imagine living a life where the nature of our being, our existence, or our reality is based upon guess work, or upon incomplete and inconclusive evidence, and yet that is the exact position of all of those who rely

upon ontology and metaphysics.

The evidence, the *pramāṇa* of the Vedas, is neither inconclusive nor incomplete. Every single truth presented there is part of the most conclusive and complete philosophy that has or ever will exist, for in essence, the Vedas present (note the two capital letters) the **Absolute Truth**.

In lesson 15, when we described some of the hellish planets, we were only presenting you with a tiny portion of the amazing and accurate descriptions how the total of all that exists is precisely described in the Vedas. The exact descriptions of all aspects of our being, our existence, and reality itself are given in fully detailed and precise ways.

There is zero room for guess work, no need for theories, and the fault-filled methods of logic and reasoning, which rely on the fault-filled material mind, are all totally rejected in favor of relying on the *pramāṇa* of the Vedas.

A Vaiṣṇava does not speculate, nor does he seek to explain life's greatest and most important mysteries—because these mysteries have all been solved for him. By accepting the facts as they are presented, he has no need to seek out, based on his own endeavors or limited abilities, the knowledge that Śrī guru will most happily provide to him.

The facts tell us that, although all truly religious texts and scriptures have their own roles to play in the historical uplifting of mankind, no other scriptures contain the vast amount of details, nor the sheer volume of information that is found in the Vedas.

The description of the process of creation that is given in the Vedas is so full of specific facts that its depth of explanation is almost mind boggling. Beginning with the original seed of creation (the Lord's own desire to expand His own pure experiences), and continuing through the nature of the soul and how it becomes involved in material existence, creation is explained in a much more complex and profound way, thus allowing us to better understand both ourselves and the entire reality of our existence.

So, while ontology and metaphysics may have a similar goal in mind, and while it is a good idea for us to know about our being, our existence, and our reality, if we are wise, we will not look to fault-filled means of finding these answers, when instead, we can so easily turn to and rely on the complete and conclusive evidence of the Vedas.

So, having shared this comparison with you, let's now take a look at some of the things that one of our greatest ācāryas has told us about this evidence.

The First Daśa-mūla—Pramāṇa /Evidence

In Jaiva Dharma, we find that much of this work is written in the form of dialogue, where one party is asking questions on a given subject, and the other, who is always a Vaiṣṇava practitioner of bhakti-yoga, is providing the answers. In the chapter where the discussion on the *daśa-mūla*'s begins, the questioner first asks his guru to bestow the knowledge of the ten fundamental principles upon him, and, in answer to this, he first lists all ten of these truths. However, in our discussion here, we will first discuss these truths individually, and then, at the end, we will provide you with the complete list so that you can bring into concentrated focus the various truths that are contained therein.

Throughout this great work, the author uses hundreds of Sanskrit terms which will not be familiar to most of you, and which, at this point in your studies you may or may not want or need to learn. For this reason, we are simply going to include the Sanskrit term, (in parenthesis). After the English equivalents are given, without spending a lot of time focusing on these terms. Then, for those of you who are more serious about learning these terms, we will, where needed, provide a more complete explanation in the glossary at the end of this lesson.

In beginning his explanation of the *daśa-mūlas*, Śrīla **Bhaktivinoda Thākura** defines *pramāṇa* /evidence in this way:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

The self-evident Vedas, which have been received in disciple succession (*sampradāya*) through the system of passing teachings from guru to student (*guru-paramparā*) by recipients of the Supreme Lord's (Śrī Hari) mercy, such as Lord Brahmā and others, are known as those truths which have been spoken and committed to memory (*āmnāya -vākyas*). The nine truths which are to be proved (*prameya-tattvas*) are established by these spoken and remembered truths with the help of other evidence that follows the guidance of these scriptures (*śāstras*), such as evidence obtained by direct sense perception. Reasoning that is only based on logic is always crippled when evaluating inconceivable subject matters, since logic and argument have no access in the realm of the inconceivable. (Jaiva Dharma)

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In this quote, there are two Sanskrit terms used that are extremely important when it comes to understanding why the knowledge we receive from the Vedas can be depended on as reliable evidence, and therefore, in order to fully explore this first of the ten roots (*daśa-mūla*) with you, we're going to discuss these words in some detail.

There is another reason why we're doing this as well. As we grow in our knowledge of the teachings of Lord Caitanya, which, in essence, make up the foundation of all the truths we share in this course, we will naturally want to begin to share these truths with others. As we do this, it is important for us to understand where these truths come from, so that, if asked, we can present answers that will satisfy those questioning us, while also providing them with a solid explanation of what we present.

For example, for those who rely on the unreliable systems of inquiry that we discussed earlier (ontology and metaphysics), it may be difficult for them to accept that pure, perfect, and complete answers to such questions as: What does God look like? or: How was this universe created? and, if they do exist, they may want to learn what the source of this evidence is and why it can be trusted.

In lesson 19, and again in this lesson, we shared quotes with you from an important Vedic text called Śrī Brahma Saṁhitā. In this text, the truths that were revealed to Lord Brahmā, at the very beginning of this universe, are revealed to us, along with the instructions that the Lord gave to the first being in this universe at that time, and, the Vedas provide us with evidence that the system which has ensured that this pure and perfect knowledge has been properly passed down to us began shortly after that time as well.

In this quote, the Supreme Lord, Śrī Bhagavān tells us:

By the influence of time, the Vedas, which contain My own personal instructions on the nature of reality, as well as the material and spiritual duties and responsibilities of all living beings (*bhāgavat-dharma*) were lost. This occurred when the regular cyclical devastation of the material universes occurred. At the beginning of the next period of material creation, I again instructed Brahmā with the exact same knowledge (the Vedas), which is, by its nature of having come directly from Me, identical with Myself. Brahmā then instructed his son Manu in the Vedic knowledge, and Manu in turn instructed the same science to the seven great sages, headed by Bhṛgu. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.3)

Here we have a description, given by the infallible evidence of the Lord's own testimony, of how the system of *paramparā* (also known as *guru-paramparā*) and the exchange of knowledge known as *sampradāya* began.

When a person who has a full understanding of the Vedas (a guru) directly speaks or instructs his knowledge to a student/disciple, and then his student, becoming guru, later passes this same information on to his student, and so on, and so on, this system of instruction is known as paramparā + puh-rum-puh-rā (like rod).

The Sanskrit term, *sampradāya*, + *sum-pruh-dā-yuh* (*dā* like dot), can be used as a synonym for *paramparā*, referring to this

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passing on of knowledge, and it can also be used to refer to **the body of knowledge itself, to the doctrine that is established and passed on in this way.**

So far in this course, we have referred to these systems using terms like “the chain of gurus” and “lineage”, but since we are now exposing you to more of the proper terms, we thought it best to share these new terms with you.

Of course, the realities of this world tell us that not all doctrines that are passed on in this way are valid. For example, the doctrine of māyāvāda, which teaches that both the individuality of the living beings and all forms of God are illusions, also makes up a sampradāya that is passed on by paramparā. This is why it is important for us to know about the history of our own sampradāya, for this will allow us to become fully confident that it originated from the purest source and allow us to share the source of our evidence with others as well.

In Jaiva Dharma, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura gives us a long list of the exact order of the gurus in our sampradāya, beginning with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who passed the knowledge of the Vedas on to Lord Brahmā. We will not share this long list of mostly unfamiliar names with you, but we tell you of this list to show you that this tradition of passing on knowledge/evidence in this way is both an extremely ancient and a highly-documented system as well.

We also wish to share that our particular sampradāya is not the only valid and authorized Vaiṣṇava sampradāya that exists. In fact, the Vedas list four separate and distinct Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas. There is however something that is very unique about our sampradāya which makes its brilliance shine even more brightly than these other lineages. And, in order to fully share the reasons for this with you, we will also need to go into a bit more detail about both our sampradāya and the other three valid ones as well.

We can start this examination with a quote from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura.

Of these four [Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas] the Brahma-sampradāya is the most ancient, and it has continued through the paramparā until the present day. These sampradāyas adhere to the system of guru-paramparā and they have brought the proper conclusions of all the Vedas (the Vedānta) and other supremely auspicious literatures forward, in a completely unchanged way, from the most ancient times, and, by the potency that exists within the system of paramparā, there is not the slightest chance that they have made any change or eliminated any portion. There is, therefore, no reason to doubt the literature that the sampradāya has authorized. The sampradāya is an effective and indispensable arrangement, and for this reason, the pure sampradāya system is continuing amongst saints and sādhus from the most ancient times.

So, while it is true that the other three sampradāyas are valid, none can be more ancient than that whose first disciple was Lord Brahmā, the very first being of this universe, and all of the gurus in our line belong to this sampradāya.

In addition to being the most ancient, there is another, even more important factor that solidifies our sampradāya as being the finest that exists.

When Lord Caitanya descended to this planet, He personally accepted a guru in this sampradāya as His own instructor, and thus, in doing so, He glorified this line, while He simultaneously expanded both its teachings and its influence, thus ensuring that it would rise to become the pre-eminent spiritual lineage in existence.

On this note, we also wish to point out that, as part of our definition and discussion on both paramparā and sampradāya, we have said that the teachings passed down by these systems must be the same information, that this knowledge must be “completely unchanged without eliminating any portions,” and

yet, in the glossary to Jaiva Dharma, we find a statement that says:

Because [Lord Caitanya] is Śrī Bhagavān Himself, He has presented the highest conceptions of love of God which were previously unknown to any of the sampradāya.

In our “Guide to Vaiṣṇava Holy Days” we mentioned how a disciple of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura had triumphed in a debate where the doctrine of Lord Caitanya had been challenged. One of the reasons for this challenge was exactly what is mentioned in the above quote, that Lord Caitanya had revealed truths that were previously unknown, and thus, it was claimed that He was not a member of one for the four bona fide Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas.

In this debate, and in the writings of all our ācāryas, both previously and since, it is shown that while Lord Caitanya may have revealed truths which added to the knowledge that was previously available, in no way did He “change” or “eliminate any portions” of what was being taught, and that, in fact, everything He taught was fully supported by the truths that were known previously.

We now wish to share with you the full name of the sampradāya that Śrīla Gurudeva and all the ācāryas in our line belong to, after which we will explain exactly why it goes by that name.

Śrī Brahma-Madhava Gaudiya sampradāya

+ when the name Brahmā is written as part of a compound word, the diacritical mark (the line over the “ā” in Lord Brahmā) is dropped.

The first part of this title refers to Lord Brahmā. The second word refers to a great ācārya in our line who was born in 1239. Commonly known as Madhvācārya, he was a powerful preacher who set out to battle and defeat the Māyāvāda doctrine, and, through his debates and writings, made great advances in bringing huge numbers of people toward the proper understandings.

The third word, Gaudiya +Go-dee-yuh, refers specifically to the fact that the branch of this sampradāya that accepts the teachings of Lord Caitanya as the highest conclusive truths was established in an area of India known as Gauda+Go-duh. This additional designation is necessary because some followers of this sampradāya did not accept some of the teachings of Lord Caitanya, such as the fact that the worship of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is the highest means of worship.

When we began this discussion on where the teachings that we accept and follow come from, we told you that it can be beneficial to know these truths so that we can tell others who may wonder about the source of this knowledge. Therefore, we suggest that you learn the name of our sampradāya, as given above. In this way, you will be able to demonstrate that the truths you wish to share flow from a line of gurus that starts with God Himself (as He was the original instructor of Lord Brahmā) and which was updated and brought to the highest and most perfect level, quite recently, when God Himself, as Lord Caitanya, descended from 1486 to 1532 in order to ensure that these truths would be available to us.

And we conclude this discussion by returning to the topic that this section is ultimately entirely focused upon, pramāna, evidence.

By using our material senses, which includes the mind and its logic and reasoning, we can **never** arrive at the answers to life’s most important questions, for truths such as what God looks like can only come to us from a dimension that our senses have no access to.

If we examine the availability of these truths from a perspective of the qualities that all faiths accept as being a part of God’s character, then we must accept the fact that these truths are available to us. For example, there is no question that God is merciful, and there is no question that He knows that countless

people will surely wonder, “What does God look like?” Knowing this, as He does, it would show a lack of mercy if He chose to make it impossible for us to know the answer to this question. Therefore, **the only possible conclusion is that, out of His mercy, the answers to these types of questions must be available to us.** And, as we have shown, these answers come to us directly from God Himself, and He keeps them intact by delivering them to us through the guru-paramparā and the Śrī Brahma Madhava-Gaudiya sampradāya.

This is true and trustworthy evidence of the nature of reality, and, we are wise to accept this, and only this evidence, as that which we can base our lives upon, and, in doing so, we should also feel extremely blessed to be able to receive these truths, while we also feel unlimited love and gratitude toward Śrīla Gurudeva and our other ācāryas for having preserved these truths and passed them on to us.

Evidence—pramāna—what it truly is, and why we can trust it; this is the first of the ten roots (daśa-mula) of Lord Caitanya’s teachings.

Prameya—That Which Is Proved

In a court of law, evidence is presented in an attempt to prove the position of the party that is presenting it. In criminal law, the prosecutor sets out to prove the guilt of the accused, and the defense, although not technically required to, will often attempt to put forth evidence that proves the innocence of the accused, or that at least creates a reasonable doubt as to his guilt.

In civil cases, the opposing parties each set out to present evidence that will convince the judge or jury that their position should prevail, and this is often or usually carried out entirely to settle some financial disagreement.

The evidence of the Vedas, however, is presented to us with an entirely different set of motives. This pramāna sets out to deliver to us a complete and vivid picture of reality, and, in doing so, it provides us with an opportunity to use this knowledge to attain various goals, which can, in a general sense, be divided into two categories.

In Lessons 17 and 18, we spent a lot of time discussing the goal of life, and, in doing so, we told you that while the “do not touch” goal of escaping the miseries of this world is vital to some, the higher, purer, and most perfect goal is simply to strive for ahaitukī-bhakti. (We hope you remember our description of what makes up this type of bhakti.)

The title of this section, Prameya—That Which Is Proved, refers to the next nine roots of daśa-mula, for although all of the evidence doubtlessly proves many things, if we do not use it to understand the realities of our existence, which includes our purpose and our goal, then all of the knowledge we attain is useless, and this is why the word pramāna is also translated as “fundamental truths.”

In further breaking down these truths, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura tells us that the first seven that are given in daśa-mula (numbers two through eight in that list) describe sambandha-tattva, the first of the three sets of truths which Lord Caitanya has mercifully given to us. This knowledge of relationships (sambandha) is a very important part of the teachings of bhakti-yoga, so let’s begin to explore these next seven aspects of daśa-mula.

Daśa-mula Two

Parama-tattva—The Supreme Absolute Truth

In order for us to practice a pure and focused type of worship, we need to have specific information about exactly who it is that we are directing our love and service toward. If we simply have a vague notion of “God” as some person or force that is beyond our knowledge, we will find that it is difficult to understand and to love Him. It is for this reason that the first of the prameyas, those truths which are to be proved, is that the Supreme Absolute Truth is none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

In the second śloka +shlo-kuh (like slope/cup), or verse, of the Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare -

daśa-mula Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura teaches us this:

Staple

Srī Hari/Kṛṣṇa, to whom Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Indra and all the other demigods continuously bow down in respect, is the only Supreme Absolute Truth. The formless, non-variegated aspect of God (brahma) that is devoid of potencies (śakti) is Śrī Hari’s effulgence. The form of the Lord who is involved in the creation of the material universes, and who enters into them as the indwelling Supersoul of all (Mahā-Viṣṇu), is simply a partial manifestation who emanates from Him. It is Śrī Hari alone, who embodies the entire spiritual reality, and whose complexion is the color of a freshly formed thundercloud, who is the beloved of Śrī Rādhā. (Jaiva Dharma)

In explaining this śloka to us, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura first discusses the relationship between the Supreme Person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and His other aspects, and the first of these which he focuses on is that of His impersonal form, brahma. He tells us:

The changeless, inactive, formless brahma, which exists without body, limbs, and so on, is not, in and of itself, a complete spiritual reality; rather it depends on the spiritual form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Brahma is therefore not a supreme entity that exists in its own right; it is merely a quality of the true supreme entity. That brahma is simply the bodily effulgence of that Supreme entity, a mere quality of that Supreme Absolute Truth, just as the light of a fire is not a complete and independent reality, but only a quality that depends on the existence of, and which emanates from the fire. (Jaiva Dharma)

Then, in order to fully support this prameya, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura shares many quotes from the Vedas with us. In this first quote, one of the Lord’s many inconceivable (acintya) qualities are described, for these qualities set Him apart as an unmatched being.

The origin of all avatārs is complete and perfect. Because He is completely perfect, all avatārs emanating from Him are also complete. All that emanates directly from the Supreme Complete is also complete. Even if the complete is subtracted from the complete, He still remains complete. In no way does that Supreme Controller experience a lessening in any way. (Śrī Īśopaniṣad, Invocation)

This quality of the Lord cannot be experienced within the framework of material reality. If we subtract something from something, both the original object and that which was removed from it will necessarily be less than the original, but, in the case of the Lord, both He, and the other avatārs that emanate from Him, are complete. And yet, in spite of this truth, as we continue to look at this first aspect of sambandha, we will find that all aspects/forms of the Lord other than His form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are simultaneously different and non-different from Him.

This truth arises from the fact that His original form, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, possesses an overwhelming abundance of sweetness that does not exist in His other forms, even though They do possess all of His majestic powers. In next month’s lesson, we are going to discuss, in quite a bit of detail, the primary qualities of the Lord, and, in doing so, we will tell you about the specific qualities that are possessed only by the cowherd boy (gopa) of Vṛndāvana. For now, we will finish up this section on the relationship between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His other aspects by sharing some more evidence (pramāna) with you. Here, relying on quotes from the Vedas, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura supports the reality of the fact that Śyāmasundara, the “like a blue pearl”, two-handed, cowherd boy is indeed the parama-tattva, the Supreme Absolute Truth.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is eternally manifest in two features, one of opulence and majesty and the other of sweetness. The majesty feature manifests as Nārāyaṇa, who is the master of the spiritual sky, Vaikuntha. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the utmost limit of complete sweetness; indeed, it is sweetness is so great that its rays completely cover His majesty. From the perspective of comparing Their essence

Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Staple there is no difference between these two. However, when we consider the degree of tastes that can be tasted in the spiritual worlds, Kṛṣṇa is not only the presiding Deity of all of these tastes, but He is also the very embodiment (rūpa) of these tastes, and thus it is He who is the supremely pleasing Being. We find evidence in the Vedas, Upaniṣad, and Purāṇas that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Personality of God who possess all opulence's to their fullest degree (svayam Bhagavān). For example, the **Rg Veda** (1.12.164. 31) states:

I saw a boy who appeared in the dynasty of the cowherds. He is infallible and never annihilated. He wanders on various paths, sometimes near and sometimes very far. Sometimes He is beautifully adorned with varieties of garments, and sometimes He wears cloth of only one color. In this way, He repeatedly exhibits His pastimes, both here in this and in the spiritual worlds as well.

In addition, in the **Chāndogya Upaniṣad** (8.13.1) it is stated:

By rendering service to Śyāma, one attains His spiritual realm, which is full of spiritual bliss and astonishing, varieties of pastimes; and within this spiritual realm, one attains the eternal shelter of Śyāma.

We read in the **Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam** (1.3.28)

Rāma [the perfect king], Nṛsimha [half-man, half-lion], and all other avatārs are all expansions or expansions from expansions of the Supreme Personality of God, but Kṛṣṇa is that original Supreme Person Himself.

In the **Bhagavad-gītā** (7.7) Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself says, “O Arjuna, there is nothing superior to Me,” and it is also said in the **Gopala-tapani Upaniṣad** (Purva 2.8):

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the all-pervasive, non-dual, Absolute Truth who controls everything. He is the only worshipable object for all the demigods, for mankind, and for all other life forms. Although He is one, through His inconceivable potencies (acintya-śakti) He manifests many forms and performs many varieties of pastimes.

After explaining this truth to us, the conversation that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura is describing in Jaiva Dharma turns to a subject that is commonly misunderstood by those who wish to deny that God has a personal human-like form, for in the Vedas this form is not only described in great detail (as we shared in Lesson 16 when we discussed the Lord's Deity from and His personal form (rūpa)), but we also find that His form is described as “medium-sized.” Based on a lack of understanding, the student asks his guru:

How can Śrī Kṛṣṇa be all pervading if He has a medium-sized human-like form? If we accept that He has a form, it means that He can only stay in one place at a time, and that gives rise to many philosophical discrepancies. The first is that He cannot be the all-pervading reality if He has a form and a body. Secondly, if He has a body, He, will be limited by the qualities that control the material affairs (the gunas), so how, in this condition, can He be independent and have limitless and absolute authority? How can this be reconciled?

In answer to this sincere but doubt-filled inquiry, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura shares many truths as he writes about the answer that was given by the student's guru.

My dear son, you are now thinking like this because you are bound by the qualities of māyā. As long as the intelligence remains bound by material qualities, it cannot touch the pure spiritual reality. If such conditioned intelligence attempts to exceed its own limitations in trying to understand this spiritual reality, it superimposes (āropa) illusory forms and qualities on the pure spiritual reality and thus conceives that the limitations of material forms apply to spiritual forms as well. After some time, the intellect, [influenced by māyā], rejects the purely spiritual form of the Lord as being temporary, changeable, and

subject to the influence of the gunas, and thus it imagines that the Lord exists only as a formless being (brahma). That is why one who relies only on the intelligence cannot gain an understanding of the Absolute Truth.

Whatever limitations you are inferring about the spiritual medium-sized forms of the Lord are completely unfounded. Believing that what is spiritual must simply be the opposite of what is material, the intellect accepts that the Lord is formless, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa has qualities that are neither formless nor material: for example, His lotus petal shaped eyes; His beautiful, blossoming, smiling face; His lotus feet which bestow fearlessness and peace upon His devotees (bhaktas); and His spiritual form which is an embodiment of the pure spiritual reality, and which exists in a body that is just suitable for Him to engage in varieties of playful pastimes. His medium-sized form is actually the essence of both His bodily existence and His all pervasiveness for it is in no way limited by material considerations, and it is supremely pleasing as well. The Nārada-pañcarātra describes His extreme attractiveness in a way that is filled with the true and proper philosophical understanding.

The spiritual body of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is composed of existence/eternity, awareness/consciousness, and bliss, without any trace of material qualities. He is therefore not subject to material time or space. On the contrary, He exists fully at all places and in all times simultaneously. Material substances are always limited by time and place, and therefore, medium-sized objects in this world cannot also be all-pervasive (existing everywhere), but this quality is charmingly manifest in Kṛṣṇa's medium-sized form. That is the supreme glory of His purely spiritual form.

Who has told you that there must be material qualities and limitations wherever there is a medium-sized form? As long as your intelligence remains bound up by material impressions (saṁskāras) you will not be able to realize the actual glories of the purely spiritual medium-sized form of the Lord. (Jaiva Dharma)

In this quote, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura refers to the negative type of āropa we discussed in Lesson 16, where one sees purely spiritual objects as material. In a similar way, he refers to the fact that the impressions that we have developed (saṁskāras) through millions upon millions of material birth can restrict or entirely prevent us from being able to gain a proper view and understanding of how the Lord's form can be both localized and simultaneously present in all times and places. **If we are wise, we will not allow the mind to limit the unlimited form of the Lord**, for that very form also possesses the quality that is found within the third daśa-mula...

Daśa-mula Three

Śaktīmān—The Possessor of All Potencies

In earlier lessons, we have shared this quote:

The only thing that is impossible is for something to be impossible because God can do anything.

When we say this however, we must also be aware of another truth as well:

Everything takes place by the desire of the Lord.

By combining these two, we can understand that we cannot simply create our own outlandish and absurd scenarios, such as, “I am (or can become) God myself, because anything is possible,” for in doing so, we deny that fact that God Himself has taught us that this situation will never arise.

In discussing the first bold statement in this section, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura tells us this:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa possesses all potencies, so even that which appears to be impossible is actually possible for Him. What is

astonishing in this? He is the all-potent Personality, the fully independent Supreme controller. He answers to no other authority and He possesses the will to engage in pastimes, and thus, simply by His desire, He can appear in this material world in His original fully-spiritual form, while also bringing His associates and all other aspects and paraphernalia of His spiritual abode with Him as well. How can there be any doubt that He is capable of doing this? (Jaiva Dharma)

There is another aspect to this fourth daśa-mula that establishes the eternal difference between the Lord and us, the jīvas. In previous lessons, we have shared these truths, but we will now quote this daśa-mula, as given to us by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, in order to bring them into our current discussion.

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is non-different from His inconceivable personal potency (or energy), He has His own independent characteristics and desires. His personal potency consists of three aspects—His fully spiritual potency (cit-śakti), His marginal potency (jīva-śakti), and His external potency (māyā-śakti) and He always inspires them to engage in their own proper and distinct functions. That Supreme Absolute Truth (para-tattva) remains completely unchangeable and is eternally situated in the fully spiritual form and personality that exhibits His own full glory, even while He is performing all these other activities such as manifesting and controlling all the forms which arise from His potencies as well. (Jaiva Dharma)

This personal śakti of the Lord has been referred to by various names. It is called His internal potency, His spiritual potency, and His topmost potency, but all these terms refer to the same aspect of His unlimited self.

In previous lessons, we have discussed the relationships (sambandha) that exist between these various potencies (or energies) of the Lord. We have shared that His personal/internal/spiritual/topmost energy is eternally superior to and in control of both the jīvas, who manifest from His marginal potency, and of all material forms and objects, which manifest from His external potency, which is also known as māyā-śakti.

The jīva on the other hand, due to his independence, can fall under the influence of either the Lord's internal energy, by engaging in his proper function as the Lord's servant, or, by rejecting this position, he can allow himself to fall under the influence of the lesser māyā-śakti and thus become entrapped as a prisoner in her amusement park of illusions and misery.

In further exploring this root truth (daśa-mula), Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura teaches us about the three divisions of the Lord's internal potency: saṁvit, which is composed of the Lord's energy of awareness or knowledge; sandhinī, which is composed of the Lord's energy of existence or eternality; and hlādinī, which is composed of the Lord's energy of bliss or pleasure. In addition, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura also explains that, while Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of all these potencies, it is His dear most eternal companion Śrī Rādhā who is the complete embodiment of these potencies. In other words, **Śrī Kṛṣṇa possesses both desire and the will to perform activities, but it only by working through and in cooperation with Śrī Rādhā that all His activities are carried out.** For this reason, it is correct to say that the spiritual energy (cit-śakti), the marginal energy (jīva-śakti), and the illusory or material energy (māyā-śakti) are manifestations of Śrī Rādhā, rather than of Kṛṣṇa Himself.

In order to put these three main energies into proper perspective, we will share a few more quotes from Jaiva Dharma with you. The first set will tell us the function of each of these three energies, and the second will tell us how these energies manifest, in both the spiritual and material worlds. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura writes:

All of the eternal characteristics of the Lord's internal/personal energy are completely present in His spiritual potency (cit-śakti), present to a minute degree in the jīva-śakti, and present in a distorted way in the māyā-śakti.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

The bliss energy of the Lord (hlādinī-śakti), functions in the form of Śrī Rādhā Herself, who gives full spiritual bliss and enjoyment to Kṛṣṇa. She is the embodiment of the highest form of prema. She gives happiness to Kṛṣṇa in Her own spiritual form, and She also manifests as Her own close associates and dear most friends, with each of Her eight principle friends being a manifestation of eight specific and distinct spiritual emotions (bhāva). All of these eternal friends and servants (the gopīs of Vṛndāvana) are direct expansions of Her form and personality (svarūpa).

The function of the awareness/knowledge energy is to manifest as all the various emotion driven moods which create the different relationships in Vṛndāvana, while the function of the existence energy (sandhinī-śakti) is to manifest everything in Vṛndāvana that consists of water, earth, and so on, such as the villages, forests, gardens, and other places of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. It also manifests all other spiritual objects used in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, as well as the spiritual bodies of Śrī Rādhā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Their friends, the cows, and so on.

Having described how these energies manifest in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura next discusses how they manifest in the jīva and in the worlds of māyā.

The function of the bliss potency is always present in the jīva [though usually covered over] in the form of spiritual bliss; the function of the awareness potency is present in the form of spiritual knowledge; and the function of the existence potency is present in the jīvas minute form [which is composed of a spark of consciousness].

In māyā, the function of the pleasure potency is present in the form of mundane sense pleasure; the function of the awareness potency is present in the form of material knowledge; and the function of the existence potency is present in the form of all the material universes, and all material objects, which includes the material bodies that the jīvas reside in. (Jaiva Dharma)

While studying these truths, we should remember that the verses are divided in categories. The first discussed pramāṇa, the evidence we are to rely on in our search for the Absolute Truth. Verses two through eight are all given to instruct us on the varieties of relationships (sambandha) that exist between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His various energies and expansions, verse nine will discuss the process we must follow to reach our goal itself (prayojana).

Therefore, although the verse we are currently discussing, the third, is based upon the simple truth that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of all potencies, we have, in describing these energies, also touched upon some of the truths contained in the next daśa-mula as well. So, before we overlap them too much, and further confuse an already complex subject, we would like to simply move on to discuss the next inter-related daśa-mula; however, due to the complex meaning of just one single word within that truth, we will first begin to introduce you to a profound and extremely important subject that will become a major focus of both these lessons and of all your deeper studies and meditations as you progress to the advanced stages of your bhakti practices.

Rasa-The Extraordinary Pleasure of Prema

When we love someone very deeply our heart becomes filled with a very unique, almost indescribable pleasure. When our love is pure and true (which seldom, if ever, exists in this world) this pleasure is in no way connected to our material senses. It does not arise from, nor does it depend upon the stimulation of our senses, for it lies in, and flows entirely from the dimension of emotions, in other words, it is a pleasure of the heart.

The Vedas tell us that the true "us", the spark of spiritual consciousness that experiences what we call "life", is situated in our heart, and, in these lessons, we've shared the fact that this truth is surely related to our tendency to identify love as being a product of the heart. (Think Valentine's Day)

Staple

Since this section of the daśa-mula's (two through eight) focuses on relationships, it is logical that the pleasures we experience from developing a loving relationship with Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa would also be a part of this discussion, and, as we will show in daśa-mula number four, the Lord is the very embodiment of the pleasures we receive from this relationship.

Although the so-called love that we experience in material relationships is vastly different and totally inferior to pure spiritual love, still, since material affection is more familiar to us, we can use it in our discussion.

In this world, we see that a person can feel love toward more than one person and that they will experience different types of emotions and pleasures within that love. For example, a woman may love her husband, a child, a parent, and even a dear friend all at the same time, and yet the type of love she feels, the way she expresses it, and rewarding feelings she receives will all be different.

In the case of spiritual love, a similar situation also exists. In later lessons we will be examining these exchanges in great detail, and, to do so, we will have to introduce many new terms which we do not wish to touch upon here, this is why we have used the inadequate and unequal material example to begin to discuss these truths with you. However, by using it as a basis, we can now tell you a bit about the term that this section focuses on.

There is a Sanskrit word rasa + rus (like rust) that is used to express the pleasurable emotions one feels when he experiences loving exchanges. Until the time of Lord Caitanya, the pure spiritual exchanges of emotions, which are the source of the material emotions in this world, were not well developed or described in the Vedas. Wishing to give us these truths, Lord Caitanya specifically instructed and empowered some of His closest associates, most notably Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, to write about and explain these truths, and it is therefore, from Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī himself that we get the definition and further explanation of what spiritual rasa is.

Several times in this course, we have mentioned that those who attain perfection enter into a very specific type of individual relationship with the Supreme Lord when they enter into His eternal abode and pastimes in the spiritual worlds. These relationships are divided into five general categories:

- 1) Neutral
- 2) Servant
- 3) Friend (male associates of similar age)
- 4) Parent/Guardian (male and female elders)
- 5) Consort (female associates of similar age)

Each of us has the seed for one of these types of relationships as an eternally established characteristic of our true and original, personally unique, personality and identity (our svarūpa). Each of the eternal residents of the spiritual worlds are also established in these various relationships, although, in some cases, someone may manifest various forms in order to be able to experience the various emotions that accompany these different types of loving exchange.

Depending on the relationship that one has with Kṛṣṇa, his loving emotions will be excited, increased, and stirred in various ways, by various things, and his experience of that love will cause various reactions as well. For example, if, as a small toddler, Kṛṣṇa decides to go with His friends to "steal" some butter from a neighbor's house, His male companions will feel great joy and appreciate his cunning and bravery, while His elders will be concerned that He is such a rascal and will want to discipline Him.

(We put "steal" in quotations marks to indicate the fact that, on one level of understanding Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot steal anything, for everything belongs to Him, and yet, for the purpose of enjoying

pastimes, such truths are covered over so that He can partake of the various loving moods that accompany these exchanges.)

In our later, more complete discussion on rasa, we will share how various aspects of the Lord, such as His flute playing and His behavior cause different types of reactions, such as laughter and singing, and arouse various symptoms, such as tears and becoming stunned. But for now, we hope we have shared enough to help you understand the definitions of rasa that we will now share with you.

In Jaiva Dharma, we find various definitions for rasa. As this book was originally written in Bengali (the native tongue of most of Lord Caitanya's associates), and then translated into Hindi (the national language of India), and recently into English, it is not surprising that there are slight differences in these definitions. Therefore, in light of this fact, we will share several with you, and then we will do our best to bring them all together in a way that will help you to begin to understand what pure and spiritual rasa is.

In the original definition given by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, rasa is defined as "When the love that one feels for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is anchored in one's primary relationship with Him, mixes with the various causes, activities, symptoms, and secondary emotions that are included in this love, it produces an extraordinary taste in one's heart. This taste is known as rasa." (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.1.5)

When we examine the English words used here, we must keep in mind that some of these words also have various meanings and that they may not always provide exact and accurate understandings of what rasa truly is. For example, when we hear the word "taste", we may often relate it to the sensations of the tongue, and therefore, knowing that such a sensation is not what is meant here, we may, on our own, translate this "extraordinary taste" as referring to some great experience, which would be very close to the truth we are seeking to understand.

In Webster's Dictionary, we find the word **"taste' defined as "a personal liking"**, and then we find the word **"like" defined as "to find attractive or pleasant; enjoy"**. And thus, by gradual examination and development of the meanings of both the Sanskrit term and its English equivalents, we can say that **"rasa" refers to "an extraordinary pleasure which arises from one's loving relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa."**

In addition to these definitions, we find one given in the glossary of Jaiva Dharma which focuses on other important aspects of what rasa is. There it says that rasa is, **"The spiritual transformation of the heart which takes place when the perceptual state of love for Kṛṣṇa is converted into liquid emotions by combining with various types of transcendental ecstasies."**

Since love is an emotion, it is natural that rasa deals with these spiritual emotions, which are here referred to as "liquid."

In the past, when we have spoken of bhāva, the early stage awakening of prema, we have referred to a "softening of the heart." In more advanced stages, the heart liquefies, for it is only in this state that our emotions can rise, roll, crest, and fall like waves, as we experience unending, ever changing ecstasies in the ocean of prema.

In the text of Jaiva Dharma, we find **rasa** described in a way that combines the ideas of the definitions we shared so far; **"the condensed liquid essence of integrated spiritual emotions."** Here, the liquid aspect of rasa is again mentioned, but it's also enhanced by describing it as "condensed." By comparison, we can think of the difference between concentrated orange juice where all of the flavor of oranges exists in a potent, condensed form, and the watered down juice we drink. In rasa, all aspects of love are condensed and concentrated into their most potent form.

The word "essence" refers to the fact that although rasa may involve various ingredients, as shown by the word "integrated," it

is only when these are combined (and condensed) that the word rasa can properly be applied.

And the final definition of rasa that we will share is found as an editorial input in Jaiva Dharma, where, (within parenthesis), we find rasa described in a way that points out a critical aspect of the true meaning of this word. Here we find **rasa** as “**taste for serving Bhagavān in a specific loving mood**”. **Without service there can be no rasa**. All of the emotional pleasures of rasa cannot arise without a desire to serve Kṛṣṇa. It is very important for us to always be aware of this fact.

The word “bhakti” comes from a root word that means “to serve”, and, as we’ve mentioned, bhakti and prema are inseparably united through this aspect of service. Prema is really prema-bhakti, love-drenched, love-driven service. It is this service mood, and the “taste”, the personal liking that we develop for it, that will slowly but surely become condensed into the essence of the more advanced spiritual moods and emotions of prema.

We ask you to call upon the mercy and guidance of Śrīla Gurudeva as you study these various explanations of rasa, asking him to soften your heart so that these truths can begin to make impressions there, for it is **only** by the mercy of Śrī guru that we will be able to understand the fourth daśa-mula.

Daśa-mula Four

Śrī Kṛṣṇa -The Ocean of Rasa

Our last section on rasa was designed to help you understand this daśa-mula. The bliss we will experience upon the attainment of prema is a manifestation of this rasa, which is itself a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa Himself. All pleasure flows from Kṛṣṇa, who is the original ocean of pleasure, or rasa, and in fact, as this next quote will show, His personal svarūpa, His very form, characteristics, and personality are all composed of these condensed, liquid, spiritual, and emotional pleasures.

The **Taittirīya Upaniṣad** (2.7.1) tells us:

The Supreme Lord is a very handsome supreme spirit. His svarūpa is composed of pure rasa, and when the jīva becomes fully connected with (realizes) this rasa-svarūpa (form and identity composed of rasa) he himself also becomes full of bliss. Who would want to continue living if that one, undivided, full and complete Supreme Lord were not the embodiment of bliss, which exists in the form of the extraordinary pleasures which arise from the love-drenched, service-based relationships that exist between Him and all others. It is He alone who gives bliss to all.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of all (sarva) potencies (śaktis). The pleasures He provides through His hlādinī (bliss) potency will only manifest in the form of temporary material sense pleasures if we continue to choose to allow māyā to remain the controller (the doer) in our lives. However, when we reject māyā’s temptations and illusions and accept only our true identity (svarūpa) as servants of the Lord, we eventually become fully situated in the other aspects of our svarūpa, which includes our direct relationship with the Lord, a complete awareness of our eternal spiritual form, and a full experience of the unlimited, love-drenched, pleasure-filled emotions that flow from our connection with the Lord. Therefore, **in order to understand and someday realize this fourth daśa-mula, we must accept that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is both the personification and the reservoir of all pleasure/rasa, and we must know that we can only enter into this ocean of bliss by following the instructions of the true gurus and receiving their mercy.**

Before we leave this discussion on these last two truths in this daśa-mula, we want to share some knowledge about the relationship between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā. This is the type of highly advanced knowledge that was unavailable to us prior to the appearance of Lord Caitanya, and this knowledge will remain entirely beyond our grasp unless and until we sincerely seek the mercy and guidance of the Lord and His direct representatives in

the form of Śrī guru.

We cannot think that we can attain Him by our own efforts. We cannot think that the mind will be capable of understanding Him simply because we study words and put information into storage in our minds. This is not to say that we should not study. We must study. But while studying, we must take on an entirely non-material understanding of what we are actually doing.

Spiritual study involves associating with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in His form as true spiritual knowledge and with His representatives, **and serving Him and His representatives (Śrī guru)**. We must think of our studies in this way.

These truths exist in the higher, pure spiritual dimension, where the tiny and limited mind has no access, and, as these next two quotes will demonstrate, it is only by mercy that we will become able to enter that dimension and absorb these truths.

The **Katha Upaniṣad** (1.2.23) teaches us:

One cannot attain the Supreme Lord by lecturing, by intellect, or by study of the various scriptures. He only reveals His svarūpa by His own mercy to those who He Himself accepts.

The Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.14.29) tells us:

O Lord, one who attains even a little of the mercy of Your two lotus feet can comprehend the essence of Your spiritual glories. Others cannot realize the essential truths about You, even though they may keep searching for You for many years through study and renunciation.

In Jaiva Dharma, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura shares his commentary on these verses:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is very merciful. That Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the supreme soul among all souls, cannot be attained simply by reading or hearing various scriptures (śāstras), or by arguments and discussions. Nor can he be obtained through sharp intelligence. Only one who accepts Him as “My Kṛṣṇa” can attain Him. He will only manifest His eternal sat (eternally existing), cid (awareness/knowledge) ānanda (bliss) form to such a loving servant (bhakta).

This attitude of “My Kṛṣṇa” is the mamatā (possessiveness) aspect of our spiritual growth that we have discussed before. This mood can be developed in various ways, and one of these is through the process of arcana (Deity worship). By accepting these forms of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa into our lives and working toward seeing Them as living beings who we can care for and serve, we will begin to feel that They are indeed “my Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.” This should also help you to understand how valuable this arcana process is and why we have introduced it into these lessons.

Seeking to absorb these truths on our own is fruitless. Seeking to learn them in the association, under the guidance, and with the mercy of Śrī guru and Kṛṣṇa Himself is the only way that will be able to attain them.

Knowing this, and asking you to seek their mercy, we will now share these higher truths related to the third daśa-mula with you.

Daśa-mula Three

Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa —Śakti and Śaktimān

In an earlier lesson, we shared a quote from Śrīla Gurudeva with you that, although quite short, was filled with profound meaning. In essence, he told us that Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa eternally exist both as two and as one. In this section, we will further explore this truth.

Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are sometimes referred to by the Sanskrit term śakti-śaktimān which translates as the potency and the possessor of the potency/energy (śakti). This relationship has been compared to a fire and the heat which is produced by it, with the fire representing Kṛṣṇa, the possessor/source of all (sarva) energies, and the heat, the energy itself, which emanates from the fire, representing Śrī Rādhā.

In this world, all movement, all activity, requires the existence of some form of energy. Similarly, in the spiritual dimension, all

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Staple activities are also driven by one of the Lord's spiritual/personal/internal energies, and one of Lord Caitanya's dearest associates has given us a verse that explains which aspect of this energy creates the loving exchanges of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, while also establishing the same truth that Śrīla Gurudeva has shared with us. **Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī** teaches us:

The loving affairs of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are manifested by the hlādinī-śakti (personal, pleasure giving energy) of the Lord. Although Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one, they have separated Themselves eternally. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi Līlā 1.5)

Earlier in this lesson, we discussed how everything that exists, in both the spiritual and the material dimensions, is a manifestation of the Lord's energies, and, as this verse shows us, this even includes the pastimes that take place between the source of these energies (Kṛṣṇa) and the energies themselves (Śrī Rādhā).

If we were to hold our hands out over a fire, would we say that it was the fire that was warming our hands or the energy from the fire? The correct answer would surely have to be that the warmth was coming from a combination of the two. Similarly, in the spiritual dimension, everything takes place due to an inseparable combination of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā.

Still, we may ask where the line between the two is drawn, or how can we better understand this same but different aspect of the Divine Couple. In Jaiva Dharma, **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura** provides us with some answers to these types of inquiries.

Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities, and pastimes all indicate the existence of, and the function of energy/śakti. However, His own personal freedom and His free will are not produced from śakti (His energies); they both exist as essential and original parts of Kṛṣṇa Himself. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that Supreme Person who has free will and possesses all potencies (śaktis).

We may be able to understand this truth by thinking of the word "will power" as involving two separate truths. Kṛṣṇa Himself produces the "will" while He also possesses the power. Addressing Śrī Rādhā as "śakti," **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura** continues,

Human beings can only realize that Supreme Person by taking shelter of that śakti. That is why those who fail to approach Him in this way cannot experience the presence of He who possesses all potencies (śaktīmān). However, when the bhaktas develop love for śaktīmān they are able to perceive that Supreme Person who is situated beyond His energies. Bhakti (love-drenched service) is a form of śakti, and that is why śakti personifies in a female form. She takes shelter of Kṛṣṇa's personal energy (svarūpa), and in this way She experiences the masculine aspect and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, who is full of will and desire.

We should seek the mercy of Śrī guru as we study these truths for they contain concepts that are difficult to explain and even more difficult to understand.

In Jaiva Dharma, the student who is receiving these truths asks if the Supreme Person Kṛṣṇa who possesses all potencies (śaktīmān) and His impersonal aspect (brahma) are one and the same, and in response, **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura** speaks as his and teaches us:

The brahma of the Vedas is desireless, but Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person has both desires and free will. There is a big difference between the two. Brahma has no form or attributes. On the other hand, Kṛṣṇa possesses both form and attributes. He has the qualities of manhood, enjoyment, control, and freedom.

In reality, Kṛṣṇa and His śakti are non-different. The śakti that indicates Kṛṣṇa's presence is also Kṛṣṇa, because Kṛṣṇa's desire-fulfilling śakti manifests Herself in a female form as Śrī Rādhā. Kṛṣṇa is the master who is served, and the supreme

śakti, Śrī Rādhā, is His maidservant. Their individual identities are the only spiritual truth (tattva) that differentiates Them.

The student in Jaiva Dharma then asks: If Kṛṣṇa's desire and ability to enjoy indicate the existence of His supreme personal form, what are the desires of Śrī Rādhā that indicate the existence of Her form? **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura** then tells us:

Śrī Rādhā's desire is subordinate to Kṛṣṇa's; none of Her efforts or desires are independent of His desire. Kṛṣṇa has desires and Rādhā's desire is to serve Kṛṣṇa according to His desires. Śrī Rādhā is the complete and original śakti, and Kṛṣṇa is the original and supreme person, that is, He controls and inspires all śakti.

Although this is only a preliminary introduction to the truths of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Their relationship, by the mercy of the Panca-tattva and Śrī guru we can develop an understanding of them.

So, in short summary, we can say that daśa-mula two, three, and four all relate directly to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In two, we find Kṛṣṇa described as the one and only supreme Absolute Truth. In three, He is referred to as sarva-śaktīmān, the possessor of unlimited potencies. And in the fourth daśa-mula Kṛṣṇa is described as the embodiment of the ocean of rasa, those highly pleasurable emotions we experience through developing a love-drenched, service-based relationship with Him.

The Position of the Jivas **Daśa-mula Five, Six, and Seven**

Many of the truths related to the position of the jīva have been discussed in previous lessons, and since our presentations are always limited by space we will only briefly review those truths here. In doing so, we will however also include new quotes and additional insights into how we fit into the grand scheme of reality.

In Lesson 7, we discussed the fact that the jīva is situated on "the shoreline" between the spiritual and material worlds. This borderland existence is not a physical place, instead it is more "like" a dimension of consciousness.

We emphasize the word "like" because the truths related to our actual position in reality can be very difficult to understand—especially if we try to use the tiny limited mind as our tool of inquiry. This limitation of the mind is explained in Jaiva Dharma, where **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura** teaches us in this way:

The time and space you experience in this material world are completely different from time and space in the spiritual world... whatever we describe in the material world is under the jurisdiction of material time and space, so when we say— "The jivas" were "created" or "The spiritual world" was "manifested"—material time is bound to influence our language and understandings. Because of this, we cannot remove the influence of material time and other considerations, like material space, from our description of the atomic sized jīva and spiritual objects or realities. Be very careful in this area. Verbal descriptions and explanations are inherently incomplete. Give up relying on them and try to experience the spiritual essence.

Spiritual realities are explained using material words and examples because the intellect is so influenced by the illusions of māyā that it cannot comprehend these high truths in any other way. However, those purified sādhus who have realized these truths experience them during their spiritual trances (samādhi).

Our words have material limitations, so whatever we say will have the defects of being influenced by māyā. Logic and argument cannot help us realize the pure truth, so it is futile to use them to try to understand inconceivable (acintya) subject matter.

I know that you will not be able to understand these subjects quickly, but as you cultivate the spiritual moods of bhakti (bhāvas) within your heart you will realize (personally experience) these emotions more and more. In other words, all

the spiritual emotions (bhāvas) will manifest in the core of your purified heart. Your body is material, and all of the activities of your body, even your thinking process, is material as well, but the essence of your being is not material; you are a conscious entity of minute sub-atomic size. The more you know yourself, the more you will realize that your essential nature is superior to the world of māyā. You will not be able to realize this just by hearing it from me, but as you go on chanting the Holy Names, these bhāvas will automatically manifest in your heart, and to the degree that they do so you will be able to realize the spiritual world and its realities.

Mind and speech both have their origin in matter, and they cannot touch the spiritual truth. The Vedas say this:

The speech and the mind return form the Absolute Truth, being unable to attain Him.

(Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.9)

So these truths cannot and will not come to us as long as we believe they are related to material limitations or within the grasp of the mind. And yet, as we have also discussed, it is proper to use material examples to help us begin to picture these realities.

Having shared this disclaimer, and knowing that we are not capable of truly and fully explaining these truths to you, we will still follow the examples of our ācāryas and share some of our own limited understandings with you, while at the same time encouraging you to always rely upon the guidance and mercy of Śrī guru and the powers of your own bhakti practices as you seriously endeavor to realize these truths.

The Supreme Lord manifests reality through three types or levels of energy (śakti). His topmost energy is His personal śakti (svarūpa). Secondary to this is His marginal śakti, which is known by the Sanskrit term tatasthā, which comes from the root word “taṭa” meaning “shore”. Inferior to this is His external śakti which manifest the matter of the material worlds as well as the aspects of the jīvas subtle body—the mind, the intelligence, and the false ego.

The jīva is a minute spark of consciousness that springs from the marginal śakti of the Lord, and for this reason, His secondary energy is also known as jīva-śakti.

The Lord is the master and controller of all His energies and He is not subject to the influence of the illusions of māyā. The jīva on the other hand can fall under her spell.

The different aspects of both the spiritual and material realities are all manifested by the Lord, their only difference lies in which of His energies they originate from. When the Lord is situated in His personal energy (svarūpa), He manifests His self-same forms, such as that of the cowherd boy Kṛṣṇa and the majestic form of Nārāyaṇa. When He is situated in His jīva or marginal śakti, He manifests as His “older brother”, Lord Balarāma, who sports with Him in the cowherd village of Vṛndāvana (see Lesson 11) and who also manifests as Lord Nityānanda in the pastimes of Lord Caitanya. When Kṛṣṇa situates Himself in māyā-śakti, He manifests as three separate Viṣṇu forms who carry out the workings of the material worlds.

The names, workings, and relationships of these three Viṣṇu forms is a bit too complex for a course such as this, so we will avoid some of these pieces of the truth in order to share some of the most general and basic facts which relate to our current subject, the position of the jīva.

There are two types of jīvas. Some are eternally (nitya) pure and perfect (siddha). These nitya-siddha jīvas never fall under the illusions of māyā. They may at times enter into the material worlds in order to assist the Lord in His pastimes, but even while doing so they remain absorbed in prema.

In an earlier lesson, we introduced you to māyā’s twin sister, Yogamāyā. We told you that she creates situations that connect us to the Lord, whereas her sister generally works to disconnect us from Him. These eternally pure (nitya-siddha) jīvas are always

under the influence under the influence of Yogamāyā, and by her powers she may at times create situations where the pure jīvas seem to act in ways that demonstrate a lack of love for the Lord, such as when they take on the role of demons who fight the Lord. The reality however is that they are at all times acting as bhaktas, servants of the Lord, whose every action is meant to benefit Him.

The nitya-siddha jīvas that live in Kṛṣṇa’s cowherd village are manifested by Lord Balarāma; those that live on the spiritual planets where the Lord is worshipped with awe and reverence (the Vaikunthalokas—see Lesson 11) are manifested by an expansion of Lord Balarāma.

The second class of jīvas are known as nitya-baddha (eternal bound or eternally conditioned) jīvas. This does not mean that they cannot ever escape the conditions of māyā, it means that they have been bound by the ropes of her illusions since a time without beginning. These jīvas are manifested from one of the Viṣṇu forms who maintain the material worlds.

In our next lesson, we will go into a bit more detail about what takes place when these jīvas manifest, but for now, we will simply share a very short version of **the fifth daśa-mula** with you.

Both types of jīvas, the eternally pure and the eternally bound, are eternally separated parts of the One Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Having said this, we will now share a concise version **the sixth daśa-mula** with you.

Those jīvas who are manifested from Viṣṇu are subject to the influence of māyā.

And, in contrast to this, a short form of **the seventh daśa-mula** tell us this:

Those nitya-siddha jīvas who are manifested in the spiritual worlds are never subject to the illusions of māyā.

Having shared these truths, we will return to those that discuss the positions of the jīva (5, 6, and 7) by sharing longer versions of those truths with you. We follow this pattern because the longer explanations given by Śrīla Bhaktivīnoda Thākura include this next daśa-mula as well.

Daśa-mula Eight

The Inconceivable Truth of Simultaneous Difference and Non-difference

In Lesson 11, we spent quite a bit of time discussing the word “**acintya**” which means “**inconceivable**”. In doing so, we explained that the truths discussed in using this term are not impossible, they are just beyond the grasp of the extremely limited, tiny material mind.

In other lessons, we’ve discussed other aspects of this daśa-mula as well. For example, in explaining why the impersonal and unvariegated form of the Lord (brahma) is not the focus of the Vaiṣṇavas, we told you that the aspect of “Different and Non-different” often leads to a misunderstanding that the jīva is, or can become, one with the Supreme Lord. In fact, this misunderstanding is addressed in the longer version of this daśa-mula, as given to us by, **Śrīla Bhaktivīnoda Thākura.**

The entire spiritual and material creation is a manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s śakti. The impersonal philosophy which states that all individuality is only an illusion is false. It is only an impurity that has been produced by the degraded conditions of Kali-yuga, and it is contrary to the teachings of the Vedas. The Vedas support the truth of inconceivable simultaneous difference and non-difference and one can attain perfect love for the Supreme Lord when he accepts this principle.

The Sanskrit term for this principle is **acintya-bhedābheda-tattva**, which breaks down as acintya/inconceivable; bheda/different; abheda/non-different; tattva/spiritual truth.

In Jaiva Dharma, Śrīla Bhaktivīnoda Thākura spends an entire chapter analyzing this daśa-mula. While discussing how the māyāvādīs misinterpret this truth he goes into great detail about

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Staple the history of their false doctrine and he also shows, through Vedic evidence, how each of their attempts to portray the jīva as one with or equal to the Lord are totally false.

We will avoid such an intense investigation here, but for those who are interested in a full analysis of this topic we again invite you to request Jaiva Dharma from us. We offer this master piece to serious students and ask you to send explicit mailing instructions.

In discussing the difference and non-difference between the jīva and the Lord, Śrīla Gurudeva often relied on one particular quote from the Vedas to establish the fact that the Lord is always unique and superior to the jivas. We will share the most relevant portions of that quote with you.

He [the Lord] is the one supreme eternal being among all eternal beings, and the one supreme consciousness among all conscious beings. He alone is fulfilling the desires of everyone.
(Katha Upaniṣad 2.13)

The inconceivable aspect of this daśa-mula is discussed as being beyond logic and argument and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura uses a quote that we also touched on when we discussed logic and argument in an earlier lesson.

"It is not proper to use argument to destroy the wisdom of the Absolute Truth that you have received." (Katha Upaniṣad 2.2)

We must always remember that both the mind and all of our other senses are limited. We must never use these faulty tools in an effort to strike down the facts that the Lord has mercifully given to us.

We can use the following material example to help us understand this truth

A huge chemical fire that cannot be extinguished with any amount of water is equal in quality to the tiny fire of a single candle. In quantity, there is a vast amount of difference. While we possess the qualities of awareness/knowledge, and bliss, we will never possess these in quantity equal to the Lord. In fact, our knowledge and bliss are so small that they can even be covered over by the illusions of māyā, even though these illusions spring from the Lord's external energy, which is in truth inferior to us. If, however, we keep ourselves connected to the Lord through bhakti, we receive an infusion of His powers and we will rise above these illusions and gain our eternal position and relationship with the Lord.

After listing a long series of quotes that establish the fact that the jivas are eternally different and non-different, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura sums these truths up as follows.

"In these and countless other passages, the Vedas declare that the jivas are eternally different from the Supreme. Every part of the Vedas is wonderful and no part of them can be neglected. It is true that the jivas are eternally different from the Supreme; and it is also true that they are eternally non-different. We can find evidence in the Vedas to support both bheda (difference) and abheda (non-difference), because these truths exist simultaneously as aspects of the Absolute Truth. This relationship of simultaneous difference and non-difference is inconceivable and beyond material logic. Logic and argument about the matter lead only to confusion. Whatever has been said in the various parts of the Vedas is all true, but we cannot understand the meaning of those words because our intelligence is very limited. That is why we should never disregard the Vedic teachings."

In closing out these last two sections, we will share the extended meanings of daśa-mula six and seven with you. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura expresses these as follows.

Daśa-mula Six

By his original personality and position (svarūpa), the jīva is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. His pure and eternal purpose and duty, that which cannot be removed from him (his svarūpa-dharma) is service to Kṛṣṇa. The Lord's illusory energy (māyā)

punishes those jivas who are opposed to Him and who have given up their svarūpa-dharma by becoming absorbed in material enjoyment. She binds them in the ropes of the three gunas, covers them with subtle and material bodies, puts them in the miserable cycle of karma, and forces them to suffer happiness and distress in the material heavens and hells.

Daśa-mula Seven

When in the course of wandering amongst the higher and lower species in the material world, and jīva is able to behold a Vaiṣṇava absorbed in the flowing pleasures of spiritual emotions (the bhāvas of rasa), ruci (a taste) arises in his heart for following the Vaiṣṇava way of life. By chanting the Holy Names, he gradually becomes free from the influences of māyā. Step-by-step, he then gains his spiritual form and identity (svarūpa), and becomes qualified to experience the purely spiritual pleasures (rasa) of direct service to Kṛṣṇa.

Daśa-mula Nine—Bhakti Is the Means

As this lesson is already quite long, we will not spend a lot of time on this daśa-mula. We also chose this approach because we have spent a great deal of time in these lessons discussing the fact that **bhakti is the only means we can use to establish ourselves in our permanent relationship with Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.** And finally, we are going to spend some time next month going over the various forms of bhakti that we have introduced so far, such as hearing about the Lord and chanting His Holy Names. In addition, we're going to introduce you to a few more ways that we can perform bhakti as well. In doing so, we will list and explain the processes that have been given to us as the "nine limbs of bhakti." So for now, we will simply share a few small truths with you.

When describing the means, we use to attain prema, Lord Caitanya used the term "**abhideya**", which can be translated as **"that which is worthiest of explanation."**

In Jaiva Dharma, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura clearly teaches us that this refers to sādhanā-bhakti, and he explains what this refers to in this way:

As long as bhakti is performed with the material senses by the jīva who is still influenced by the gunas, it is called sādhanā-bhakti.

Sādhanā is the name given to the practice of manifesting bhāva (spiritual emotions/the sprout of prema) in the heart. As long as it is not manifested, one will have to perform sādhanā.

Sādhanā consist of efforts of the body, mind, and speech to help bhāva manifest in the heart. Sādhanā-bhakti is any method that trains the mind to become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

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

Duty is ascertained to be that which makes one constantly remember the Supreme Lord, and prohibitions are those forbidden activities that make one forget Him.

We pray that you seek the guidance and mercy of Śrī guru as you study these truths, while asking him to bring them into your heart.

Daśa-mula Ten—The Goal of Life Is Prema

As with the above daśa-mula, we have repeatedly shared the fact that the only true and perfect goal in our life is the attainment of a service-based relationship with Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and that prema, pure love is the motivating factor which drives this service.

Without love, our service cannot be pure. If we serve out of fear or out of duty, we will be limited in our progress and a relationship with one of Kṛṣṇa's opulent forms will be our highest hope. If, however, we develop the necessary ingredient of possessiveness (mamatā), and we truly feel that "He is mine" (my friend, my dependent/child, my paramour), or "I am His" (His friend, protector, female admirer) then we can enter into a relationship with His most beautiful and sweetest form, the

cowherd boy of Vrndāvana.

This is our goal (prayojana), and the means to attain this goal is sādhana bhakti.

Review and Closing

We've promised a list of the daśa-mula's, and we will close this lesson by providing one to you, but before we do so, we'll do a short review, then we'll close out the lesson with this list.

The lesson began with an examination of the fact that very few people in this world are wise and strong enough to dedicate themselves to following the bhakti path. In doing so, we also pointed out that the reward for doing so, prema, is millions of times superior to any other type of pleasure.

Our inmate contributor then shared his understandings on how we can keep the mind focused on Kṛṣṇa, even while we perform the daily activities that might seem to be totally mundane and material. He explained his own angle of vision on what Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was referring to when he spoke of the subsidiary devotional practices that lead us to the topmost platform of uttamā-bhakti.

Using various quotes, he showed how we can offer our every activity to the Lord, with the motive and feeling that we are offering both the action and the results to the Lord for His own pleasure.

In sharing a long quote from Śrīla Gurudeva, he also discussed how we can bring our activities and our very selves into the spiritual dimension, for even during the practicing stage (sādhana) we can rise above māyā and become nirguna, situated beyond the influence of her binding ropes of influence.

The rest of the lesson was dedicated to sharing the ten roots or basic truths, the daśa-mula that Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thākura has used to explain Lord Caitanya's message to us.

Using many quotes from the masterpiece "Jaiva Dharma," we spoke about each of these truths, and, in next month's lesson, we told you that we will further explore the ninth daśa-mula by showing you the nine processes of bhakti that are considered to be the foundation that our practices are to be built upon.

So now, as we close the body of this lesson, we'll share a final list of the daśa-mula as they are given to us by Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thākura.

1. Pramāṇa (evidence): *The teachings of the Vedas, as received through the guru-paramparā, are known as that which is committed to memory (āmnāya). The infallible evidence of the Vedas, as well as evidence such as direct sense perception that concur with the evidence of the Vedas, are all accepted as pramāṇa (evidence). This pramāṇa establishes the following prameyas (fundamental truths):*

2. Parama-tattva: *Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the Supreme Absolute Truth.*

3. Sarva-śaktimān: *Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of unlimited multifarious śakti's.*

4. Akhila-rasamṛta-sindhu: *He is the ocean of nectarine rasas.*

5. Vibhinamsa-tattva: *All jīvas, both those that are eternally liberated (mukti) and those bound (baddha) by māyā are manifested from Him, becoming eternally separate individuals.*

6. Baddha-jīvas: *Those jīvas who are bound and covered over by māyā.*

7. Mukta-jīvas: *Those jīvas who are liberated from māyā.*

8. Acintya-bhedabheda-tattva: *Everything that exists, including the conscious jīvas and non-conscious matter is manifested from the Supreme Lord and all things are inconceivably and simultaneously both different and non-different from Him.*

9. Suddha-bhakti: *Pure bhakti is the only practice (sādhana) that leads to the attainment of perfection.*

10. Kṛṣṇa-prema: *Spiritual love and affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only goal (sadhya/prayojana) and the only final object worthy of attainment.*

We join you in prayers that these truths enter our hearts.

May you turn your focus toward Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and may you seek the guidance of Śrī guru.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa - Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare - Hare Rāma Hare Rāma - Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

**We are, the servants of God's servants,
The IPBYS Prison Program service team.
All glories to Śrīla Gurudeva!**

Staple

Glossary

Aisvarya—opulence, splendor, majesty, supremacy; in regard to bhakti this refers to service that is inspired by the opulence and majesty of the Lord, especially in His form of Lord Nārāyaṇa. This type of devotion restricts the intimacy of exchange between the Lord and His servants.

Āmnāya—that which has been committed to memory

Āmnāya -vakyas—that which has been spoken and committed to memory

Ananda—bliss, happiness; in regard to bhakti this refers to the eternal unlimited bliss which constitutes one of the three primary ingredients of the soul and which is fully experienced upon the attainment of prema

Ayur-veda—that portion of the Vedas which deals with herbal medicines

Bhagavat-dharma—the material and spiritual duties and responsibilities of all living beings

Cid/Cit—Spiritual; consciousness; spiritual awareness or perception

Cit-śakti—The energy/potency of the Lord related to consciousness, awareness, and knowledge

Daśa—ten

Daśa-mula—the ten root or basic truths that convey the essence of Lord Caitanya's message

Guru-paramparā—the chain of gurus that passes spiritual truths along; the system where a student/disciple of one guru becomes the guru of later student's disciples

Hladinī-śakti—the energy/potency that relates to the bliss (ānanda) aspect of the Supreme Lord; the aspect of the Lord's personal/internal śakti by which He tastes bliss and causes other to taste it as well

Jīva-śakti—the energy of the Lord which manifests the individual living entities (also known as tatasthā-śakti [see below])

Mahā-Viṣṇu—the form of the Lord who manifest the jīvas in the material world and who, by further expansion, situates Himself as the Supersoul in every jīva

Māyā-śakti—the energy of the Lord which generates all material objects as well as the illusions which separate the jīvas from their proper position and identity

Para-tattva/Parama-tattva—the Supreme Absolute Truth

Pramāṇa—evidence/specifically, the infallible evidence of the Vedas along with other evidence that supports these truths

Prameya—that which is proved: especially refers to the daśa-mula

Rasa—the extraordinary pleasures tasted by the heart of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Their advanced devotees; the spiritual transformation of the heart which take place when prema is converted to liquid emotions by the combination of the emotions of one's personal relationship being stimulated by other ingredients

Taṭa—shore; the borderland between land and water; a marginal state

Taṭasthā-śakti—the marginal energy of the Lord; from taṭa (see above) and the verbal root "stha" meaning "to be situated"; the energy of the Lord which manifests as individual living beings

Śakti-śaktimān—the potency and the possessor of the potency; refers to both the Supreme Lord and to the Divine Couple aspect of His personality, with Kṛṣṇa as the possessor of potency and Śrī Rādhā as His potency/energy

Sampradāya—the process or path that thoroughly and perfectly bestows the Supreme Absolute Truth; a line of disciplic succession; an established doctrine transmitted from one teacher/guru to another; a particular system of religious teaching

Staple **Samvit**—the energy that relates to the cit (awareness/ consciousness) aspect for the Lord; the aspect of the Lord's personal/internal energy by which He knows Himself and causes others to know Him

Sandhini—the energy that relates to the sat (existence) aspect of the Lord; the aspect of the Lord's internal/personal energy by which He maintains His own existence and the existence of others

Sarva-śaktimān—the possessor of all potencies; Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śāstra—scripture, especially the Vedic scripture

Sat—existence; eternality

Śloka—a verse

Smṛti-śāstra—the body of scriptures that is remembered

Śruti-śāstras—the body of scriptures which is directly heard or revealed to the sages (not in body of lesson)

Svarūpa -dharma—the pure and eternal purpose and duty of the jīva which can never be removed from him

Svayam-bhagavan—the original, full, and complete Supreme Personality of God; He from who all else manifests; Śrī Kṛṣṇa



Lord Caitanya and the Pancha-Tattva performing kīrtana in the courtyard of Śrīvaṣa Pandit's house.

The Journey to Prema-Lesson 21 Correspondence Course

1. What is the seed of all of Lord Caitanya's teachings?
2. In your own words, try to express why this is such an important truth?
3. Name the three sources of misery and give an example for each one.
4. Name two negative aspects of being situated in brahma
5. Can you name a positive aspect of existing in brahma.
6. Along with chanting the Holy Names, what other practices should we engage ourselves in?
7. Can we offer all of our activities to Kṛṣṇa? Explain your answer.
8. By what activity can we spiritualize our actions?
9. What does "nirguna" mean?
10. How do we become nirguna?
11. When do we come nirguna?
12. Can we act on our own energy?
13. What does "daśa-mula" mean?
14. Why is the so-called science of metaphysics useless for understanding the Absolute Truth?
15. What is the first daśa-mula?
16. Define "sampradāya."
17. Give at least two reasons why the sampradāya that Śrīla Gurudeva belongs to is known to be the topmost of all.
18. Name this sampradāya and say what each term means.
19. What truth do the second through eighth daśa-mulas describe as a whole (not individually)?
20. Define "śaktimān."
21. In your own words, describe rasa.
22. List the five categories of relationships we can have with Kṛṣṇa.
23. How does Śrī Rādhā, as śakti, relate to Sri Kṛṣṇa, the śaktimān?
24. Name the three aspects of Kṛṣṇa's personal energy.
25. Discuss the difference between nitya-siddha jīvas and nitya-baddha jīvas.
26. Name at least one way we are the same as Kṛṣṇa and at least one way we are simultaneously different.
27. What is sādhana-bhakti? Give at least two examples of how to perform it.
28. For you personally, what was the most valuable teaching in this lesson and why?

You may use these questions for self-study or participate by sending your answers (and any questions you have as well) to the address at the bottom of page 1.

All Glories to Śrīla Gurudeva!

