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# THE JOURNEY TO PREMA

A Course in the Science of Bhakti-Yoga ~

Lesson 22

**Please Chant:**

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

## IN THIS LESSON:

- The Nectar of Instruction
- Controlling the Six Urges
- Six Impediments to Bhakti
- The Consequences of the Company that We Keep
- Six Principles Favorable to Bhakti
- Similar Messages from the Scriptures
- The Qualities of Śrī Rādhā

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His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja  
(Affectionately called Śrīla Gurudeva)



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## THE JOURNEY TO PREMA – LESSON 22

Dear servant of God,

Please accept our respects as we humbly bow down and offer them to you. As your friend and fellow traveler on the bhakti path, we join you in continuing to do our best to make progress on our journey to prema.

In this month's lesson, you will find a beautiful blend of truths. In the early sections, you will find discussions on one of the most foundational books in our line of gurus, written by one of our founding fathers, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. In this regard, Śrīla Gurudeva instructs us about the importance of this book:

*You will never be able to advance without following the instructions of this book. This is the first step. Because these steps are very high, you cannot gallop or jump over them.*

(Lecture 5 May, 2008)

In the body of this lesson, we will take a very close look at some of the instructions given in this book. In doing so, we will focus on some subjects that we have covered in the past, such as controlling the mind and the importance of associating with the sādhu s, as well as the dangers of associating with those who are not on the bhakti path. We gladly repeat these topics because of the critical role they play in our spiritual lives.

The later sections of this lesson will focus on the third aspect of the meditations and understandings will progress to as we ascend the stairways of bhakti. So far, we have discussed the importance of the Holy Names, and we've shared prayers and verses that can be used to help you enter into these truths. We've also discussed the form (rūpa) of both Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Rādhā, again sharing verses from the Vedas that describe Their unique loveliness. Now, in this lesson, we will begin to share descriptions of Their qualities. By learning Their qualities and meditating on them, we increase our ability to know, know, Them and thus make it even more likely that we will someday discover just how much we love, love, love Them.

An interesting point that we will share again later, as we list and give examples of Their qualities to you, is the fact that our beloved Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote both the book of basic instructions that we will discuss and more exalted books which go into such great detail about the qualities of the Divine Couple. He gave us these instructions, from the beginning to the sublime, because the most merciful of all the Lord's forms, Lord Caitanya, had instructed him to share these truths with us.

These books, by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and the other gurus in Lord Caitanya's line, are store houses of unimaginable wealth. They contain both the keys to unlock these storehouses, as well as the wealth stored there. In teaching us the importance of these works, Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us:

*The transcendental science of the love affairs of Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not easily understandable even by the highest talented persons and materialistic opportunists. Those who therefore try to realize the affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the puffed-up manner of materialistic scholarship will be vanquished in the womb of oblivion if they are reluctant to consult the books left by the Gosvāmīs. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Thākura therefore recommends to the serious students of the science of bhakti to surrender unto the protection of the merciful Gosvāmīs, who left all material association of aristocracy and comfort to voluntarily accept the part of a rigid mendicant, and thus to bestow upon the fallen souls like us their highest gift of benediction in the matter of the love affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.* (Purport to Prayer to Sri Guru)

With these truths in mind, we will close the opening to this lesson by sharing a short, but very important and powerful prayer with you. In doing so, we will ask you to learn this prayer and to meditate on it often, as the mood contained in this prayer, as well as the message of the prayer itself, will greatly assist you as you attempt to do as has been recommended by all of those in our line. This is also the prayer that Śrīla Gurudeva used to close out

his introduction to the first book of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī that we will discuss, so we can see by his own example how important this prayer is. So, let's join together now, as spiritual brothers and sisters, as we pray for the mercy and guidance of our beloved founding father.

**ādadānas tṛṇaṁ dantair  
idaṁ yāce punaḥ punaḥ  
Śrīmad-rupa-padāmbhoja-  
dhūliḥ syāṁ janma-janmani**

*Clasping a straw between my teeth, I repeatedly beg, again and again, to obtain the dust of the feet of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in birth after birth.*

Having prayed for this dust, and with both firm determination and a great hope of receiving it, let's continue to walk along together on our shared, but also very personal, journey to prema.

**Śrī Upadeśamṛta**

In Lesson 17, we introduced you to the very book that we are now going to discuss in a bit more detail. In that lesson, we told you that this title has been translated in various ways. Coming from two Sanskrit words, it has been said to mean "The Nectar of Instruction," and even "The Ambrosial Advice of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī."

It's two root words are *upadeśa*+ oo-puh-daysh, which means "instructions" or "advice" and *amṛta*+ ām-ri-tuh (ām like mom) which means both "nectar" or "ambrosia" and "immortality."

The body of this work consists of only eleven short, but compact instructions on the science of bhakti-yoga. In the early sections of this lesson, we will be sharing the first three of these instructions with you, and nearer to the end, we will share the last of these instructions with you as well.

The explanations of these verses, as given to us by our ācāryas, are full of details, and taken together they are long enough to fill an entire lesson, so we will only be sharing selected portions of their comments with you. In time, if you remain a serious student of this science and a practitioner of this path as well, you will surely gain the opportunity to study their full works.

All of these first three verses discuss six different aspects of the bhakti path. Verse one teaches us about six urges we must learn to control. Verse two tells us about six impediments on the bhakti path, and verse three lets us know about six practices that will help us to advance toward our goal.

While these dos and don'ts are critical parts of our journey, **those in the first verse are not direct bhakti practices:** Instead, they are a subsidiary part of our practices which we introduced during our discussions on what is not pure bhakti. Knowing those lessons were full of information, and that they may have been a bit much for some of you to absorb, we'll do a short review of the category that these instructions fall into.

**Sanga-siddha Bhakti**

There are many practices that can assist our bhakti even though they are not direct practices of bhakti.

The Sanskrit word *sanga* means "to associate with," and *siddha* refers to "perfection," therefore, by referring to these activities a sanga-siddha-bhakti we're shown that if they are performed in connection/association with bhakti, they become a part of those practices which perfect our other practices. Śrīla Gurudeva describes some of these practices in this way:

*There are other endeavors which, although not purely constituted of bhakti, acquire a likeness to bhakti due to there being established as assistants to it. Such endeavors are known as sanga-siddha-bhakti. An example of this is found in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.3.23-25): "One should cultivate compassion toward others, friendliness, offering respect to others, cleanliness, austerity, tolerance, silence, simplicity, celibacy, non-violence, and so on. One should consider heat and cold, and happiness and distress to be the same. One should live in a secluded place, renounce family attachments, and remain satisfied with whatever gain that comes of its own accord."*

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

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Even though behavior in accordance with the duties given by the scriptures are not purely constituted of bhakti, they are assistants to bhakti. Thus, they are considered to be like associates of bhakti. If bhakti is removed from these qualities then Bhagavān (The Supreme Lord, possessor of six opulence's) has no direct relationship with them. Only when these qualities exist as assistants to or associates of bhakti is their likeness to bhakti effected. Therefore, they are known as sanga-siddha-bhakti. (Śrīla Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu)

Thus, this first instruction by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī does not instruct us how to perform bhakti. Instead it speaks on aspects of our behavior that will assist us on the bhakti path.



Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

In explaining the meanings of Sanskrit verses, our ācāryas will often break them down and explain the meanings of the individual words that make up a verse, while explaining how these words form a broader meaning as well, and thus we will follow their examples in sharing these truths with you. In some cases, we will share the Sanskrit for these terms with you, but often times, we will stay with the English, simply as a way of avoiding the introduction of more and more Sanskrit terms. As always, we recommend the memorization of these verses, for this will assist you in understanding them, in other words, acting upon them and applying them to your life.

#### Verse One

*A wise and self-controlled person, who can subdue the urge to speak; the urge to become angry; and the urges of the mind; as well as the urges of the tongue, belly, and genitals; becomes qualified to instruct the entire world.*

When this verse speaks of the **urge to speak**, it refers to **various ways that we use words in negative ways**. One of our ācāryas has explained this as the **urge to use words that cause distress to others**. In another explanation of this verse, we find this urge described as **all talk not related to the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa**. This excellent, though very broad definition is further said to include **the speculations of the followers of impersonalism (those who believe the Lord has no personal form) for these views are entirely opposed to bhakti**. It also includes **the discussions of those who are ensnared in material activities which stress seeking temporary gains. Writings which reflect these negative and non-bhakti related practices are also included as practices which are to be subdued or given up completely**.

Our great ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us the essence of this instruction on controlling our speech:

*The meaning of controlled speech conveyed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī advocates the positive process of engaging the speaking process in glorifying the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa -kathā). The tongue can thus glorify the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord. This is the significance of controlling the urge to speak.*

In this regard, we also want to point out a truth we shared when we discussed how we can perform those activities that are not directly a part of our bhakti practices. In a section written by our inmate contributor, he explained how even such activities as cleaning a locker can become “subsidiary” devotional practices if we always keep our connection to Kṛṣṇa established. The locker, and any other object we deal with, should always be thought of as Kṛṣṇa’s property and the activity itself should also be offered to Him.

In a similar way, those discussions that are not purely composed of glorifying the Lord, can become subsidiary practices if they are properly connected to Kṛṣṇa. For example, a trip to the store may involve various small conversations with any number of people. In these situations, we maintain our bhakti by the method given to us by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

**Thākura.**

*My meditation is practiced in every act when bhakti proper (Kṛṣṇa-kathā and other practices) is carried out in due time while otherwise performing the subsidiary devotional activities in one’s dealings with the ungodly people of this world. In such a position, the jīva does not become apathetic to God even by performing these worldly activities. This constitutes the practice of looking inward, i.e., turning toward one’s real self. (Purport: Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā Text 62)*

In summary, **the most pure and proper use of the tongue is the glorification of the Lord**, and yet we may still engage it in other practices, just so long as we keep our words properly focused and totally avoid using them in negative or harmful ways.

Of course, as we have pointed out before, real truths are universal and therefore we can find them expressed in other scriptures as well. For instance, in **the Holy Bible** we find **the apostle Peter** expressing the need to control the tongue when he writes:

*For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.*

(1 Peter 3.13)

By the truths we have shared so far, we can see that controlling the urge to speak involves both restraining the tongue from improper and hurtful speech and the engagement of the tongue in glorifying the Lord. Thus, we can also see that although this aspect of controlling our urges is not generally considered to be a direct bhakti practice, when do so in the positive and progressive way, that of glorifying the Lord, we can dovetail it in such a way that it can become a part of our walk along the bhakti path.

Before we go on to discuss the second urge we must subdue, the urge to become angry, let’s look at a general rule that applies

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



to controlling our urges, for it is this rule that allows us to both disengage, and engage our senses in ways that benefit our spiritual progress.

In Jaiva-dharma, we find a discussion on the two most basic dos and don'ts, where Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura expresses these rules and instructs on the basis for all dos and don'ts.

*The scriptures have prescribed regulative duties [the activities we must perform; the dos] and these are called vidhi. They have also prohibited certain forbidden activities [the activities we must not perform; the don'ts], calling them niṣedha. The prescribed duty (vaidhī-dharma) for the jīvas is to follow all the regulations and avoid all the prohibited activities.*

In response to this instruction, the disciple who is receiving it asks:

*From your explanation, it seems as if the prescribed duties (vaidha-dharma) consist of all the rules and regulations of the scriptures (śāstras), but the jīvas of Kali-yuga are weak and short-lived, so they cannot study the prescriptions [the dos] and prohibitions [the don'ts] of all the scriptures and then ascertain their duties. Do the scriptures indicate how we can determine vaidhi-niṣedha briefly and practically?*

His guru then answers:

*It is written in the Padma Purāṇa (42.103):*

***Always remember the Lord and never forget Him. All the other prescriptions and prohibitions (vidhi-niṣedha) are servitors of these two instructions.***

*The purport is that the arrangement of all the various kinds of vaidhi and niṣedha within the scriptures are based on these two basic sentences. Duty (vidhi) is ascertained to be that which makes one constantly remember the Supreme Lord, and forbidden activities (niṣedha) are those that make one forget Him.*

***“Remember the Lord constantly throughout your life,” this is the basic prescription [do], and the arrangements of the rules of how to function in life and society so that the jīvas can maintain themselves are all subject to this rule. “Never forget Kṛṣṇa,” this is the basic prohibition [don't]. Every other rule—such as abandoning sinful activities, avoiding the tendency to divert one's attention away from Kṛṣṇa, and atoning for sinful acts—are all subordinate to this basic vidhi-niṣedha. Therefore, all the rules and prohibitions described in the scriptures are eternal servants of the rule to remember Kṛṣṇa constantly and the prohibition to never forget Him. It follows that the regulation to remember Kṛṣṇa is the fundamental principle amongst all the regulations of religion and society.***

(Jaiva Dharma)

With these truths in mind, you should be able to understand why back in Lesson 1, we began this course by telling you that **the number 1 rule of the science of bhakti-yoga is to always remember the Supreme Lord.**

Keeping this in mind, our ācāryas have also explained the basic principle of dos and don'ts in regards to another aspect of proper behavior.

As we've mentioned before, two of the qualities of advanced and strong faith are the acceptance of those things which are favorable for our advancement toward prema-bhakti and the rejection of all that is detrimental to our progress. And yet we find that this alone is not enough to qualify as bhakti. This is explained by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

***The acceptance of that which is favorable and the rejection of that which is unfavorable are not direct limbs of pure (śuddha) bhakti. Rather they are aspects of that advanced faith which in turn bestows qualification for bhakti.***

Then, in relating this truth to his discussion on controlling the six urges, he goes on to say:

***The attempt to restrain these six urges does not constitute sādhana-bhakti, rather it is the staircase to ascend to the platform of eligibility through which one may enter the temple of bhakti. On other paths, such as karma-yoga and jñāna-yoga,***

***one is also instructed to curb these six urges.***

***[Therefore, this alone is not bhakti.] In the scriptures, hearing, chanting, and remembrance of the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are described as actual bhakti.***

Thus, we can see that is essential for us to control these urges if we wish too eligible for bhakti, to do so in a progressive, positive way, such as controlling the urge to speak by only engaging the tongue in glorifying the Lord, rather than keeping it silent, is the superior method, for in this way we can both approach and enter the temple of bhakti.

In a bit, when we discuss controlling the urges of the mind, we will share a bit more about the urges of the tongue in relation to the mind, but for now, let's go on to discuss...

### **Controlling the Urge to Become Angry**

Anger is a terrible enemy. **In the Gita, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells us that through anger we can lose our intelligence and thus fall again and again into the material worlds.** (B.G. 2.63) However, in the verse just before this He also tells us what leads to anger, which provides us with the keys to how we can go about controlling our anger. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

***While contemplating the objects of senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust (kāma) develops, and from lust, anger arises. (BG. 2.62)***

So, the key to controlling our anger is to control our lusts, for when our desires (our lusts) go unfulfilled we become angry.

The fact that anger and a loss of intelligence are interconnected is also expressed in the **Holy Bible**, where we find this instruction on controlling our anger:

***Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. (Eccl. 7.9)***

Along with this quote, we find the apostle James linking lust with sin as well.

***But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. (James 1.14-15)***

The urge to speak and anger are also related to each other, for through careless words we can incite anger in others. Śrīla Gurudeva express this while also telling us about the weakness of the tongue in a somewhat comical way.

***This tongue has no back bone. She can go in any direction needlessly, sometimes here, sometimes there, sometimes up, sometimes down. She is so crooked—she will go anywhere and provoke all kinds of evil activities. She makes quarrels everywhere, everywhere. you know I have told so many times that you should not speak as you like. Do not due what the uncontrolled tongue wants you to do. (The Essence of All Advice)***

In discussing the first verse of Śrī Upadeśamṛta, Śrīla Gurudeva also points out that although we may not wish to follow these instructions, we must do so, for their nectar is found in the nectar they lead us to, and, in doing so, he also discusses the root of anger and the benefit of overcoming it.

***This is nectar, but there are those who do not want to take it. They think it is bitter, very bitter. They do not want to control the six urges, but this instruction to do so is so important.***

***And then, the urge to become angry: this is a root problem. From where does anger come? It comes from so many desires where there are no desires, there is no anger at all. You will be very happy—always, always happy, and always smiling. Your face will show that you have no anger. So, you should try to take this drop of nectar first if you want to enjoy the transcendental nectar of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. (The Essence of All Advice)***

These enemies, uncontrolled speech, lust, and anger are indeed powerful and difficult to overcome, but the **Vedas** assure us, time and time again, that victory can be ours, just so long as we seek our deliverance and find our protection in the proper way. Śrīla

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

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Nārada Munī expresses this truth:

*It is not possible for one to surmount the infatuations of lust, the rise of anger, and so on, by one's own self. It is only by the grace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that one can overcome them. Lust anger and thirst always try to deviate the mind from concentration on Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The most fortunate ones are those who are always alert and thus keep constant watch against the secretive movements of these enemies of the heart. By keeping themselves fully engaged in steadfast love driven service (bhakti) to Śrī Kṛṣṇa they attain the final goal.*

*The six greatest enemies of the heart are lust, anger, greed, pride, illusion, and envy. They are ever present in their attempts to prevent one from approaching Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As the proverb tells us: The mightiest serpents are there to prevent us from taking possession of the hidden treasure. Only those who feast upon the words and instructions of the exalted crest-jewel sādhu s, the pure devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and thus become enlightened with spiritual wisdom can root out the ignorance of the heart and thus destroy the very seed of these enemies, which then allows them to attain the direct service and association of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I therefore bow down and pay my most sincere respects to these devotees, and I crave their blessings, mercy, and guidance.*

*It is a fact that the path of bhakti to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is very difficult to follow for one who becomes indifferent to it. For him, his misfortune is great and he may miss out on this golden opportunity. Whereas, one who meets all obstacles with steadfast endeavors to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa will receive the helping hand of God Himself, who will notice his sincerity and earnestness. For him, his attainment of the goal is one hundred percent assured.*

*For one who worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa with steadfast, unceasing service, with great faith, and with a heart that is devoid of impure motives, all of the obstacles that stand in his path of progress are removed by the Lord Himself. As the darkness, cannot prevail where a light is present, so too, he whose heart is illuminated with the effulgence of spiritual wisdom cannot be enveloped by the ignorance of māyā. (Śrī Hari Bhakti Sudhodaya 7.41-44)*

So, these are our instructions on how to subdue these urges. We must feast upon the words and instructions of the sādhu s and we must sincerely, wholeheartedly, and unceasingly engage in serving the Lord with love, for this recipe ensures us that the sweetness of the nectar of these instructions will be ours to taste.

### **The Urges of the Mind**

As we have discussed before, the mind is the filter which all of our desires and activities must go through. After confronting the mind, we make accept or reject any idea that pops into our head. Therefore, needless to say, of all of the urges, it is the urges of the mind that are most dangerous and difficult to control, and yet, at the same time, it is these urges which we should wage our most serious battles against, for without controlling them, all our other efforts will fail.

In this course, we have already spent a good bit of time discussing the mind. We have told you that **Śrī Kṛṣṇa** Himself has informed us that **the mind can be both a friend or an enemy, acting as a friend for those who control it and an enemy for those who don't.** (B.G 6.5-6) And, even though Kṛṣṇa's friend, Arjuna, has taught us that **the mind is restless, powerful, and obstinate, and that controlling it can be more difficult than controlling the wind** (BG 6.34), **Śrī Kṛṣṇa** teaches that **by constant practice and the giving up of our material attachments the mind can be controlled** (BG 6.35).

Therefore, having shared these truths and more, our approach to this section will be to simply share with you a group of direct quotes from our gurus and from the Vedas themselves. In doing so, we rely on the extreme power and mercy of their words, while also providing you with a set of potent verses for you to study,

meditate upon, and hopefully bring into your heart. And as always, before, during, and after your contemplation of these truths, we ask you to bow down your hearts to Śrī guru and seek the wisdom and guidance which can only be delivered to us by an associate and dear servant of the Lord.

The **Āmrta-bindu Upaniṣad** states:

*The mind is the sole cause of a man's bondage or liberation. A mind absorbed in objects that give pleasure to the senses causes bondage, and when it is detached from such objects it causes liberation.*

Śrīla Gurudeva gives us these methods for controlling the mind.

*By always remembering Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes, as well as Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu and Their pastimes, there will be no time for the mind to wander. The mind will become so pure that the tongue and other senses will automatically be controlled, and we will no longer commit offenses.*

*The mind is controlled by always remembering Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes and always praying to Lord Caitanya. (The Pinnacle of Devotion)*

*Our spiritual sentiments should be so deep that we won't be able to forget them even for a moment, but regrettably, we have become accustomed to generally doing the exact opposite. We hear these topics, but it seems as if immediately afterwards, remembrance of material enjoyment consumes us. We are chanting the holy name, studying verses from scripture, and giving scriptural readings, but where are our minds? Just as when we place an empty pot in a river it immediately fills up with water, immediately after hearing Kṛṣṇa's-kathā (discussions on the name, form, qualities and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa) our minds will be filled with thoughts of sense enjoyment that we have been experiencing since time immemorial. We must try to keep the mind free from these thoughts, even though it may not always remain steady. We should go to wherever Kṛṣṇa's-kathā is being spoken and completely fill our minds with it, leaving no room for thoughts of sense enjoyment.*

*Indeed, there is nothing more favorable for us than hearing Kṛṣṇa's-kathā, and it should be as our food. We should have love for Kṛṣṇa's-kathā, and if not, then we should at least consider it our duty to hear it, understanding that it will bestow on us our ultimate good fortune. Those whose hearts have been thoroughly purified, who never think of sense enjoyment—when they hear such discussion (kathā), deep sentiments that touch the very core of their hearts arise, and they remain absorbed in these sentiments day and night. (Bhakti-rasāyaṇa)*

Repeatedly, in his lectures and books, Śrīla Gurudeva tried to make us aware of the enormous value of hearing about Kṛṣṇa, and if we pray to him these understandings will enter our heart, for **Śrīla Gurudeva** tells:

*Guru is like that. If you pray to him, new understandings will enter your heart, solely by his inspiration. Do not think that he is mortal. He is like Kṛṣṇa, and like Kṛṣṇa, his mercy is causeless. So, pray to him and he will inspire you. (Lecture—Australia 28 April 2005)*

So, let's pray to him as we listen to his descriptions on the value of Kṛṣṇa's-kathā. In asking you to study his words, we also note that his instructions will be especially helpful if we take them to heart and follow them as we study the descriptions of the qualities of Śrī Rādhā that we will close out this lesson with. **Śrīla Gurudeva** teaches us:

*The descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are referred to here as the savior and purifier of the entire world. One may be purified by repeatedly bathing in holy places, but hearing Kṛṣṇa's-kathā from an elevated devotee will purify one for all time, and make one qualified to purify others as well. Acting as guru, this Kṛṣṇa's-kathā is the purifier of everyone, whether they are qualified or not by other considerations. It is the bestower of the knowledge of*

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

*Kṛṣṇa's glories, and the very thing that takes us across the ocean of material existence. Singing about Kṛṣṇa's pastimes will purify oneself and the entire world also... If anyone hears and chants the description of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes found in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, then certainly Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by His associates, will appear in that person's heart. (Bhakti-rasāyana)*

Śrīla Gurudeva made these comments when discussing some very special verses. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, the elder brother of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has compiled these verses at the conclusion of one of his books, and he has referred to them as **Bhakti-rasayana**, which can be translated as **"the nectar-tonic of bhakti."** In this next quote, Śrīla Gurudeva explains how we can use these types of verses, which describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes, to assist us in controlling our minds and moving forward on our journey to prema.

*After telling us the story in his book, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī is giving us some rasāyana, some nectar tonic that is especially for those who have been freed from the diseases of the heart, but who are still a little weak. By taking this medicine for some time, the body will again become strong, meaning that one will be able to progress in his bhakti practices (sādhana) and one's prema-bhakti will become steadfast. First, he treated our disease, but just curing the disease is not everything because one still remains weak. After one's faith has increased and transformed into resolute determination (niṣṭhā), progressing from there he will still face many, many impediments to spiritual advancement (anārtas). This nectar tonic is especially intended for those at this stage. **If in a regulated manner one hears these final verses and then deeply meditates on them, his love for Kṛṣṇa will surely increase.** But, if after hearing these verses one does not meditate on them, then at the time of chanting the holy name, the mind will certainly be absorbed in thoughts of material enjoyment. While chanting, his mind will be unsteady, and remembrance of events from the life he led before he began to follow the path of bhakti will awaken inside him. Various kinds of attraction and repulsion to material objects will come to mind and he won't receive the full benefit of this nectar-tonic. But, **if someone meditates on these verses while chanting the holy name, then his bhakti will surely increase. This is the method for increasing one's bhakti.***

*While we are dreaming, those things which occupied our mind, and which we meditated on time and time again while awake, will come to our vision. Sometimes things that are completely unrelated appear in our dreams; it is all scrambled and there is not even any realistic continuity. If our minds are not controlled, then it will be the same when we chant the holy names. For a certain amount of time each day, we all hear some Kṛṣṇa's-kathā, but now consider what you are doing for all your remaining hours, then at all times the mind will remain absorbed in Him.*

***The focus of the mind will be determined by what we think about during our waking hours.** If during those hours, the mind is pondering over sense enjoyment, such as the arrangements we have made for eating and drinking and how we will solve all of our worldly problems—then how will we be able to steadily think of Kṛṣṇa? Will the mind remain steady while chanting from our daily hearing of perhaps only one hour of Kṛṣṇa's-kathā? **The mind will certainly be absorbed in what we think about during most of our waking hours, and even while sleeping we will remember those same things. But if one remains in the association of sādhu's and during all his waking hours he applies his mind to hearing Kṛṣṇa's-kathā, reading scriptures, and serving the Lord, and he doesn't worry about any other problem then his mind will remain steady. Therefore, the bhakti practitioner who wants to elevate the mind should meditate on the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa while chanting the holy name. We should make this effort, pushing away the thoughts of experiencing sense enjoyment and collecting good quality possessions, and gradually, in due course, our minds will***

***remain steady in meditation on Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. (Bhakti-rasāyana)***

Staple

In concluding this section on controlling the urges of the mind, we would like to share the topmost reason why the focus of the mind is so important. By controlling the mind, we gain such benefits as a peaceful existence, but as such things are not our true goal (and as they can also be achieved by those on other paths), the supreme benefit of controlling the mind far outweighs any other benefits we receive.

In the Bhagavad-Gita, Śrī Kṛṣṇa explains the real value behind focusing the mind on Him.

***Whoever remembers Me at the time of "death" (when the soul departs the material body) is sure to attain an eternal spiritual state like Mine. Of this there is no doubt.***

***Whatever one remembers at the time of giving up his material body, one is sure to attain that same state again, due to his always being absorbed in such contemplation.***

***Therefore, you should always remember Me and fight. (Do your duty). With your mind and intellect devoted to Me, surely you will come to Me.***

***O Arjuna, by engaging in this yoga practice of constantly meditating on the Supreme Divine Person and not permitting the mind to wander elsewhere, one will surely attain Me. (BG 8.5-8)***

In explaining these verses, our ācāryas have told us that this life is a preparation for the test we will take at the time when we leave our present body behind. To pass this test, we must remember Kṛṣṇa at that time. To ensure this outcome, we must practice throughout our lives, which is discussed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī in this way; paraphrasing Śrī Kṛṣṇa he says

***'In this way, he who practices remembering Me during his life will naturally remember Me at the time of death, and He will achieve Me. Thus, remembrance of Me is the supreme yoga of the mind. When one constantly remembers Me with such undeviating attention, he will be able to conquer the restless nature of the mind.'***

We should always remember that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has very deep and unbounded love for all of us. Knowing that, we can begin to understand why He has told us that the number one rule of bhakti-yoga is to always remember Him. He is very anxious to have us reach Him, and thus, knowing of the test we will face when we leave our bodies, He has emphasized this number one rule in order to help us train the mind in such a way that we will go to Him upon our departure from this body.

Having shared the ultimate benefit of controlling the mind by focusing it on Kṛṣṇa with you, we will now close out this section with some of the comments which Śrīla Gurudeva has given us on these teachings from the Gita.

*By remembering Bhagavān at the time of death, one attains His nature (his eternal spiritual state). Similarly, one attains a nature corresponding to the other beings and objects one remembers at this time. Bharata Mahārāja (a former emperor for the earth planet) thought of a young deer at the time of his death, and in his next life he received the body of a deer. For this reason, at the time of death, one must not think of anything except Bhagavān.*

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam also relates the story of a man who attained the body of a woman in his next life, all because he was thinking of a woman at the time of death. Actually, **whatever we do in the course of our lives influences our consciousness at the time of death, and we take another birth accordingly. This is why those on the bhakti path should chant the holy name and practice pure devotion in this life, so that at the time of death, their intense remembrance of Bhagavān will guide them on the path of auspiciousness.***

*It is necessary to engage in constant practice in order to attain unbroken continuity in one's remembrance of Kṛṣṇa (like the unbroken flow of a stream of oil). **By continually practicing***

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

Staple

*remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa throughout one's life, a person will be able to conquer the distracted mind, thus enabling him to remember Kṛṣṇa at the time of death.*

### **The Tongue, Belly, and Genitals**

In his commentary on controlling our urges, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has told us that **the urge to become angry is one of the urges of the mind**. In a similar way, the urge to speak arises from the mind as well.

In discussing the other three urges that we must subdue, he has taught us that they can be considered as urges of the body.

**The demands of the body are also of three types: the urges of the tongue, belly, and genitals.** *Anxiousness to relish any of the six kinds of taste (sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and stringent) and greed to enjoy flesh, fish, eggs, wine, and excessive milk, milk sweets, cream, and so on is known as the urges of the tongue. Sādhū s also avoid eating foods that are overly bitter or spiced with hot chili. Consumption of betel nut (an intoxicant), cigarettes, marijuana, opium, and other intoxicating substances, as well as onions and garlic are also considered as impetuous demands of the tongue. Practitioners of bhakti must never indulge in these intoxicants.*

The urges of the tongue are very powerful, and thus, in His merciful kindness, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has provided us with a very excellent means of helping us overcome these urges.

**Foodstuffs that are prepared for the Lord's pleasure and then offered to Him are known as "prasāda" + pruh-sod.** This word, **prasāda**, also translates as "mercy", for when we come to learn all of the truths about prasāda we find that such food is indeed the mercy of the Lord, and in this next quote Śrīla Prabhupāda explains how this prasāda is used in our attempts to control the urge of the tongue.

*As for the urges of the tongue, we all experience that the tongue wants to eat palatable dishes. Generally, we should control the tongue by supplying it with prasāda. The devotee's attitude is that he will eat only when Kṛṣṇa gives him prasāda. That is the way to control the urges of the tongue. One should take prasāda at scheduled times and should not eat in restaurants and other food shops simply to satisfy the whims of the tongue or belly. If we stick to the principle of only taking prasāda, the urges of the belly and tongue can be controlled.*

Of course, we are aware that those in some trying circumstances, such as being in prison, the standard of taking only prasāda must be adjusted. One of the qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that He is the master of time, place, and circumstance, meaning that He can adjust as situations require. Thus, in this light, it is perfectly acceptable to take the foodstuffs that are available to us, however we should still avoid those foods that should never be offered to Kṛṣṇa. Such things as the flesh of animals, eggs, and the foods listed on the Ekādaśī guidelines that we have sent you should never be taken, for these foods will surely affect our consciousness and decrease our ability to stay on the bhakti path.

Our inmate contributor and other inmates have informed us that most (if not all) prisons offer alternative or even vegan meals upon request. We highly recommend that you consume this type of diet. In doing so, we receive food that can be offered to the Lord. Ideally, this food should be prepared by a devotee and formally offered to Kṛṣṇa in His deity form, but in trying circumstances, we can offer this food to Him ourselves, for in the Gītā Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells us:

*If one offers Me a leaf, a flower, fruit, or water, with love and devotion, I will accept it.* (BG 9.26)

In his explanation of this verse, Śrīla Prabhupāda teaches us:

*If one wishes to engage in devotional service to the Supreme in order to be purified and reach the goal of life—the transcendental loving service of God—then he should find out what the Lord desires of him. One who loves Kṛṣṇa will give Him whatever He wants, and he avoids offering anything which is undesirable or*

*unasked for. Thus meat, fish, and eggs should not be offered to Kṛṣṇa. If He desired such things as offerings, He would have said so. Instead, He clearly requests that a leaf, fruit, flowers, and water be given to Him, and He says of this offering, "I will accept it." Therefore, we should understand that He will not accept meat, fish, or eggs. Vegetables, grains, fruit, milk, and water are the proper foods for human beings and are prescribed by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Whatever else we eat cannot be offered to Him, since He will not accept it. Thus, we cannot be acting on the level of loving devotion if we offer such foods.*

With these truths in mind, we should eat a diet consisting only of those foods which Kṛṣṇa will accept, and then, by offering this food to Him, before we take any for ourselves, we can, through His mercy/prasāda begin to control the urges of the tongue and belly.

Some of these descriptions of the urges of the tongue also contain the symptom which is referred to as the urge of the belly. In his explanation of this verse, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura says **the urge of the belly is the drive to eat too much**. And in his comments, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī says:

**Gluttonous persons usually suffer from different types of diseases. By eating too much, many difficulties ensue. Persons who eat excessively generally become subservient to the demands of the genitals and thus become debauchees.**

Since the urges of the tongue and belly are similar, it is no surprise that the means to curb them are also related.

**By accepting only prasāda in a suitable manner, by observing Ekādaśī in accordance with the regulations, and by serving Kṛṣṇa, the demands of the belly are mitigated.**

In our "Guide to Vaiṣṇava Holy Days", and each month in our newsletters, we mention the glories of Ekādaśī and provide you with the guidelines for honoring this special day. By fasting twice per month, we both honor the Lord and receive the benefit of decreasing the urges of the belly, so here, we once again encourage you to make the observance of Ekādaśī, a regular and important part of your bhakti practices.

And of course, other scriptures also warn us against urges. For example, the **Holy Bible** tells us:

**His end is destruction whose god is his belly.** (Phil 3.19)

Moving on now to discuss the next urge, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī discusses the urges of the genitals in this way:

**The demands of the genitals are of two types: in accordance with scripture and not sanctioned by scripture. When a person who attains maturity marries in accordance with scriptural regulations and observes the prescribed duties (dharma) for a householder by following the proper behavioral codes for begetting good children, he regulates the demands of the genitals. This is classified as sex indulgence in accordance with scripture. On the other hand, there are many different types of illicit sexual indulgence, such as transgressing scriptural and social codes and accepting another man's wife, lusting after various types of conjugal exchanges and enjoying the senses by artificial and licentious means contrary to scriptural codes. All practitioners of bhakti (sādhakas) should always remain aloof from the demands of the tongue, belly, and genitals.**

In regards to the urges of the genitals, we have told before that it is improper to even meditate on illicit sex.

While many do not consider this to be wrong, even **Lord Jesus Christ** made this point clear:

**Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.** (Matt. 5.27-38)

So, we must control our mental lusts as well. We would also like to point out an interesting variation on how the original verse was translated, and how we can apply this to our attempts to curb these urges. In his "Nectar of Instruction", Śrīla Prabhupāda has

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

said we must “tolerate” these urges, while in other translations we find words like “subdue” and “control”. Each of these has its own unique meaning, all of which can be applied here.

We can think of an itch. When we have an itch brought on by certain types of rash, we will only increase our troubles by scratching it. So, in absence of a treatment, we should tolerate the itch. In our early attempts to battle these urges, they will still remain present due to our saṁskāras (mental impressions) from the past. When they arise, we must tolerate them, not giving in to scratch them, thus continuing the cycle of impressions. At the same time, we should apply the medicines that the expert spiritual physicians (our ācāryas) have prescribed for us. By engaging in bhakti practices like hearing and chanting, by taking only prasāda for our foods, any by observing Ekādaśī, we will gradually be able to subdue these urges until we finally gain total control of them and cure our sensory itches once and for all.

### Qualified to Instruct

At the end of this verse from Śrī Upadeśamṛta, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī tells us that **one who subdues these urges becomes qualified to instruct the entire world**. In this regard, we must point out that this alone does not provide these qualifications. Just as the control of these urges is not bhakti itself, but instead only the doorway to bhakti, this control only qualifies us to further our abilities to share the glories of bhakti with others.

Only a very few rare, exalted, and totally pure devotees are qualified as true gurus, and yet, by controlling these urges and then further following the path they guide us upon, we can at least become good examples to others and increase our ability to share the message of Lord Caitanya with them. Our desire should be to instruct others and encourage them to seek the guidance and mercy of a true guru, and not to falsely position ourselves in the role of Śrī guru.

However, in this same regard, we are never to feel as if we are totally unqualified to preach, and thus decide to simply work on our own practices while ignoring our responsibility to help other by sharing these truths with them. We must do all these things: Open the doorway to bhakti by controlling our urges; follow the path by hearing, chanting, and so on; and do our best to help others as well. Śrīla Gurudeva instructs us in this way:

***I want you to practice all these instructions and preach throughout the whole world. That is the best thing. Tell everyone:***

***In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy (kali-yuga) there is no other means of spiritual advancement that chanting the Holy Names of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.***

***You should chant and be like a guru and instruct others. To be guru means that you should practice these teachings and tolerate all these urges. First you should practice, and then you can tell others. Then you are really a Vaishnava. You should have no sense of ownership and be very humble, not quarrelling with anyone. Be very humble. (The Essence of All Advice.)***

According to our own situation, we should preach when we can. However, in this regard, we will also remind you that it is an offense to the Holy Names to share Their glories with those that are not at all interested in hearing about Them. Thus, in some cases, you may need to concentrate your preaching on other truths: Such as, “You will never die. You are not this body. You are not the mind. You are an eternal servant of God and you will only be happy when you understand this and act in this capacity”: and so on. If you adjust accordingly to your audience and pray to Śrī guru for his guidance and one drop of his mercy, you can be a successful preacher. You can have total control of the urges and advanced knowledge in the science of bhakti. **But always remain humble**, knowing that any success you have is simply a manifestation of the mercy potency of Śrī guru, and not a result of your own abilities.

Śrī guru can, out of his own humility, send his mercy out

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

through others, without feeling any need to receive credit himself, while on the other hand, we should never believe or try to portray that we are capable of guiding others without the powers of Śrī guru backing us up.

### Gosvāmī or go-dāsa?

In the final portion of his comments on controlling the urges, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī tells us about the true meaning of the word “Gosvāmī”, and he instructs us on a term that applies to those of us who do not make the effort to control these urges as well. So please allow us to follow in his footsteps by sharing the nectar of his instructions with you.

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

*Those who are go-dāsa, servants of the senses, are actually servants of illusion (māyā). If, therefore, they desire to become servants of Kṛṣṇa, they should follow in the footsteps of those who are truly gosvāmīs. There is no means other than this.*

*Those whose senses are not controlled can never become devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam [a great devotee child of only five years old, who was subjected to the mistreatment of his demonic father] has said:*

***O father, materialistic persons are simple milling over that which has already been milled and chewing that which has already been chewed. Because their senses are not controlled, they are proceeding towards the dreadful hell of this material existence, repeatedly trying to enjoy that which has already been chewed. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.30)***

We ask you to deeply reflect upon all of these truths and to seek the mercy of Śrī guru as you make a concentrated effort to control these urges and bring these truths into your heart.

### Śrī Upadeśamṛta — Verse Two

#### Six Impediments to Bhakti

**A NOTE ON QUOTATIONS:** In sharing the translation and meaning of this verse with you, we note that most of our ācāryas have written commentaries on, or spoken in lectures about these critical instructions of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Therefore, there are many angles of vision as to their exact interpretation which have been mercifully given to us. For this reason, when sharing some of their shorter explanations, we will simply say they are given to us by “Śrī guru”. All of their words will appear in *italics*, although, in some cases, we will not provide the specific speaker or source of the quote. You may rest assured, however, that all of these quotes are authentic and therefore valid sources of the Supreme Absolute Truth.

This same standard will be applied to the direct translation of the verse itself, as we will use a combination of their translations, and then, in explaining the verse, we will provide other views on its exact meaning.

When longer quotes are used, we will follow our usual pattern of attributing them to specific ācāryas, usually providing the source of the quote as well. We pray that our ācāryas will accept this method of conveying their knowledge to you. We apologize to them for any faults it may have, and we humbly beg them to excuse us while also instilling their mercy into our attempts to share these truths with you.

The six impediments to bhakti that are discussed in this next verse are not generally considered to be the same as those obstacles which have previously discussed (anāṛthas). Anāṛthas (such as weaknesses of the heart, envy, etc.) may at times cause us to face the impediments described here, but these impediments focus more on activities we perform as opposed to the weaknesses that drive these activities.

### Verse Two



Staple

**One's bhakti** (love-driven desire to serve Kṛṣṇa) is destroyed by engaging in the following six activities:

- (1) Eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required;
- (2) Endeavoring for worldly objects or engaging in activities that are opposed to bhakti;
- (3) Talking unnecessarily about material subject matters;
- (4) Disregarding the rules and regulations of bhakti and/or paying too much attention to strictly following them when such adherence impedes one progress;
- (5) Associating with those who are not interested in the Lord or in bhakti-yoga (the path to reach Him);
- (6) Being greedy to attain material sense enjoyment and/or a restlessness of the mind which causes one to be unsteady in one's resolve to concentrate exclusively on the bhakti path.

Having shared these dangerous activities with you, we will now examine each one in greater detail. In doing so, we will share the Sanskrit terms for these faulty activities. While it may not be necessary for you to learn these terms, using them will help us explain their meanings. Of course, serious students may also wish to learn these terms as well. But remember, it is much more important for us to **understand** these activities and why they are impediments on our path, in other words, to **actively engage ourselves in avoiding the acts**, than it is to simply be able to recite them from memory or give the Sanskrit terms.

#### Atyāhāra

+ ut-yā-hār (yā/hār/ like yacht/hard) Śrī guru explains this word in this way:

**Atyāhāra is a compound word formed by the combination of the prefix "ati", which means "too much or excessively", with the word "āhāra" which means "to seize, grasp, or consume for one's own enjoyment". Excessive enjoyment of sense objects through any one of the senses and the endeavor to accumulate in excess of one's requirement are known as Atyāhāra.**

Devotees who have renounced householder (married, family) life are forbidden to accumulate material goods. Householders must acquire goods sufficient for their maintenance, but if they accumulate beyond their needs it is known as atyāhāra. Those who are eager to perform deep meditative service (bhajana) should not accumulate worldly goods like materialistic sense enjoyers.

When we discussed anāthas, we mentioned that attachment to material objects is an obstacle on the bhakti path. When we allow that attachment to drive us into acquiring these objects, we further impede our progress.

Along with these meanings, **Śrī guru tells us that this term refers to over eating.** Taken in this way, we can see how the urges of the belly can also drive us to further impediments. For these reasons, we can see why it is very valuable for us to be able to analyze and recognize the impediments in their early stages, when they sit, unacted upon as desires in the mind, for in this way, we have a better chance of nipping them in the bud, cutting them off and controlling them before they cause us to act, and thus create even more difficulties for us.

Bhakti-yoga is an excellent, logical, and detailed science. It provides perfect analysis of the chains of events that can either stop our progress toward prema or allow us to move smoothly and quickly forward. This science, again and again, clearly identifies the mind as the root of all evil (the uncontrolled mind that is) and thus we must do all we can (beginning with the chanting of the Holy Names) to bring it under control. In this way, it will act as our great friend and as an assistant in our progress. Left uncontrolled, it will battle us like an enemy,

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

driving us off the bhakti path.

Śrī guru has also expressed this impediment as **an excessive endeavor for material prosperity**, which is another way of stating **collecting more funds than required. The way of life designed for humanity, and given to us by the Vedas and Śrī guru is based on simple living and high thinking.** Maintaining a simple home, while accumulating only enough resources for healthful living is proper, and, if this were the rule of society there would be such an excess of resources that all of humanity could be easily fed and sheltered. Instead, because of atyāhāra, there is great poverty and hunger for some and excessive collection of goods for others.

The fair and proper distribution of God's gifts would also eliminate a large number of crimes in this world, but this cannot be carried out by artificial man-made means, such as the implementation of such political schemes as socialism or communism. Only when the general populace experiences a change of heart, and, of their own free will, overcome such impediments as the unnecessary accumulation of goods and overeating, will the needs of all men be met.

In addition to these means, Śrīla Gurudeva further points out that **atyāhāra does not pertain to over-eating with the mouth only.** We have five knowledge-acquiring senses (the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin), **if these senses are engaged in any way in material enjoyment this is called atyāhāra, or over-eating through any of these senses.** When we spend our time, energy, and resources in an effort to enjoy our senses, we decrease the time, energy, and resources that are available for us to serve the Supreme Lord. If we can understand these simple facts, we will give up the dangerous, damaging, and illogical activities that impede our journey to prema.

#### Prayāsa

+ pruh-yās (like rust and yacht) This Sanskrit word has a meaning that is similar to some of the aspects of atyahāra. Śrī Guru explains prayasya in this way.

**Prayāsa refers to activities that are opposed to bhakti or preformed for the enjoyment of the senses. The cultivation of that knowledge which sets out to establish only the quality of the jīva with brahma (the impersonal aspect of the Lord) while ignoring the differences is also called prayāsa.**

By these definitions, we can see a clear similarity between these first two impediments. As a very dear godbrother of Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja has explained prayāsa in this way:

**Going against devotion by adhering to that which is forbidden and abhorring that which is favorable.**

By this meaning we can see that all activities that decrease our desire to serve the Lord, as well as the avoidance of those acts which increase our bhakti can meet the requirements of this impediment.

Time is precious, it can never be replaced, nor can it be purchased. No amount of wealth can create more than twenty-four hours in a day. We must spend this resource wisely. When we endeavor to perform activities that are not designed to increase our affection for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Their servants, we foolishly waste the time we are given in this life. Similarly, we mismanage our time when we fail to take part in those practices which bring our hearts closer to the Lord. So perhaps, in some ways, this impediment focuses on how we spend our time.

#### Prajalpa

+pruh-julp-uh Translated as **talking unnecessarily about material subject matters**, this impediment to bhakti is clearly very closely related to the urge to speak. In addition to this meaning, the improper and unnecessary use of words encompasses other things as well. For example, **Śrī guru** says:

**Prajalpa means to uselessly criticize and gossip about others, which is a gross misuse of time.** (We can notice how Śrī guru has identified the use of time as a factor of this impediment as he

does in this next definition as well.)

*To waste time in useless, mundane talks is called prajalpa. The dry scholarship of those interested in liberation through merging with brahma, which amounts to nothing more than useless scriptural argumentation; praise of the benefits of pious deeds, which generates fondness for religious rituals in those who carry them out only to gain material benefits; and talks pleasing to the senses of those who have many material desires, are all called prajalpa.*

In this next explanation, he further expands our understanding of what constitutes unnecessary talk.

*When we mix with a few friends, we immediately begin unnecessary talking, sounding just like croaking toads. If we must talk, we should talk about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Those outside of Kṛṣṇa consciousness are interested in reading heaps of newspapers, magazines, and novels, solving crossword puzzles, and doing many other nonsensical things. In this fashion people simply waste their valuable time and energy. In the Western countries, old men, retired from active life, play cards, fish, watch television, and debate about useless socio-political schemes. All these and other frivolous activities, are included in the prajalpa category. Intelligent persons interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness should never take part in such activities.*

In examining how these other activities can be considered useless talk, we can consider that even in doing these things the mind generates its own internal dialogue. When reading a celebrity magazine, the mind will talk to itself—“Oh, I like this person because la did da”, and so on. Even when doing something like playing cards the mind rambles on—“He played a low spade, I best be ready for a run down in hearts. Boy am I hungry, I wonder what the wives got on for dinner. I think I’ll blah, blah, blah”. In its restless state, an unoccupied mind will always find something to talk to itself about, and this is why, as Śrīla Prabhupada said, *“If we must talk, we should talk about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”*

In our “Guide to Vaiṣṇava Holy Days”, we introduced you to Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, telling you that he is considered to be the first **rupanuga—follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī**. Having taken a great deal of personal instruction from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as well as from Lord Caitanya Himself and other close associates of the Lord, this amazing devotee was also able to convey the highest truths in the writings he left for us. One of his works is entitled Śrī Manah-śikṣā—Preaching to the mind. In this book, the dangers of mundane talk are also mentioned, and in their analysis of this text, our ācāryas have made some important and powerful observations that we would also like to share with you. In the fourth verse, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī writes:

*O my dear bother mind! Please totally abandon all contemptible talk of material affairs, for these talks will act like a prostitute and deprive you of all your spiritual intelligence.*

In this verse, he also warns us against hearing discussions about merging with the Lord’s impersonal feature, which he describes as a tigress that devours your very soul, and he tells us our affection should be focused solely on Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, even to the point of abandoning affection for all other forms of the Lord. He instructs the mind to stay in the cowherd village of Vṛndāvana and worship Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, for only They can revive our pure and original love which is meant only for Them.

In explaining his comments on useless talk, Śrī guru tells us, *Just as a prostitute deprives a debouche of his riches, material talk robs the living entity of his wealth of good intelligence. Intelligence directed toward spiritual progress is the only treasure of the jīva who is travelling the path of bhakti. Material talks ruin such wisdom and turn it toward sense enjoyment. Discussions of fleeting sense enjoyment and other such topics are useless.*

Here we can note that in the case of a prostitute, the customer

willingly gives his money away, only to receive a very temporary pleasure. In a similar way, those who engage in material talks willingly give up the focus of the mind, in their attempts to enjoy other temporary pleasures.

Further, in discussing what is meant by “spiritual intelligence”, Śrī guru tells us:

*This spiritual intelligence means that one is firmly committed to the position of, “I will perform bhakti”. This resolve is rare and precious. It is our greatest treasure and our only possession of any value. It is the seed of the bhakti creeper (vine-like plant) which goes through the stages of bhakti growth, eventually to produce the fruit of prema, so prevent it from being destroyed at any cost.*

The message of the Vedas and the words of our ācāryas are so wonderful. They are filled with such deep and important truth and overflowing with mercy and affection for us. They have just told us the answer to a question that few will ever ask, and even fewer will be able to properly answer.

If someone were to ask you, **“What is your only possession of any value?”** what would your answer be?

Śrī guru teaches us that a **resolve, a firm commitment that, “I will perform bhakti!” is our only treasure.**

We have told you that the journey to prema begins at the stage of hearing (śravaṇa-dāśa), but that if we wish to make progress from there we must rise to the stage of acceptance (varana-dāśa), which arrives when we attain this resolve— **“I will perform bhakti!”**

Knowing that this our greatest and only wealth, we will surely be counted amongst the greatest of all fools if we squander this wealth by placing it in the hands of the prostitute of useless talks. Instead, we are to do as instructed, **we are to prevent it from being destroyed at any cost.**

As we travel along together, we should regularly take notice of how our experiments in the science of bhakti-yoga are turning out. Of course, in doing so, we must be honest and consider if we are properly conducting these experiments. Are we chanting on a regular basis? Are we worshipping Śrī guru daily?

Along with this analysis, we should gauge the results of our experiments. Has our worship of the Deities, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-madana-mohana increased our feelings that yes, the Deities are a manifestation of God, and yes, They can hear our prayers and accept our offerings?

In addition to checking the positive results of our experiments, we can also look to see if our failures to follow the path are also proving to us that the science of bhakti-yoga is a true and valid science. Using our current topic as an example, we can take a close look at how our bhakti is affected when we engage in prajalpa, remembering that useless activities like playing cards, reading magazines and novels, and watching TV are also included in this bhakti destroying impediment.

**When we waste our time in these ways, does our commitment to perform bhakti become weaker? When we avoid these activities, spending more of our precious time on bhakti, does our commitment become stronger? An honest assessment of our own resolve, will clearly demonstrate that yes, prajalpa damages our resolve thus impeding our spiritual progress.**

As we close this section on prajalpa, the impediment of useless talk, we will share some final words of Śrī guru with you. Please read, reread, study, and meditate on these words while begging Śrī guru to bring them into your heart. **Śrīla Gurudeva** teaches us:

*There are two types of instruction regarding the performance of bhakti: one is prescription (what we must do), and the other is prohibition (what we must never do). Both are necessary. “Always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him.” This is the primary injunction of the Vedas, and all other injunctions are subordinate to this. Always remember Kṛṣṇa is a prescription and*

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never forget Kṛṣṇa is a prohibition. Also, “Accept whatever is favorable for bhakti, and reject that which is unfavorable.” Actually, we don’t really have the qualification to know what is really favorable and what is not; but we can find out by associating with sādhu s and from the scriptures. **useless, material talk is prohibited.** We have been warned not to engage in worldly talks. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructed Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī to avoid worldly talks. **Worldly talks mean talks about material duties and responsibilities, especially those religious rites which aim at material gains, talks of wealth and how to accumulate it, talks of sense pleasures, our lusts, and how to fulfill them, and talks of impersonal liberation from this world.** The guru and Vaiṣṇavas, being very merciful, bestow upon us this power of discernment (so that we can understand what is favorable and what is not).

**“The worst impediment in the realm of bhakti is useless material talk; therefore, never speak worldly talk—instead, always speak about bhakti.”** This instruction was given to Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam also decrees worldly talk and advises one to keep away from it. **A mind which is polluted is a great impediment to bhakti, and so Śrī Caitanya has said one should cleanse the mirror of the mind through the chanting of the Holy Name.**

**The mind itself is a storehouse of pollution.** It carries the impressions of all the good and bad actions by a person through countless lifetimes. These impressions are to be cleansed away by the chanting of the Holy Names, as advised by Śrī Caitanya.

**The effect of bad association pollutes the mind and ruins bhakti.** When one’s mind is attracted to speaking about useless topics, one falls from the bhakti path. **Do not indulge in idle talk even for a moment. This will displace bhakti from the heart and destroy the seed of one’s affection for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.**

The desire to please Kṛṣṇ and His associates, the guru, and the Vaiṣṇavas comes in bhakti. Besides this, any other desire for self-enjoyment or the desire to go to Vaikuntha and enjoy the opulence there does not come under the heading of bhakti. One has to undertake all kinds of efforts for Kṛṣṇa. **One should be intent to carry out all of one’s endeavors for the sake of Kṛṣṇa. Do not delay; start this right now.** (Commentary on Śrī Manah-sikṣā Verse Four)

### Niyama—Agraha/Āgraha

The Sanskrit word Niyama refers to **rules and regulations**. In this verse from Śrī Upadeśamṛta, we find a dual meaning word **niyamāgraha**. Śrī guru tells:

The word **agraha** means **“eagerness to accept”** and **āgraha** means **“failure to accept”**. By adding either of these two words to the word **niyama**, the compound word **niyamāgraha** is formed. Thus **niyamāgraha** has a twofold meaning.

When read **in regards to accepting the rules of bhakti**, Śrī guru tells us **this word indicates over-zealousness**. As we progress in our bhakti, some practices that we carried out in our early stages may no longer play such a critical role in our further advancement, **so if we are over-zealous to follow rules that impede our further progress, we commit the fault of niyama-āgraha**. An example of this would be if we consider our own vows and practices, carried out for our own advancement to be so important that we neglect opportunities to engage in more beneficial services, such as doing some service for a sādhu.

**The fault of being over-eager to follow rules also applies when our extra efforts are polluted by the expectation of some personal material benefit for our efforts.** Of course, when personal desires interfere with our practices, they actually begin to fall into the category of mixed (miśrā) bhakti, or even causes our actions to step outside of the category of bhakti altogether. Yet still, many will continue such activities as worshipping the Lord and making offerings to Him while seeking their own

material rewards.

**The impediment of niyama-āgraha (failure to accept the rules) arises when we disregard the regulations of bhakti.** This can include failing to perform the “dos”, such as chanting, or performing the “don’ts”, such as taking intoxicants. **Śrī guru tells us this fault takes place due to an absence of firm faith.**

**Therefore, the impediment known as niyamāgraha refers to both disregarding the rules of bhakti and to being over-eager to follow them when doing so either impedes your progress or when your drive to follow is contaminated with desire for personal material gains.**

The rules of bhakti must be followed properly and in accordance with our stage of advancement, as well as time, place, and circumstance, otherwise we face the possibility of allowing our following or not following to impede our progress.

### Jana-sanga

Many times, in this course, we have told you of the power of associating with sādhu s (sādhu-sanga), explaining how this is a critical practice. We have also, at times, spoken of the dangers of associating with non-devotes, such as when we discussed Māyāvādīs (those who believe Kṛṣṇa has no eternal personal form and that personal form He does appear in, as well as our own individuality and every aspect of this world, are all illusions/māyā). The impediment being discussed here deals with this negative and harmful association.

Śrī guru has explained **jana-sanga** in this way:

**Associating with worldly minded people who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is known as jana-sanga. One should strictly avoid such association. This includes association with non-devotee women or with any man who is overly attached to women, associating with Māyāvādīs, atheists, and other non-devotees. We are therefore advised to live only in the association of Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees.**

We should note that this restriction does not necessarily include all association, instead, it focusses on friendly or intimate association and on association in regards to religious matters. To put ourselves amongst those who discuss philosophies that are opposed to bhakti truths is dangerous and improper. Our regular dealings in the world may often require interactions with those who fall into these categories, such as when shopping or taking care of other material affairs. In these situations, we should be courteous and give due respect, while at the same time avoiding any unnecessary association.

**Śrī guru has also told us that we should not associate with those who identify the body as the self.** This category includes a vast majority of the population and shows us why terms like “non-devotees” are used. When people are unaware of their true spiritual identity (svarūpa) as a servant of God, and instead consider themselves to be men, women, African American or Caucasian, tall or short, rich or poor, and so on, and they base their entire existence and their view of the world only on these illusory, temporary designations, their minds become so clouded that we can only experience negative effects by associating with them.

Jumping ahead a bit, we will tell you that the next verse from Śrī Upadeśamṛta, Verse 3 (which we will also discuss in this lesson) tells us about six moods and activities that are favorable to our bhakti. In this list, we will find the other side of the truth shared here. In Verse 2, we are told that associating with non-devotees impedes our bhakti, while in Verse 3, we are told that giving up the association of non-devotes will improve our bhakti. This dual-natured consideration of one activity is similar to the number one rule of bhakti—Always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him. In light of the fact that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has double emphasized the importance of not associating with non-devotees, and combined with the fact that associating with those that are devotees is a powerful positive practice that greatly enhances our advancement, we are now going to share a long

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series of quotes on the power and effect of association. Please study and contemplate these quotes very carefully, for even within a single sentence of a single quote, you will find vast and deep truths which are being mercifully given to us. As we do this, we should also pray to those who bring these truths to us, asking them to bring these understandings into our heart.

One final note, after we share these quotes, we will discuss how these truths can be applied, within the limiting prison environment. We mention this now in hopes that you will not feel these teachings will be difficult or impossible for you to follow in your current situation.

### **The Effects of Association**

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, the Supreme Lord teaches us: *Association is the cause of both material bondage and liberation from material existence. When, due to ignorance, one keeps company with worldly minded people who are diverted from the path of bhakti, that association further entraps one in material entanglement. On the other hand, when one keeps company with sādhu s, that association liberates one from material existence and causes one to attain the lotus feet of the Lord.* (S.B. 3.23.55)

*Those who desire to obtain Kṛṣṇa-prema, which is the ultimate reward of bhakti-yoga, should never indulge in illicit association with women. Learned sage who know the Absolute Truth say that illicit association with women opens wide the door to hell.* (S.B. 3.31 39) [This applies to illicit association with men as well.]

*One should never associate with foolish, agitated, materialistic people who identify the body as the self, who are most deplorable, and who are dancing dogs in the hands of women.* (S.B. 3.31 34)

Lord Caitanya teaches us:

*By associating with a sādhu, one awakens his faith in Kṛṣṇa-bhakti. As a result of performing bhakti, one's prema awakens, and thus one's material existence comes to an end. Unless one receives the mercy of a great devotee, one cannot come to the platform of bhakti nor can one be relieved of the bondage of material existence.* (C.C. Madhya 22, 49, 51)

Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the form of His topmost scripture, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, teaches us:

*By their powerful words, sādhu s can completely cut asunder all the unfavorable attachments of the mind.* (S.B. 11.26. 26)

Lord Caitanya instructs us:

*The association of sādhu s is the root cause of bhakti. This sādhu-sanga waters the creeper of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti through the medium of hearing and chanting and thus transforms it into Kṛṣṇa-prema. When Kṛṣṇa-prema is awakened, sādhu -sanga becomes the most essential limb once again.*

*When the material entanglement of the jīva who is wondering throughout this worldly existence begins to diminish, he obtains sādhu-sanga by the causeless mercy of the Lord. By that association, he obtains Kṛṣṇa bhakti and progresses from faith, to affection for Kṛṣṇa, to Kṛṣṇa-prema.* (C.C. Madhya 19.151; 22. 47)

Śrīla Gurudeva expresses these truths in this way:

*Sādhu-sanga is the passageway which brings us face-to-face with the Lord. By the influence of this association those who are averted from the Lord turn towards Him, and thus, faith, affection, and prema arise one after another.*

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* contains these truths:

*In the association of devotees, there is constant chanting and discussion of the glories of the Lord's transcendental pastimes, which are purifying by nature and which produce the highest results. By such association, there will be three effects: the feelings of mutual affection and love between devotees will be increased, mutual happiness will be experienced, and devotees will help each other to become free from all material attachments and distress. All this is learnt in the association of devotees. In this way, devotees constantly remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who destroys*

*all sins. They also cause the remembrance of the Lord to appear within each other's hearts. Thus, by prema-bhakti awakened through the steadfast performance of sādhanā-bhakti, they always remain engaged in thinking of Kṛṣṇa and they come to exhibit symptoms of spiritual ecstasy in their bodies, such as tears and the standing of hairs on end.* (S.B. 11.3.30,31)

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gives this nice summary:

*The desire for worldly activities is not vanquished unless one gets the association of devotees. One attains pure chanting in the association of sādhu s and thus his bhakti grows and flourishes.* (Comments on Śrī Manah-sikṣā Verse One)

We may ask, "What does it mean to associate with sādhu s?"

This answer is given by Śrīla Gurudeva:

*Lovingly we should speak with them, ask questions, listen to the answers, and have a mood of affectionate reciprocation in all respects.* (Bhakti-rasāyana)

Śrī guru also tells us that *sādhu-sanga means to associate with sādhu s for the purpose of learning how to perform bhakti.*

The glories of this association and connection between the Lord's mercy and the mercy of the sādhu s is explained by Śrīla Nārada Muni.

*The fundamental source of awakening bhakti in one's heart is the unreserved mercy from the exalted, love-intoxicated devotees, along with a drop of mercy directly from the Supreme Lord Himself.*

*To get a chance to meet a God-realized, and love-intoxicated pure devotee of the Lord is the supreme good fortune, it is the rarest of the rare opportunities, so rare that it is almost impossible, but if one gets this chance, one will surely, without any doubt, be rewarded with spiritual enlightenment.*

*To become associated with such a sādhu is possible only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Therefore, it may be said that in the manner of distributing mercy and awakening prema, God Himself and His love-intoxicated devotees are one and the same.* (Śrī Nārada Bhakti Sūtras 38-41)

Who we chose to associate with either benefits us or harms us. Śrīla Gurudeva explains:

*If our association is good, then our bhakti will increase, and if not, it will decrease. If we associate with worldly minded people, then we will have a taste for sense enjoyment. If we associate only with devotees that are on the same level as ourselves, and we also associate with non-devotees, then our service will lack feeling and we will also have some taste for sense enjoyment. With good association, we will maintain our enthusiasm. If we do not have enthusiasm, it is due to bad association.* (Pinnacle of Devotion)

So far, we have focused mainly on the value of good association, touching only briefly on improper association as causing negative effects. In these next few quotes, these damaging effects will be clearly emphasized. While contemplating these truths, we should remember that two of the instructions of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī focus on this negative association, for he has told us that associating with non-devotee impede our bhakti and giving up this association increases it.

The Vedas tell us:

*One should never associate with people who are absorbed in non-reality, for by such association, one is deprived of all objects that are worthy of attainment and he falls down to a degraded position.* (Hari-bhakti-vilasā 10.294)

*It would be better to live in a cage of fire than to suffer the misery of associating with those who are inimical to the thoughts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.* (Katyāyana-saṁhitā)

*If one associates with those who are devoid of virtue, one's good qualities—such as truthfulness, cleanliness, mercy, control of speech, intelligence, shyness, forgiveness, and control of the mind and senses—completely fade away. Therefore, one should never associate with disgraceful people who are agitated*

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*by desires for sense enjoyment.* (Śrīmad

Bhāgavatam 3.31.33-34)

Śrī Nārada Muni teaches us:

**Association with non-devotees must be shunned by all means. Such evil company breeds lust, anger, loss of memory, loss of wisdom, and finally causes one's life to totally be out of control. As one's thoughts and actions are blown about by desires, one ends up with no real say in his own affairs, just as stalks of grain in the field are blown about by the wind.**

**Who will escape the cycle of birth and death? Who will become free from the illusions of māyā? Only he who gives up the association of sense enjoyers and who constantly associates with the exalted love-intoxicated devotees by rendering humble service to them. (Śrī Nārada Bhakti Sutras)**

When we discussed the dangers of the doctrine of the Māyāvādīs, we said we would be speaking of them again when we discussed association. In these next quotes, we will find that our ācāryas, including even Lord Caitanya Himself, have all spoken but very heavily and in extreme terms about the dangers of such association.

Our decision to include these warnings was primarily driven by another upcoming instruction from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, that we are to follow the footsteps of our ācāryas, and yet we also had to consider that each of us is on our own individual path to prema. Unlike some other doctrines, the Vedas do not allow for eternal damnation. In time, all jivas will attain some level of prema. With this consideration in mind, some will suggest a more passive approach to preaching, however, since this has not been the standard of our ācāryas, sharing their own, sometimes harsh words with you seems to be our best course. We apologize to those we may offend and we seek the mercy and guidance of our ācāryas in sharing their words with you.

When the Lord descends to the material planets, He is accompanied by others from the spiritual worlds as well. These associates travel with Him in order to assist Him in His pastimes. Sometimes these associates behave in ways that seem “wrong”, such as fighting against the Lord, but a deeper understanding of the truth tells us that all such activities are both sanctioned by the Lord and that they fulfill His desires as well.

This next very long quote that we will share with you comes from an article written by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Here, he relates the history of an event where one of these associates of the Lord acted in an improper way, doing so only to assist the Lord in teaching us about the dangers and the wrongs of improper association.

In this article, “Bhakti-devi”, refers to an associate of Śrī Rādhā. This gopī, who is actually a direct expansion from Śrī Rādhā Herself, awards us by awakening the love-driven service attitude toward Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa that lies buried in our heart.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura teaches us:

*We perform bhakti in many ways. We accept a mantra from a guru who belongs to an authorized sampradaya (chain of gurus who all teach the same philosophy). Each day we perform arcana (Deity worship) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. We observe Ekādaśī, chant and remember the holy name according to our capability and we visit holy places like Śrī Vṛndāvana. However, when it comes to avoiding offenses to Bhakti-devi, we lack prudence. This is our great misfortune.*

As mentioned here by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, there are many ways we perform bhakti. From receiving mantras, to chanting them, and worshipping the Lord, all with the intent of remembering the Lord and uncovering our prema for Him. While it is true, from one angle of vision, that these various activities are all equal, it is also true that we must try to determine what to do and when to do it. In this regard, we will share two final quotes with you; one which focuses on sādhu-sanga, and one on giving up negative association. We understand that this can be difficult to do in prison, as giving up negative association will often result

in a life of near solitude, but given the effects that this association can have on us, we are wise to seriously weigh the benefits versus the damage that can be done.

Some may feel like they can wait to work on who they associate with; these quotes will establish the fact that the best time to begin this practice is **NOW**.

In regards to when we should give up the association of non-devotees, we rely on the direct instruction of the highest authority, for Lord Caitanya Himself says:

*When the Holy Names are chanted in the company of sādhu s, They quickly gives good results, otherwise there will be delay. When the jīva associates with atheists and those caught up in trying to enjoy material life, he becomes entrapped by the illusions of bodily identification, wealth, family, greed, and so on, and these cause discrepancies in his chanting to arise. Therefore, the first step towards advancing in bhakti is to give up the association of non-devotees. Taking complete shelter of the Holy Names, he should simply chant. By the mercy of the Holy Names, one becomes free from ignorance and confusion; his offenses vanish, and he feels pure joy. Once freed from offenses to the Holy Names he profoundly experiences the first stirrings of Kṛṣṇa -prema within his heart. (Prema-vivarta)*

As to when we should take up the association of the sādhu s, Śrīla Gurudeva teaches us:

*If you follow this instruction to associate with sādhu s, Śrī Kṛṣṇa will manage everything for you. Don't fear, Kṛṣṇa has created you. He is the supreme controller, so why should you have any fear? All problems will be solved by following this instruction and Kṛṣṇa will manage everything.*

*If you want unalloyed service to Kṛṣṇa, have courage in your heart, be bold, and make an effort to associate with qualified Vaiṣṇavas. Its importance is stressed, not only once but three times: sādhu-sanga, sādhu-sanga, sādhu-sanga.*

*sādhu-sanga sādhu-sanga—sarva śāstre kaya  
lava matra sādhu-sanga sarva siddhi haya  
[The verdict of all scriptures is that by even a moments association with a sādhu, one can attain all spiritual perfections. (Lord Caitanya, C.C. Madhya 22.54)]*

*What is the meaning of this verse? It is that unalloyed service to Kṛṣṇa can be attained through the association of a sādhu, and following this instruction is our first duty.*

**Our first step towards advancing in bhakti is to give up the association of non-devotees and to gain the association of sādhu s. By the mercy of these sādhu s, these truths may enter our hearts.**

### **Association Is Not A Physical Thing**

Earlier we mentioned that we would close out the topic of association by telling you how your confinement in prison does not prevent you from associating with sādhu s. To do so, we will share the answer to a question regarding a similar topic, where, within the answer given, your current dilemma is addressed as well.

Along with the topic of how we can associate without physical presence, other profound and comforting truths are given as well. These truths provide us with great reasons to feel hope, and even joy, no matter the situations we face.

The question posed was this: How can one hear the descriptions and glorification of the Lord (Kṛṣṇa-kathā) in the association of devotees when one is residing far away from them?

The answer is given by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

*In our communities of devotees, Kṛṣṇa-kathā is being delivered all the time and everyone is engaged in serving Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa-seva). It is our foremost duty that, by all means, we should associate with devotees whose life and souls is Kṛṣṇa-seva. Staying in a place where Kṛṣṇa-kathā is absent is absolutely undesirable, even if that place is very comfortable and we are surrounded by loved ones.*

*Those gentlemen who desire true welfare should visit the*

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

community of devotees and listen to Kṛṣṇa-kathā from Śrī guru and the Vaiṣṇavas. **Our taste for hearing Kṛṣṇa-kathā and our inclination to serve Him shall itself separate us from unfavorable association. And, if we constantly beseech Śrī guru and Lord Caitanya for their mercy, while we read and discuss the spiritual books and periodicals of our great ācāryas, then we can receive the same benefit we would achieve by listening to Kṛṣṇa-kathā directly from the mouths of the devotees.**

*In our sojourn on this planet, we do not always have the opportunity to meet many great devotees from the transcendental realm. Nevertheless, there is no reason to be disappointed; the dialogues and pastimes of Śrī Caitanya and His associates are eternally present in the form of spiritual literatures. If I perpetually immerse myself in Kṛṣṇa-kathā while residing in this world, I shall, without a doubt, be benefitted, and nothing shall ever cause me harm.*

**By the sweet will of Bhagavān, we shall realize His mercy, and the subject of His bhakti, and remembrance of Him, no matter where we stay—even amidst all sorts of worldly talks and activities—if we simply continue to hear and discuss Kṛṣṇa-kathā. In whatever state Bhagavān is pleased to keep His devotees, it is appropriate for them to stay in that state and to forget all of their sorrows.**

**When the inclination for Kṛṣṇa-seva arises in the heart due to associating with devotees and regularly hearing Kṛṣṇa-kathā, one is able to remember the Supreme Lord in all circumstances.**

*In order to test us, the Supreme Lord remains just behind the veil of the material world. By perceiving the presence of Bhagavān's mercy in every event and circumstance, no distress shall remain in our life. In fact, this material world is specifically the place where the Supreme Lord examines us. In order to pass this exam, one must listen to Kṛṣṇa-kathā, spoken by the pure devotees of the Lord. Presently, even though we may not always get the opportunity to hear Kṛṣṇa-kathā in the physical association of the devotees, if we listen to Kṛṣṇa-kathā in the form of reading sacred books, we will not feel the deficiency of physical association so much.*

**The devotees of the Lord are able to view the Lord everywhere, while the non-devotees, who are envious of the Lord, do not even believe that the Supreme Lord exists.**

*We are presently situated midway. That is, sometimes we show an inclination toward Kṛṣṇa-seva, but in the next moment, we busy ourselves in sense enjoyment. Within material sense objects, we may find temporary happiness and distress for ourselves, but Kṛṣṇa-seva is meant for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, we shall eternally strive to remain engaged in His service, solely for the purpose of giving Him pleasure.*

No matter our location or circumstances, by absorbing ourselves in spiritual literatures, we can give up the association of non-devotees and accept the association of the sādhu s.

We have spent a great deal of time on this important subject of association. May you benefit from it and take it to heart.

### **Back to Śrī Upadeśamṛta ...**

Having stepped away from our main topic in the first parts of lesson, let's do a quick, mini-review. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, a very close associate of Śrī Caitanya wrote a short set of verses called Śrī Upadeśamṛta —The Nectar of Instruction. In the first verse, he named six urges that we must learn to control, telling us that the wise, self-controlled person who subdues these urges becomes qualified to instruct others. These were: the urge to speak, the urge to become angry, the urges of the mind, and the urges of the tongue, belly, and genitals.

In the second verse, he names six moods or activities that impede our progress on the bhakti path. He begins with atyāhāra; eating more than necessary, which includes using any sense for our own pleasure, and also includes collecting more funds than necessary. He then gives us prayāsa; endeavoring for worldly

objects or engaging in acts that are opposed to bhakti. This is followed by prajalpa; talking unnecessarily about material subject matters. The next impediment is dual natured—niyamāgraha; disregarding the rules of bhakti and/or paying too much attention to strictly following them when such adherence impedes one advancement. And the fifth impediment is the one we discussed in great detail—jana-sanga; associating with non-devotees. The final impediment he warns us against is more of a mood or state of mind, but this too will lead us to perform activities which slow or even stop our progress, and this impediment is...

### **Laulya**

+ Lowl-yuh (like howl/young) In this course, we have told you that spiritual greed is a quality we desire to possess and develop. We should be so greedy to engage in bhakti that nothing will stand in the way of our service, and, no matter how much we perform, we are always anxious to do more.

On the other hand, **this impediment, laulya, is also translated as “greediness”,** and this same word can be used to represent both types of greed. In this case however, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is referring to **being greedy to attain material sense enjoyment and/or restlessness of the mind which causes one to be unsteady in one's resolve to concentrate exclusively on the bhakti path.**

The first type of greediness, that which refers to greed for sense enjoyment is well known by most all of us and requires little explanation. *Śrī guru tells us that this greed leads to offenses against the Holy Names, particularly the tenth offense. (Do you know what that is?), where we remain absorbed in the concepts of I, me, and mine even after having received many instructions not to do so.*

**The other aspect of this negative greed—being unsteady in one's resolve to concentrate exclusively on the bhakti path** requires a bit more explanation.

**Some of us feel like we are wise to continuously search for the truth, even when we have already found it.** We have told you that there is a Sanskrit term which is often translated as the Absolute Truth (with two capital letters). This term is also used to refer to God Himself, for He is both the possessor of and the origin of all of the knowledge which combines to make up the Absolute Truth.

**Those who fail to see and accept the three main truths of bhakti:** that the true identity of the jīva is that of being God's eternal servant; that the goal of life is prema; and that the only means to achieve that goal is bhakti, **will continue to investigate other paths in their search for the truth. This is therefore a negative type of greed for information.**

Driven by this greed, they develop restless minds and thus they associate with the followers and the literatures of lesser or useless paths. Accepting, at least in part, false doctrines, they will remain uncertain as to the final conclusions to life's greatest questions.

Through this type of greed, one may awaken a taste for these other paths and thus become unsteady in his resolve to concentrate exclusively on the bhakti path. This can also lead to offenses against the Holy Names. (Can you figure out which ones?) by accepting or following other doctrines or paths, we risk losing faith in the glories of the Names. We may then commit offenses such as thinking the glories of the Names are exaggerated, thinking Their glories are imaginary, or even worse, we may disobey the instructions of our guru or even say negative things against him, or others who spread the Names and Their glories.

**Once we come to the bhakti path, we must give up our greed for all other objects and activities as well as other so-called knowledge that leads us away from focusing all of our time and energy on making progress on our journey to prema.**

In summing up the importance of overcoming these six impediments Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has written:

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

Staple

*Thus, one should give up these six kinds of faults and engage in pure sādhanā-bhakti. If one fails to do so, then the ability to understand that only Kṛṣṇa-bhakti bestows the highest good for all jīvas will be lost and one will be deviated from the bhakti path.*

Please study and learn these dangerous impediments so that you may avoid them, while you also drive the desire to engage in them from your heart.

### Śrī Upadeśamṛta —Verse Three Six Principles Favorable to Bhakti

In Verse 2, we found a list of five activities and one mood or state of mind. Similarly, Verse 3 contains both activities and states of mind as well. In this case however, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī teaches us about those things that will allow us to improve our bhakti. The qualities and activities which are described by the original Sanskrit words have been viewed in various ways by our ācāryas, so again we will provide their words under the reference of Śrī guru, thus allowing you to gain a full and broad understanding of how we can improve our bhakti.

#### Verse 3

*There are six principles favorable to the development of bhakti:*

- (1) *enthusiasm;*
- (2) *confidence/firm faith;*
- (3) *patience/perseverance;*
- (4) *performing the activities of bhakti such as hearing, chanting, remembering, and so on;*
- (5) *giving up the association of non-devotees; and*
- (6) *following in the footsteps of the ācāryas.*

#### Enthusiasm

Śrī guru tells us that *enthusiasm means an eagerness to perform the limbs of sādhanā that enhance one's bhakti. He tells us we should never be idle, and he warns us that without this enthusiasm one's bhakti will vanish. Following bhakti with great respect is also part of enthusiasm, and this includes having no interest in other paths or philosophies.*

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that *bhakti is not a matter of silent meditation. He says it requires practical action, and that bhakti is not a matter of sentimental speculation of imaginative ecstasy.*

He goes on to say:

*Bhakti is a sort of cultivation. As soon as we say "cultivation," we must refer to activity. Cultivation of spirituality does not mean sitting down silently for meditation, as some pseudo-yogis teach. Such idle meditation may be good for those who have no information of devotional service, but the real meaning of meditation is to stop all nonsensical activities. Bhakti, however, not only puts an end to all nonsensical material activities, but also engages one in meaningful devotional activities.*

The need for enthusiasm is confirmed by Śrīla Nārada Munī:

*In order to wash off the sinful dirt of the heart and ward off ignorance one must endeavor for spiritual attainment and there must not be any slackness. One should follow the spiritual path very carefully and sincerely and with all endeavor. (Śrī Hari Bhakti Sudhodaya)*

#### Confidence/Firm Faith

Śrī guru describes confidence as *a state where the devotee thinks, "Kṛṣṇa will surely protect me and give me help so that I can successfully execute bhakti. Surely, one day very soon I will achieve this nectar of pure bhakti. Surely, I will have the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and the service of Śrī Caitanya. Surely I will get it." Confidence also involves thinking. "Prema-bhakti alone is the ultimate goal for all jīvas and bhakti-yoga is the only path to achieve it."*

In discussing this verse, Śrīla Gurudeva tells a story that explains how one displays both confidence and enthusiasm.

*There was a devotee who was always chanting, "Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa. O Nārāyaṇa!" For so many thousands of years he was*

*chanting like this. One day he saw the great sādhu, Śrīla Nārada Munī, and he asked him where he was going. "Oh, I am going to Vaikuntha to meet Nārāyaṇa."*



The transcendental spaceman Narada Muni playing on his vina.

*Hearing this, the devotee said, "Oh, please be merciful to me. You should inquire from Nārāyaṇa for me. For thousands of years I have been chanting, "Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa!" I want to know when He will give me a chance to see Him."*

Nārāyaṇa then left, and, upon reaching Vaikuntha, he met with Nārāyaṇa, telling Him, "There is a devotee who has been chanting Your name for so many years. He has asked when You will give him a chance to see You."

Nārāyaṇa asked, "In what process is he chanting," Nārada replied, "He is sitting under a tamarind tree and chanting." "there are so many branches and so many leaves on that tree," Nārāyaṇa said, "No one can count how many leaves there are. I will let him see Me after as many births as there are leaves on that tree."

Nārada became very disappointed. "How can I tell that devotee this? He will die."

When Nārada returned, he tried to avoid that devotee, and hid from his view, but there was only one path. That devotee was waiting and waiting for Nārada to come with Nārāyaṇa's answer. Finally, when Nārada could no longer avoid him, he approached him and told him, "Very sad thing, very sad thing."

"What's that?"

"Nārāyaṇa has said that there are unlimited leaves on the tamarind tree, after that many lifetimes He will allow you to see Him."

*Oh, that devotee began to dance and sing. "Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa! Up till now, I had no confidence that I would ever get to meet Nārāyaṇa, but now, I have confidence that Nārāyaṇa must come and let me see Him, even after thousands of births. No harm, but eventually I will see Him." And he continued to dance.*

*At once Nārāyaṇa came—in a moment! Nārada was so surprised and asked Him, "Oh, why have you gone-against Your word? You said that after hundreds of thousands of lives You would come. So why have You come just now?"*

Nārāyaṇa answered, "At first, he was doing his chanting by what process? He was following a slow process, doing general chanting with no eagerness. But now, he is chanting Nārāyaṇa, always absorbed. He is not thinking about his food or anything else. So how can I stay away? I thought, "I must come."

*If someone is chanting in a methodical way, no harm. But if someone is chanting with confidence and enthusiasm, oh, Kṛṣṇa must come.*

So, this is how we must carry out our bhakti, with firm faith and confidence that we will someday attain our eternal, original personality and identity (svarūpa) and that we will surely serve

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

Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa directly in that form, and, having this confidence, we must serve with enthusiasm, laying aside all other matters and concerns, for then, as Śrīla Gurudeva has taught us, “Oh, Kṛṣṇa must come.”

### Patience/Perseverance

Śrī guru explains patience in this way:

***Bhakti must be executed with patience. one should not be impatient in executing devotional service, but one should take instructions from Śrī guru and perform them with patience depending on the mercy of Śrī guru and Kṛṣṇa***

***Not letting up in any way in one's execution of bhakti, even when there is a delay in obtaining the desired goal is called patience.***

***Patience also refers to perseverance to remain on the bhakti path, regardless of obstacles. In this regard, Śrī Haridās Thākura took a steadfast vow to chant in the face of all obstacles. The ideal standard of perseverance in bhakti is related in this verse from Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavat. (Ādi 16.94)***

***Even if my body is cut to pieces and the life air exists my body, I will never abandon the chanting of the Holy Names.***

This extremely dedicated level of perseverance will not arise in an impure heart, but as we clear away the obstacles (anāṛthas) and impediments in our path, our dedication to serving Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa will develop to this level.

In this world, most of us seek and even come to expect instant gratification of our senses. We are not willing to wait until we've actually earned things, we want our desires to be fulfilled as quickly as possible. This can be seen in the fact that most everyone lives in debt. Using credit cards and taking out loans, people purchase their house, their cars, and even minor wants like new clothes or a fancy dinner on credit, wanting to get the pleasure of these things even before they have earned the money to pay for them.

In spiritual life, the opposite approach is recommended. We are to happily and peacefully build up our spiritual credits until the day comes where Śrī guru and Kṛṣṇa reward us with their mercy. And how long are we to be willing to wait? That question is answered in this next quote from Śrīla Gurudeva.

***Being patient. What is the meaning? “Today the deep love and affection that resides in the heart of Kṛṣṇa's dearest associates have not come into my heart but I want to see Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.” But we are not seeing Them, so we think it is better to try something else. No. Have patience. It will come, but in its own time. Be patient. If after thousands and thousands of births this affection has arisen, then very soon loving service that is driven only by the heart (bhakti) will come. Don't be weak. Act according to regulative principles, such as hearing, chanting, remembering, all these, and especially sādhu-sanga, chanting the Holy Names, hearing the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, residing in those places where Kṛṣṇa carried out His pastimes, and worshipping the Deity with faith. If we have not made any offence, we can achieve our goal very quickly, even in thousands of births. Oh, even a few thousand births can be considered a very short time, because we're coming from where? From the beginning of creation! No one can calculate how many ages (yugas) have passed—so many thousands and hundreds of thousands, and uncountable creators of individual universes have been changed. So, if bhakti comes after hundreds and thousands of births, oh, no harm. Do not try to jump. Pray for the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, the Vaiṣṇavas, and guru especially.***

Rather than worrying about the future, about when our rewards will come, we should instead be using the present moments of our life, the now, to seriously engage in the practices of bhakti that both lead and drive us along on the path to perfection.

Before we move on to discuss the fourth principle favorable to the development of bhakti, we will point out that all of the first three, enthusiasm, confidence, and patience/perseverance, can all be looked at as aspects of firm faith, even though we only labeled

confidence in that way. When our faith is weak, we can say that we “believe” something is true. When our faith is strong, we say we “know” something is true.

Very early in this course we used the analogy of a person who knows that there is a treasure of vast wealth buried in their yard, asking, “If that was you, would use a plastic spork from the chow hall to dig it up? Would removing just a tiny bit of dirt a day satisfy you?” Similarly, if our faith is weak, if we only “believe” that prema is the goal of life and that bhakti will uncover this treasure for us, we may be unenthusiastic, have little confidence, and become upset if we feel we are not being rewarded soon enough. On the other hand, if we know what our goal is, and we know how to reach it, and we know we will reach it, then we will enthusiastically work to uncover it, we will be confident of our success, we will persevere in the face of all obstacles and we will be patient, because we will be relaxed in our assurance that the treasure will someday be ours.

If the treasure we seek is material riches, then impatience may also play a role, as we worry that we might not be able to enjoy our wealth for as long as we would like, but when our reward is permanent and eternal, the scale of time between now and when it is uncovered is of no real concern.

With this in mind, we can see that we can judge our level of faith by honestly looking at how enthusiastically we practice our bhakti, how confident we are of our eventual success, and how patiently we wait as we persevere in the face of all obstacles. As we find these principles increasing in our practices, we will find we are progressing more quickly, due to our enthusiastic efforts and our perseverance, and we will find our journey to be more peaceful and enjoyable due to our patience and confidence.

For all of these reasons, we should do all that we can to develop and increase these principles, and one of the best ways we can do this is to follow this next positive practice...

### Performing the Activities of Bhakti

In next month's lesson, we are going to list and discuss the sixty-four main ways that we can perform bhakti. This list, which was given to us by Lord Caitanya, does not include all of the ways that we can serve the Lord, but it does give us a good number of ways to do so. So, far in this course, we have discussed, and specifically stated four of the primary practices. (Do you know what they are?)

We've talked about hearing (śravaṇa) about the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of the Lord; about chanting these names and glorifying Him with our words, including our written words as well (kīrtan); about remembering Him (smarana); and about worshipping His Deity form (arcana).

Next month, when we list other practices, we will show you that we have also given you many of these as well (such as serving Śrī guru) even though we never gave you the Sanskrit terms or pointed out that they were part of any type of specific list of practices.

**The principle now being discussed includes our performance of any or all of these practices. In Sanskrit, this principle is “tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt”.** You will see the word “karma”, which means “activity” here, and if you remember the verse that we shared on the symptoms of śuddha (pure) bhakti, you will know that this verse pointed out that karma (or activities) are part of the bhakti process. Śrīla Prabhupāda also mentioned this in an earlier quote we shared, saying that the cultivation of bhakti requires activity and that the process of silent meditation is not within this system.

In addition to performing activities such as hearing and chanting, **Śrī guru tells us that this principle also includes giving up unfavorable activities.** In next month's lesson, when we list the sixty-four types of bhakti, you will find that these include things you should not do as well as things you should do, thus we can increase our bhakti by both engaging in positive activities and giving up negative ones as well. An example of a

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



## Staple

negative activity that we must give up, which is also included in the sixty-four limbs of bhakti, is this next principle given to us in Verse 3 of Śrī Upadeśamṛta.

**Giving Up the Association of Non-Devotees**

In discussing verse 2 of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's instructions, we told you that association with non-devotees destroys our bhakti, and we mentioned that giving up that association would be included in his next instructions as well. We then went on to share a long list of the benefits of associating with sādhu s and the ill-effects of associating with non-devotees. Having already spent such a considerable amount of time on these topics, we will only take a little time here, doing so mainly to include some further explanations and expansions that Śrī guru gives regarding those who association we must avoid and try to give up completely.

In the heading of this section, we refer to "non-devotees". Śrī guru has explained that *this category will include atheists (who believe God does not exist), agnostics (who do not specifically deny His existence, but who do not accept it as well), along with those who are fully absorbed in satisfying their senses. Those who are dedicated to following other paths, such as jñāna-yoga and aṣṭāṅga-yoga are included as well, and of course the Māyāvādīs are never to be associated with.*

In discussing those who are absorbed in satisfying their senses, *men who are addicted to illicit association with women (and vice-versa) are also included. In addition to this, women in general are mentioned as well, however there are some exceptions in this regard.* In Vedic society, there are four stages of religious life—celibate student, householder, retirement, and complete renunciation (sannyāsa). Some will go straight from the first to the fourth stage, but for those who marry and become householders, legitimate contact with women, such as family members or other devotee women is not prohibited. Then, even in the retirement phase of life, one may have contact with his wife as long as sexual contact is given up. Sexual contact is prohibited in all stages, except in the case of the attempt to have children. For those in the celibate student and sannyāsa stage, all contact with women, even socially, is prohibited.

Due to the conditions of modern society, our ācāryas have recognized that some contact beyond what was prescribed in a pure Vedic society is inevitable, but still, we are expected to live up to the highest standards, to the best of our ability.

To ensure our advancement on the bhakti path, we must carefully give up the association of those who will create impediments to our progress.

**Following in the Footsteps of the Ācāryas**

This favorable activity has been translated in various ways, but all explanations of what is involved are nearly identical. Śrī guru says that general idea is *to adopt the behavior and character of the sādhu s.* This can clearly include all aspects of their lives, from the way the practice bhakti, to the foods they eat, and even down to the daily schedules they keep.

This positive principle has also been described as *maintaining one's life in a suitable manner.* In explaining this Śrī guru has noted that *sanyasis should beg alms by a process known as madhukarī (the profession of the bee), where one accepts only a little from any one home, traveling from home to home as the bee travels from flower to flower.* In maintaining oneself in this way, the sannyāsa also distributes his mercy to those homes he visits.

*For the householder, Śrī guru says devotees should sustain their lives by means that are favorable to the Vedic regulations.* Thus, engaging in occupations such as working in a slaughter house or owning a liquor store would fall far outside this recommendation.

All of the activities of our lives should be directed toward our spiritual progress. All activities which distract us from our path will only result in loss and suffering. By carefully studying the eighteen guidelines given to us by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in these

first three verses of his Śrī Upadeśamṛta, we can gain a strong understanding of how we can adjust our attitudes and our behaviors in ways that will ensure our progress on the journey to prema. And as we try to incorporate these principles into our lives we should always remain aware of what Śrīla Gurudeva has said:

*You will never be able to advance without following the instructions of Śrī Upadeśamṛta. This is the first step*

**Śrī Upadeśamṛta in Other Scriptures**

Early on, we told you that this course was a work in progress, and that continues to be the case. As we prepare, revise, and rewrite these lessons, we listen to the ideas and suggestions of our team members and the inmates who write to us and we pray to Śrī guru for guidance and inspiration as well.

At one point, one of our team members suggested the idea of including quotes from other scriptures as well, for the Absolute Truth is revealed to us in many ways. After a bit of discussion on this idea, our team agreed that we would do this. At that same time, we were beginning a re-write of the early lessons in this course, with the goal of including more quotes from our ācāryas, so, along with doing this the words from other scriptures were added as well.

For those of you who began this course prior to that time, we included a notice in our newsletter inviting you to restart the course so that you could benefit from the powerful words of our ācāryas and from the fact that we have added a lesson-by-lesson correspondence course for those who are interested in a more structured study of these truths.

As we began revising the earlier lessons, we also began including many more quotes in the lessons we were then preparing, and we have continued this pattern. In using quotes from other scriptures, we hope to show the similarities between many paths. While we recognize that not all will agree on how any particular quote is to be interpreted, we still felt drawing from more sources would be of benefit to you. We felt this way in part because our inmate contributor told us that he has often heard other inmates express how the Vedas reveal truths that are similar to those found in the faiths they previously followed, whether they be Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, or of other faiths as well.

In this lesson, we have spoken several times about the benefits of focusing exclusively on the bhakti path. We have said that collecting knowledge from other paths is an impediment to our progress as well. And, we have also pointed out in this lesson, and earlier lessons as well, that Buddhism is specifically mentioned as a path that we should avoid. Therefore, with these facts and warnings in mind, one might wonder why we would continue to quote these other scriptures.

The truth is one. There is no doubt about this. Even within scriptures whose final conclusions do not fully line up, there is often common ground. Therefore, by sharing these quotes from other scriptures we hope to point out the unity of the world's faiths, and to perhaps allow those of you who may have followed these other paths, or those who may still be following them to some degree, to see that many truths can be found in a variety of places, for in noticing this, we'll be more inclined to accept the truth, even if it comes from a source other than the scriptures that we had decided to place our faith in.

Our ācāryas have told us that Lord Jesus Christ was especially empowered by his Father, the Supreme Lord, to spread a message of love for God. They have also told us that Muhammed was a guru who preached according to time, place, and circumstance, and the Vedas inform us that Lord Buddha was an avatār who descended to accomplish a specific mission as well.

For all of these reasons, we will continue to share the words of various scriptures with you, and we will do so now as we list some quotes that clearly reflect many of the teachings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī that we have just shared with you.

The **Holy Bible** speaks on patience, confidence, and

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

perseverance:

*For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye must receive the promise.* (Heb. 10.36)

*And let us not lose heart and grow weary and faint in acting nobly and doing right, for in due time, and of the appointed season, we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage and faint.* (Gal. 6.9)

*Only it must be in faith that he asks with no wavering. For one who wavers is like the billowing surge out at sea that is blown hither and thither and tossed by the wind. For truly, let not such a person imagine that he will receive anything from the Lord.* (James 1. 5-8)

*For ye have need of steadfast patience and endurance, so that you may perform and fully accomplish the will of God, and thus receive and carry away what is promised.* (Hebrew 10.36)

On controlling the mind and the evil of anger, the Holy Bible says:

*A calm and undisturbed mind are the life and health of the body, but envy, jealousy, and wrath are like rottenness of the bones.* (Prov. 14.30)

On the effect of good and bad association, the scriptures state:

*But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore, put away from yourselves that wicked person.* (I Cor. 5.13)

*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what community hath light with darkness?* (II Cor. 6.14)

*O ye who believe! take not for friend's unbelievers rather than believers. O ye who believe! fear God and be with those who are true (in word and deed).* (The Holy Quran 5.4 A 144/S.9 A 119)

On association, Lord Buddha teaches these truths in the **Dhammapada**:

*There should be no companionship with the foolish.* (Verse 61)

*By spending even, a moment with a wise man, an intelligent person can understand the dharma (the path). Just as a tongue immediately tastes the flavor of soup.* (Verse 65)

*Associate not with evil men. Associate with wise men, with noblemen.* (Verse 78)

*Therefore, a man of intelligence should associate with those who have realized the truth, who follow the proper path, who have given up their thirst for sense pleasure.* (Verse 208)

Lord Buddha speaks on many of the teachings in Śrī Upadeśamṛta in these verses from the **Dhammapada**. On control of the mind:

*The mind is hard to check, swift, and unsteady: to control it is good. A controlled mind is conducive to happiness.* (Verse 35)

*Whatever harm an enemy can do, an ill-directed mind can do far greater.* (Verse 42)

*He whose mind is not steady, who does not know the true doctrine, and whose confidence waivers, will never attain a state of perfect wisdom.* (Verse 38)

*Giving up sense pleasures, the wise man should cleanse himself of the impurities of the mind.* (Verse 88)

On patience, confidence, enthusiasm, perseverance, anger, and so on...

*Do not avoid doing good works, thinking good results will never come; For just as the water pot is filled drop-by-drop, the wise perform good deeds until they are filled with goodness.* (Verse 122)

*Glory steadily increases for one who is energetic, mindful, pure, considerate, self-controlled, and careful.* (Verse 24)

*Conquer anger by love; conquer evil by good; conquer the stingy by giving; conquer the liar by truth.* (Verse 223)

*One should utter the truth and not be angry.* (Verse 224)

*One gets rid of suffering by confidence, virtue, effort, concentration, and investigation of the truth.* (verse 144)

And for our final quotes in this section, we will share the

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

wisdom of the Holy Bible on the subjects of controlling the urge to speak and the fault of useless words.

*Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore, let thy words be few.*

*For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by a multitude of words.* (Eccles. 5. 2-3)

Lord Jesus Christ teaches:

*O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and on evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* (Matt. 12. 34-37)

We ask you to reflect on these truths well, for we must control our urges, give up those activities and moods that harm our spiritual progress, and cultivate those principles which increase the speed of our journey to prema.

### A Warning from X28 (and a little preview too.)

Hello my dear friends. This is X28, your inmate contributor speaking to you again, and, from my cell to yours, I send you my greetings and best wishes.

Before we move on to share the qualities of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with you, I felt I would step in for a moment in order to share a bit or straight talk with you.

Way back in Lesson 5, when we first began to introduce you to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, I also put in my two cents, letting you know that it can be very dangerous for us to allow our contaminated material views to influence our understandings of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the relationship between Them.

As we read and learn more about Them, we will likely come across things that will cause us to feel there are material or even improper aspects to Their relationship. We must avoid this at all costs. One way that I might be able to help you understand this is by reminding you that **Kṛṣṇa Is GOD**, and thus, every one of the gopīs (the cowherd girls of Vṛndāvana) that He has dealings with are ultimately expansions from Him, which He has manifested in order to create and enjoy variety.

God Himself is fully self-satisfied. He does not need anything outside of Himself in order to experience the eternality, the awareness, and the bliss that He is composed of, and yet, for His own pleasure (as well as ours) He manifest Himself in an unlimited number of ways and carries out an unlimited variety of pastimes. Therefore, when we begin to place our limited views and our own standards of judgements upon Him, we do so only out of ignorance.

Although it can help us avoid offenses to know that Kṛṣṇa is God, in another sense, in order to begin to appreciate some of His pastimes, we must suspend that understanding. We must not think of Him as **THE ALMIGHTY LORD**, instead we must see Him as a young, beautiful, and quite mischievous boy of about fourteen and a half years old, whose entire heart is caught up in the love of his female admirers, and most especially in the love of His most beloved, Śrī Rādhā.

We know of the term "puppy love". In this love, there are no real sex driven desires. Think of the young girls who would scream, cry, and even faint when they saw Elvis or the Beatles. The ecstatic and overwhelming emotions they were feeling are only a very dim reflection of the type of totally overwhelming love that is felt between Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs, and yet, although we can use this example, there is no similarity between these two whatsoever.

Just as oil and water cannot mix, the reality of bhāvas, of

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spiritual emotions, is so pure and totally without desire for any personal pleasure that it cannot in any way be equated with material love or emotions. As **Śrī guru** has said *the love of this world is kāma, lust, and this lust is like lead, whereas the love of the spiritual worlds, prema, is totally devoid of lust, and it is like gold.*

In the descriptions of the qualities of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa that will be given, we may see words that cause material thoughts or images to come to mind, but we must do all we can to **never** allow our polluted minds to influence us into seeing material aspects in the pure, prema driven relationships and activities of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. It will surely require both a great deal of awareness of our tendency to see things improperly and a bit of time to overcome this weakness, so in the meantime we must be vigilant. Just stop the mind in its tracks when material or sexual views creep in. Call out to the ācāryas for guidance and mercy, and try to find the sweet purity of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and all of Their qualities and dealings.

I hope these few words will be of benefit to you. You are all in my prayers. May each of us find the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī guru.

### The Gunas of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

When we explained the ropes that bind us to this world we said these were called **the gunas**. We discussed how **these gunas shape our personalities and drive our activities in this world**. We also talked about how the gunas are used by māyā to control us and keep us under her spell. In telling you all these things, we basically told you **that the gunas are the qualities which make up māyā's world of illusions.**

The Sanskrit word “guna” can simply be translated as “quality”. When we use this word, as we will in this section, we are referring to the type of qualities that make up a person's form and character.

In explaining how we practice bhakti, we have mentioned hearing, speaking on, and remembering the names, forms, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord. In these lessons, we have already discussed the Lord's names in some detail. We gave you some verses to use in your meditations on the name and we told you **the Sanskrit word for name—nāma (like mom).**

Later we did the same in regards to the forms of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Having explained that most of the followers of Lord Caitanya are specifically and exclusive interested in these forms of the Lord, we also shared meditations to help you focus on **the forms—the rūpas**, of the Divine couple.

In the next section of this lesson, we will focus on **the qualities—the gunas** of Śrī Rādhā, and in the final section of this lesson, we will share some verses that can be used during our meditations on the beautiful, wonderful, and lovely qualities of Śrī Rādhā.

### Placing Śrī Rādhā Before Śrī Kṛṣṇa

Several times in this course, we have hinted at the fact that Śrī Rādhā plays an incredibly important role in the type of bhakti that is practiced by the ācāryas in our line (rupanuga-bhakti), but as of yet, we have been a bit secretive as to exactly why this is the case. In this section, we will share a few quotes from our ācāryas that will begin to reveal the reasons that Śrī Rādhā is placed first in the hearts of those in our line.

Even still, after sharing these quotes, there will still be more pieces to place into the puzzle, and in next month's lesson, we plan to reveal some more of these truths to you, but for now, we'll just paint in a few more strokes of the full picture.

As we did in the section on positive and negative association, we are simply going to share a string of quotes with you, without going into a lot of explanations as to how they can be interpreted or as to the various truths they reveal. That being said, we again remind you of what **Śrīla Gurudeva** has taught us:

*Śrī guru is like that. If you pray to him, new understandings will enter your heart, solely by his inspiration.*

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

So, do not feel unqualified. Do not feel that the truth and the nectar of these quotes is beyond your reach. Pray to Śrī guru for his guidance and mercy as you reflect on these truths, for with his assistance, the glories of Śrī Rādhā can enter your heart. **NOTE:** The name **Rādhikā** is a name for Śrī Rādhā that means “**the best worshipper.**”

In this conversation with Lord Caitanya, **Rāmānanda Rāya** has described Śrī Rādhā in these ways:

*The body and personality (svarūpa) of Śrī Rādhā is comprised of prema. She is the topmost of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's female admirers. This truth is known throughout the entire creation.*

*Her topmost, love-drenched spiritual emotions are the essence of spiritual life. Her only business is to fulfill all of Kṛṣṇa's desires.*

*If one asks about the origin of love for Kṛṣṇa, the answer is that it springs from Rādhikā alone. And who is Kṛṣṇa's most beloved? The answer is Rādhikā, the reservoir of all spiritual qualities, and no one else. Her hair is very curly, Her eyes are always darting back and forth, and Her bosom is firm. Rādhikā alone is able to fulfill all of Kṛṣṇa's desires, and no one else.*

*Even Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself cannot fully describe all of Her qualities, so how then can an insignificant jīva even begin to estimate them? (C.C. Madhya 8.162, 164, 182, 185)*

By starting with these truths, we can begin to see why Śrī Rādhā holds the topmost position in our line. In these next quotes, a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī describes in more detail the mood of the rupanuga Vaiṣṇavas. **Sambidananda dāsa** writes:

*Śrī Rādhā has been described as the crest gem of all the transcendental beauties and no devotee of the transcendental Vṛndāvana can delight Kṛṣṇa except in strict obedience to Her. All of the rupanuga Vaiṣṇavas, from Śrī Caitanya down to the most recent times have invariably emphasized this vital point of their devotion. She stands foremost among all spiritual damsels surpassing all in beauty, merit, good fortune, and love. The rupanuga Vaiṣṇavas never indulge in their devotion to Kṛṣṇa without obedience to Rādhā. Had Kṛṣṇa quarreled with Rādhā, all rupanuga Vaiṣṇavas would choose to forsake Kṛṣṇa in favor of Rādhā. Their's are the first authentic books which expressly establish Rādhā supremacy in the love sports of Kṛṣṇa. These principles have been developed so much by the rupanuga's that it will be no exaggeration to say that they were rather devotees of Rādhā than Kṛṣṇa, who goes nowhere except in the company of Rādhā. Such is the exalted position of Rādhā to the rupanuga Vaiṣṇavas. (The History and Literature of the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas)*

In a prayer he has written, **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura** expresses these truths.

*Kṛṣṇa's pleasure lies in the bliss of Rādhā. To keep His company, leaving the feet of Rādhā, I shall never yearn. There may be some who are willing to live apart from Her, let them live as they prefer. As for me, I am always in support of Rādhā. I hate to see the others. (Sarangaṭi No. 26)*

In referring to a work of **Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's**, **Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura** also wrote:

*The necessity for taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā is described in the works of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in these words, “How is it possible to immerse oneself in the ocean of spiritual pleasures that arise from contact with Kṛṣṇa without worshipping the dust of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā, or without taking shelter of Vṛndāvana, which is decorated with Her footprints, or without serving Her devotees, whose grave hearts are always absorbed in love for Her?”*

In regards to Rādhā's ability to transmit spiritual truths, **Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī** has taught us:

*The foremost transcendental pleasure giving potency, Śrī Rādhā, is the sole guru of all devotees. Not only this, She is even the guru of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who, accepting a position as Her*

*disciple, learns the art of dancing.* (Periodical—Rays of the Harmonist, Issue 21)

On Śrīmatī Rādhikā's appearance day, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gave a lecture where he spoke at length about the glories of Śrī Rādhā.

*As soon as we come to understand, in the light of the teachings of those who possess the greatest truths (mahājānas), that She is Śrī Bhagavān's everything, we shall proceed to serve Her, knowing that the perfection and prosperity of living worship exists solely in Her. If we engage in serving Her from this day forth, the day of Her advent, then we shall become qualified to reach the summit of auspiciousness.*

*But if we engage in self-deception, by depriving ourselves of service to that person who means everything to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and we deny ourselves of service to Her faithful followers, who are Her dear confidantes, we can never attain the eligibility to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa.*

*The single most cherished ambition of the topmost devotees is to serve the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā.* (Periodical—Gaudiya, Year 10 Issue 11, 1931)

Truths such as these have been described as “that which is situated in secrecy”. Until the advent of Lord Caitanya, the glorious position of Śrī Rādhā was unknown in this world. Along with this, the path we follow to reach Her, the hidden path of rāgānuga-bhakti was also confidential. Fortunately, however, Lord Caitanya has revealed these truths to us through the writings of His closest associates, such as Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī and He has further explained them through the words of the rupanuga ācāryas who have followed in our line.

By some great fortune of ours, gurus such as Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Gurudeva have now delivered these truths to fallen souls throughout this planet. Knowing we are all unqualified, they have shown us their causeless mercy and brought these most sacred and most secret teachings to us. Shall we dishonor both our gurus and their gifts by failing to devote ourselves to absorbing the only knowledge and following the only path that can lead us to the greatest treasure?

Earlier in this lesson, we told you that along with sharing the first three verses of Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī's Śrī Upadeśamṛta with you, we would share the eighth verse as well. In this verse, we find the **essence of all advice**, the supreme and most important teaching given to us in a book that contains the sweetest nectar of all instructions. Although we will share this verse with you now, along with a follow up reiteration of this verse given to us by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, we will save a longer explanation of these verses for another time. However, if you pray to Śrī guru as you meditate upon these truths, you may find that their meanings enter your heart, even without passing through the dangerous pathways in our polluted minds.

### Śrī Upadeśamṛta Verse 8

*While residing in Vṛndāvana, one should follow the guidance of exalted and advanced devotees (like Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī and others in his line), and using all of one's time—twenty-four hours a day—one should engage one's mind and one's tongue in gradually hearing about, remembering, discussing, and chanting the names, forms, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is the essence of all advice.*

In many cases, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has taken the writings of previous ācāryas and recomposed them, often times translating them from ancient Sanskrit into a more commonly spoken language, Bengali. In doing so, while keeping the heart of the teachings intact, he will at times include additional explanations or expansions of the verse. In this way, he has written a verse that conveys the essence of Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī's essence of all advice, while also including a direct reference to the type of bhakti being described therein. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written:

*Always dwelling in the holy land of Vṛndāvana, become a*

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

*practitioner of rāgānuga-bhakti, while engaging in chanting and remembering the names, forms, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Spend every moment of your time in these ways. This is the essence of all advice.* (Sarangati—Song 9)

We will now close out this lesson with a list of verses for you to meditate upon as you chant the Holy Names. In doing so, we also note that all of the statements of our ācāryas found in this section may be meditated upon as well. For those of you who may be trying to understand why Śrī Rādhā is so important, and where Śrī Kṛṣṇa fits into the picture, we provide the first two verses below. From there, we focus on Śrī Rādhā, for the reasons found in the remainder of the verses. Keeping in mind that the essence of all advice instructs us to follow the guidance of Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī and his followers, one would be wise to note the authors of these verses.

### The Glories of Śrīmatī Rādhikā

In Śrī Caitanya-Caritamṛta, the great follower of Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has written:

*Śrī Rādhā is the personification of the complete energy and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of the complete energy. The two are not different, as evidenced by the revealed scriptures.*

*Thus, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one, yet They have taken two forms to enjoy the highly pleasurable tastes that arise from Their pastimes together.*

*Lord Kṛṣṇa enchants the world, but Śrī Rādhā enchants even Him Therefore She is the Supreme Goddess of all.* (C.C. Adi 4.96, 98, 95)

*When will I relish that most wonderful festival of attachment to the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā by keeping that most supreme ambition of serving Them in my heart?* (Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhānidhi 29)

The original rupanuga Vaiṣṇava, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī writes:

*O Goddess Rādhā! I am suffering greatly and therefore I am throwing myself on the ground like a stick (falling to pay respects) and desperately begging You, with a choked-up voice, to be merciful to this fool and count me as one of Your own confidantes.*

Śrīla Gurudeva's god brother, Śrī Vāmana Mahārāja has written:

*When Kṛṣṇa is represented without Rādhā, He has no identity. The manifestation of His moods and everything else is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Also, without Her, one cannot conceive of His existence and personality.* (Periodical—Śrī Gaudiya Patrika, Issue 45/6-7)

The stalwart ācārya Śrī Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura writes:

*If one worships Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of Śrī Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa can never leave that person.* (Padyāvalī)

Śrī Gaura-kīśora dāsa Bābājī Maharaja has sung:

*Where is my Rādhā, the embodiment of prema? O Rādhē! O Rādhē! Please maintain my life by allowing me to see You. O Rādhē am just a beggar desperately calling to You.*

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda has also sung:

*Those who place Śrīmatī Rādhikā's lotus feet in their heart and worship them with great care obtain the priceless jewel of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Without taking shelter of the lotus feet of Rādhā, one can never meet Kṛṣṇa. The Vedic scriptures declare that Kṛṣṇa is the property of the maidservants of Śrī Rādhā.*

*If I were to ever renounce Rādhikā's lotus feet for even an instant, I would be totally devastated. For Her sake, I will gladly tolerate the pain and agony of death hundreds of times.*

*If the desire to serve Śrīmatī Rādhikā does not appear in my heart, then my worship of Kṛṣṇa is simply useless. Just as the sun cannot be perceived without sunlight, in the same way I cannot recognize Śrī Kṛṣṇa without Rādhā.*

And the final quote we will share with you this month comes from our own beloved Śrīla Gurudeva.



Staple

*I am always doing deep meditational worship (bhajana). I am always doing bhajana of Rādhikā and serving Her lotus feet. With my mouth, I am uttering, Rādhe! Rādhe jaya! (all glories/victory to) Jaya Śrī Rādhā". Why? Śrīmatī Rādhikā is unlimitedly more merciful than Kṛṣṇa. (The Essence of All Advice)*

We will see you again next month. In the meantime, ...

**May each of you gain the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā.**

**We are, the servants of God's servants  
The IPBYS Prison Outreach Program  
Service Team**

**All glories to Śrīla Gurudeva**

### Glossary

**Atyāhāra**—a compound word from the prefix “ati”—too much or excessively—with the word “āhāra”—to seize, grasp, or consume for one’s own enjoyment; excessive enjoyment of sense objects through anyone of the senses; the endeavor to accumulate in excess of one’s requirements; an impediment to bhakti

**Bhāgavat-dharma**—the socio-religious duties prescribed in the scriptures for different classes of people; one’s fixed occupation in regards to the highest ideals known to man

**Bhajana**—from root word “bhaja”—to serve; in general sense, the practice of bhakti by hearing, chanting, and so on; deep meditational worship

**Kṛṣṇa-kathā**—discussions on Śrī Kṛṣṇa

**Laulya**—greed; maybe either material or spiritual

**Niṣedha**—prohibitions; that which must not be done

**Niyamāgraha**—from “niyama”—rules and regulations—with “agraha”—eagerness to accept—or “āgraha”—failure to accept; with agraḥa, refers to over zealotness to follow rules, even when doing so is an impediment to bhakti; with āgraha, refers to failing to follow the rules of bhakti due to the whims of the mind; both meanings are impediments to bhakti

**Prajalpa**—useless talk of material subjects; an impediment to bhakti

**Prayāsa**—activities that are opposed to bhakti; acts done for the enjoyment of the senses; cultivation of so-called knowledge that seeks to establish equality between the jīva and God while ignoring the differences; going against bhakti by doing what is forbidden and disregarding what is favorable; an impediment to bhakti

**Rasa**—extreme spiritual pleasure which arises from one’s relationship with Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

**Sādhaka**—one practicing sādhanā bhakti, a devotee

**Sampradāya**—established doctrine transmitted from one teacher or guru to another

**Śāstra**—scripture; the Vedas and the writings of Śrī guru

**Vaidhi-dharma**—see Bhāgavat-dharma

**Vidhi**—prescriptions; that which must be done

### Correspondence Course

1. Say a few words to glorify Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī.
2. Describe sanga-siddha bhakti.
3. What is “the urge to speak”?
4. How do we misuse our speech.?
5. The most pure and proper use for the tongue is \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is vidhi?
7. List three niṣedha activities.
8. What rule forms the basis for all dos (vidhis) and don’ts (niṣedha)?
9. Name the steps that lead to anger.
10. List the six urges that we must control.
11. The sole cause of bondage and liberation is \_\_\_\_\_
12. Descriptions of Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes are referred to as \_\_\_\_\_
13. What determines the focus of the mind?
14. Name the valuable reward of focusing the mind on Kṛṣṇa.
15. The Supreme yoga of the mind is \_\_\_\_\_
16. Describe “prasāda.”
17. Explain the process used to control the urges of the belly.
18. Śrīla Gurudeva says that being a guru means
19. Translate “gosvāmī” and “go-dāsa”.
20. List six activities that destroy one’s bhakti.
21. What is prajalpa? Give three examples.
22. Name our only possession of any value.
23. The worst impediment to our bhakti is \_\_\_\_\_
24. Can we be too eager to perform our bhakti practices? Explain.
25. Discuss how association affects our lives.
26. What does it mean to associate with a sādhu?
27. Lord Caitanya says that the first step towards advancing in bhakti is \_\_\_\_\_
28. How can we associate with sādhu s while being physically separated from them?
29. Name two types of negative greed.
30. List the six principles that favor bhakti.
31. Briefly describe each of these principles.
32. Pick a quote from the other scriptures we shared and describe its value to you.
33. Say a few words about the qualities of Śrī Rādhā.
34. The single most cherished ambition of the topmost devotees is \_\_\_\_\_
35. For you personally, what is the most valuable teaching in this lesson and why?

**You may use this course for self-study or you may participate by sending your answers to our Alachua, FL team. We highly encourage you to use them as you review this lesson.**

By the way ....

Do you have more questions?

Would you like to receive free books on bhakti-yoga?

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