

Guidance

by

His Divine Grace

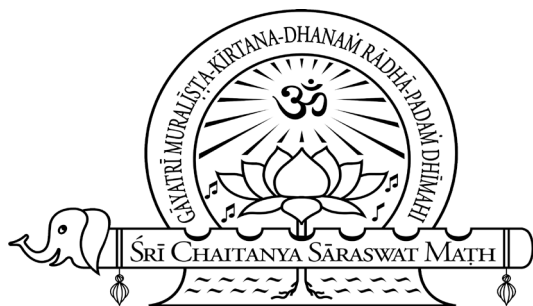
*Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti
Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj*



All Glory to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga

GUIDANCE

*Compiled based on the discourses emanating from
the heart of Ananta-śrī-vibhūṣita Om Viṣṇupād
Paramahaṁsa-kula-chūḍāmaṇi Viśva-vareṇya
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj*
— { Volume 3 } —



Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh,
Śrī Nabadwīp Dhām
2019

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PRESENTATION

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His Divine Grace commented about the original Bengali book, "This book is written in a little difficult language, but you should read it again and again and try to understand it."

PRINTING

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— { Praṇām-mantra } —

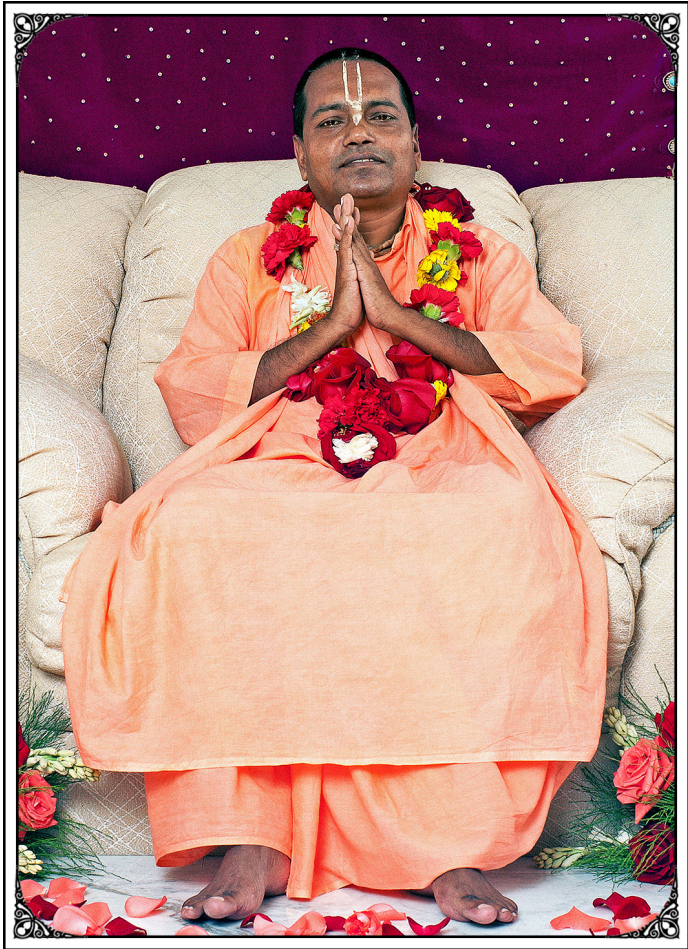
pūjya-śrī-guru-varga-vandita-mahābhāvānvitāyā sadā
paurvāparya-paramparā-prachalita-prājya-pramūrtākṛteḥ
bhakter nirmala-nirjharasya nibhṛtaṁ samrakṣakaṁ sādaram
vande śrī-gurudevam ānata-śirā āchārya-varyaṁ nijam

“I bow my head in eternal obeisance to my Gurudev, the best of āchāryas, Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj. He is the ever vigilant, stalwart guardian of the current of pure devotion—the devotion whose highest form flows from our most worshippingable Śrī Rūpānuga Guru-varga in their exclusive dedication to Mahābhāv, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”

prerakaṁ prāchya-pāśchātya-śiṣyānāṁ bhakti-vartmani
bhakti-nirmalam-āchārya-svāmināṁ praṇamāmy aham

“I offer my respectful obeisances to Swāmī Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya, who is energetically inspiring all Eastern and Western disciples on the path of pure devotion.”

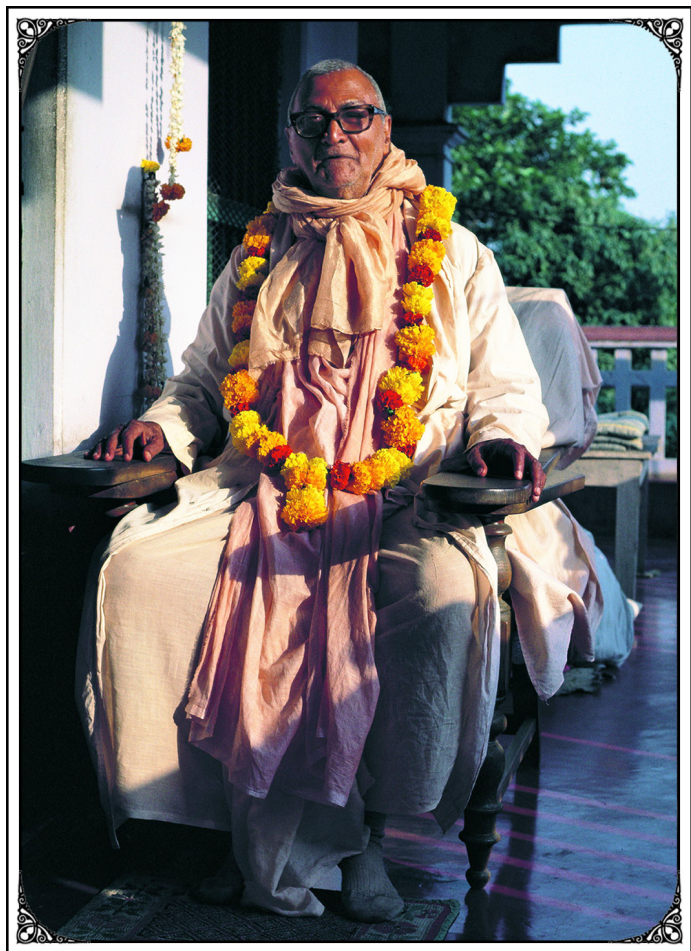




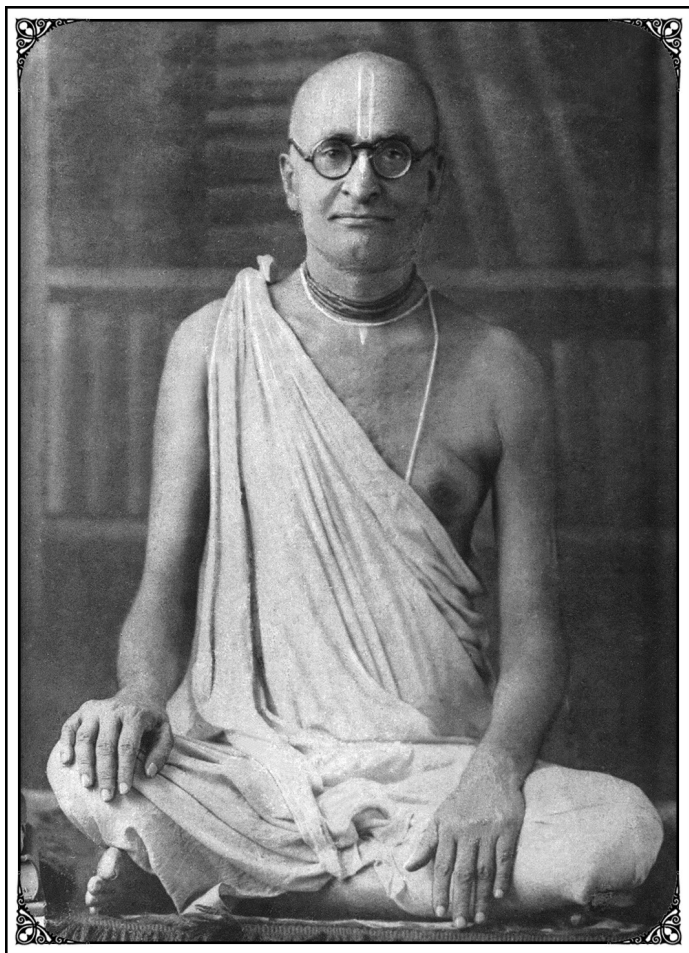
*Oṃ Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj,
the successor Sevāite-President-Āchārya of Śrī Chaitanya
Sāraswat Maṭh, the present day holder of the current of pure
devotion in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu*



*His Divine Grace Jagad-Guru Om Viṣṇupād
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj,
the Sevāite-President-Āchārya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh*



*His Divine Grace Jagad-Guru Om Viṣṇupād
Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj,
the Founder-Āchārya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh*



*Bhagavān Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sāraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda,
the Founder-Āchārya of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh and the modern age
reviver of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's movement and conception.*

Foreword

There have already been published the First and Second volumes of *Śrī Upadeś* (Guidance, Bengali editions) composed from the holy nectarean discourses (*hari-kathā*) emanating from the holy mouth of supremely worshippable Śrī Gurupādpadma, the current President-Āchārya of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj. This fallen soul has got an opportunity to have the association of Śrīla Āchārya Mahārāj during the preaching programmes at various festivals and in various villages. At these spiritual gatherings His Divine Grace shed light on the holy guidance of Bhagavān Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sāraswatī Ṭhākura, the preserver of Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* and the establisher of the worldwide preaching of *śrī-bhakti-siddhānta-vāṇī* (the teachings of pure devotional conception), as well as the holy discourses of the Founder-Āchārya of this holy Maṭh Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj and the *hṛt-karṇa-rasāyana kathā* (discourses that are pleasing to the ear and heart) of my Śrī Param Gurudev, the Sevāite-Āchārya of this holy Maṭh, Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

Today, on this *gaura trayodaśī* bright moon day, is the appearance day of Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu, mercy incarnate. Worshipping this supremely auspicious day that awards liberation and desiring the purification of his soul, this engulfed in ignorance soul has expressed his desire to publish the third volume of *Śrī Upadeś* based on the holy talks emanating from the lotus mouth of Śrī Gurupādpadma. Therefore, this holy book

contains many spiritual solutions that warrant auspiciousness. The readers seeking spiritual benefit will surely obtain satiation of their hunger and feel nourished and satisfied by the subject matters contained herein.

O *adoṣa-daraśī* readers (who do not see faults in others)! It is my prayer that you may please forgive my being unqualified in the matters of publishing, my lack of attachment to the service of devotees of supremely merciful Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda, as well as all the mistakes and errors that have polluted this holy book.

Humbly,
the very poor and low,
Publisher (of the original Bengali edition)
(Śrī Bhakti Tilak Nirīha)



Preface

Meaning of Festival

*By His Divine Grace Ōṁ Viṣṇupād
Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj*

We have assembled here today on the occasion of the holy appearance day of Ōṁ Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj. It is our great and highest fortune that our Śrī Gurupādpadma, having manifested himself in the Deity form, is taking our service and worship. Today also we have gathered here in the *nāṭ-mandir* of Śrī Śrī Gaurasundar and Gāndharvā Govinda-sundar-jiu and are making a festival in honour of his holy appearance day.

When we hear that there is a festival held in the Vaiṣṇav tradition or any other tradition, we understand the word ‘festival’ (*utsav*) as a social function, but when Vaiṣṇavs make a festival, it is called ‘*mahotsav*’ (‘grand festival’). Vaiṣṇavs make *mahotsavs*. In vernacular language it is often called ‘*mochchhav*’ and sometimes we hear people say, “Oh, Vaiṣṇavs are making a *mochchhav* today. Come, we will get some *prasād* there,” but the real meaning and purpose of a *mahotsav* is actually realised when Vaiṣṇavs are served properly. Even if you serve non-Vaiṣṇavs for all eternity, it will be not be a *mahotsav*. Only when there is Vaiṣṇav-sevā, can it be a *mahotsav*. The purpose of a *mahotsav* is to please Vaiṣṇavs. We see such mention in the scriptures.

Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur discussed this matter in his books very earnestly and gave it much importance. He says that if one serves Vaiṣṇavs—even if it is two-four Vaiṣṇavs only, but if they are pure Vaiṣṇavs—then the purpose of the *mahotsav* is fulfilled.

Today, Kṛṣṇa-kīrtan and Kṛṣṇa consciousness is spread all

over the world, and it is our great fortune that we can take part in it bringing ourselves thus a greatest benefit. The hearts of all the Vaiṣṇavs have assembled here today for this purpose.

One can recognise a Vaiṣṇav by following the Vaiṣṇav's guidance—the qualities of a Vaiṣṇav (*vaiṣṇavatā*) are present where there is adherence to Vaiṣṇavs' guidance; the qualities of a Vaiṣṇav are present where there is more humility than that of a blade of grass; the qualities of a Vaiṣṇav are present where there is more tolerance than that of a tree. In this way, there are three different kinds of Vaiṣṇavs (they are described in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*): *uttam* (senior), *madhyam* (middle), and *kaniṣṭha* (junior).

“Our intrinsic identity is that we are members of Goloka or Vaikuṇṭha, which is the abode of Lord Kṣīrodakaśāyī, Kamalāpati.” Our original form is that we are all Vaiṣṇavs, that is we are all servants of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is Sarveśvareśvara (Supreme Lord), He is Vrajendra-nandan (Son of Nanda Mahārāj) and we are all His servants and maidservants. Therefore, in our original form we are members of Goloka, but at present, due to our activities and faults, we have become averse and fallen into the ocean of *māyā*, illusion, and we are struggling and splashing amidst it. Forgetting the service of the Lord, we enjoy ourselves roaming throughout heaven, hell and all the planes in-between: when we do something good, we go to heaven; when we do something bad we go to hell—in this way we play ducks and drakes with our lives, squandering life in vain. But the Lord is not pleased with that. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj has a book called *Loving Search for the Lost Servant* where he says that the Lord is waiting for His lost servant, His lost children.

There is a prison in every country. Suppose there are 125 million people in a country—100,000 of them may be in prison, but you cannot judge or learn about the world based on those 100,000 bad people. The transcendental abode is the plane where

souls engage themselves entire twenty-four hours a day in the service of the Lord. This is the place of our original existence and this is what constitutes the activities of our original form. However, because we are looking for our own happiness, we have all of a sudden, by some bad fortune, got into prison.

There is, however, a way to reform. All the Vedas and allied scriptures are pointing in that direction, and sometimes the Lord comes also Himself or His devotees appear in this world. Taking pity on the conditioned souls like us, they come to educate us and take us to Goloka Vṛndāvan, engaging us again in service or giving us such an opportunity. It is these three agents that we must connect with and relate to—the Guru, Vaiṣṇav, and Bhagavān. They come to the prison from time to time when the religious standards decline. There are different ways to reform the prisoners, “*Vedādi-sarva-śāstrānām sāmāñjasya-badhāyakam*: all the scriptures, all the Vedas give us adjustment and show us the path to follow.” That road is the path of *śaraṇāgati*:

śaraṇagatera, akiñchanera—eka-i lakṣaṇa
tāra madhye praveśaye ‘ātmasamarpaṇa’

“There are those who have surrendered to the Lord and those who are free from material desires. Both of these types of devotees have one common quality—complete self-surrender.”

śaraṇa lañā kare kṛṣṇe ātmasamarpaṇa
kṛṣṇa tāre kare tatkāle ātmasama

“When one fully surrenders unto Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, Kṛṣṇa accepts them as His very own.”

se-i deha kare tāra chidānanda-maya
aprākṛta-dehe tāra charaṇa bhajaya

“When the devotee’s body is transformed into spiritual existence, the devotee, in that transcendental body, renders service to the lotus feet of the Lord.”

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, 2.22.96, 99 ; 3.4.193)

This is the straight Grand Trunk Road—we can see by the mercy of Vaiṣṇavs that the scriptures lay a road through a mountain and if we take this road, then we can proceed undaunted (*mayā syā hy akuto-bhayaḥ*; SB, 11.12.15).

bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād
 īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
 tan māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ
 bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā

"A person of fine intelligence will serve with single-minded devotion to his Guru, who is his Lord and dearest friend. But those who have turned away from the Lord adopt the illusory ego of considering the perishable body to be the self, forgetting their true identities. Their consciousness absorbed in 'secondary pursuits', i.e., mundane objectives, they are always fearful on account of the body and its attachments."

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 11.2.37)

We experience so much disturbance, so much difficulty, but all fear comes from secondary pursuits. 'Secondary pursuit' means pursuit of anything other than Kṛṣṇa. When one does something related to the service of Kṛṣṇa, then there is no place for any secondary pursuit. We have opened our own separate account and all the good or bad actions we perform come to that account—all burden falls on our shoulders. The only problem is that having opened that account I all of a sudden find myself completely broke.

Where is our real destination, our real position? The Lord has mercifully given us free will so that we could serve Him, so that we could practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our genuine existence consists of willing, feeling and thinking, but we have misused it. I have dragged myself into this perverted ugly form, and now I am suffering and enjoying with that. However, our hope is that the *sādhus*, Guru and Vaiṣṇavs will show us the light.

The Lord Himself says, “I come from time to time”:

yadā yadā hi dharmasya, glānir bhavati bhārata
 abhyutthānam adharmasya, tadātmānam sṛjāmy aham
 paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām, vināśāya cha duṣkṛtām
 dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya, sambhavāmi yuge yuge

“O Bhārata, whenever there is a decline of religion and an uprising of irreligion, I personally make My advent. I appear age after age to deliver the saintly devotees, vanquish the miscreants, and firmly establish true religion.

(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gita, 4.7-8)

The Lord comes Himself, but who is actually even more important for us than the Lord Himself? His devotee. The Lord comes Himself or He sends His devotee, “Go and rectify them by hook or by crook. If I come and show them My four-armed form, what will that give them? It is necessary to first give them the eyes.”

andhībhūta chakṣu yāra viṣaya dhūlite
 kemane se para-tattva pāibe dekhite

*“Our eyes are blinded by the dust of the illusory environment.
 How can we then see the transcendental world?”*

“Even if I show Myself to them, will they be able to see it? Go and make all the arrangements so that they could see Me.”

Devotees then come to this world, tolerating all kinds of pain and sadness: *sādhus*, Guru and Vaiṣṇavs appear in this world to engage us in the service of the Lord and bring us back to their transcendental abode full of spiritual bliss. Kṛṣṇa comes Himself, He sends His devotees and with the help of the Vaiṣṇavs we can get the qualification to engage in the eternal service in that transcendental abode of the Lord and return to the life of our real identity.

Whatever is done in this world is called *karma* (fruitive work) and whatever is done in the world of devotion is called *sevā*

(service). There is no need for renunciation. The scriptures also tell us that it is necessary to practise “*yukta-vairāgya*” (proper renunciation). Why? “Whichever direction you go, your bad luck is such that you will get rough road everywhere. Even if you try your best to trudge through, you will still not be able to go—you will stumble and break your leg. Look, I am giving you a pavement, you can go along it.” The Lord says (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, 11.2.34):

ye vai bhagavatā proktā upāyā hy ātma-labdhaye
 añjaḥ puṁsām aviduṣāṁ viddhi bhāgavatān hi tām
*“No doubt, even ignorant people can reach the Lord if they follow
 the process prescribed by the Lord Himself, namely bhagavat-
 dharma, or devotional service to the Supreme Personality of
 Godhead.”*

“Take shelter of *bhagavat-dharma*. If you take shelter of the devotees of the Lord, you can get eternal supreme benefit.” The Lord Himself says, “There is only one way to get Me. Our only duty, our only activity is to surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord.”

satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
 bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
 taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
 śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati

“In the association of sādhus, discussions of the Pastimes of the Lord bring joy to the ear and heart. Relishing these discussion and association, you will quickly progress to the path of liberation, thereafter faith, attachment and devotion to the Lord will ensue.”

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, 3.25.25)

The Lord says Himself, “Keep association of the *sādhus* who talk about Me, who discuss topics related to Me, and in whose association My service is accomplished—by their mercy you will get everything.” They have no other business—their

only business is to run following one single course, they do not understand anything other than that. *Sādhus* try to engage themselves wherever there is service to the Lord, wherever there is service to the Lord's devotees. Whatever we get, we get by the mercy of the *sādhus*, Guru and Vaiṣṇavs. There is only one path: to worship the Lord following the footsteps and guidance of the *sādhus*, Guru and Vaiṣṇavs.

When the Lord comes in the form of a Guru, He actually comes Himself—Guru is non-different from the Lord. It is written in *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* (1.1.47): “*Śikṣā-guruke ta' jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa*: I know that *śikṣā-guru* is non-different from Kṛṣṇa.” It can blow your mind if you think about it. “*Antaryāmī, bhakta-śreṣṭha—ei dui rūpa*: the Lord manifests Himself in two forms, as the Supersoul and as His dearest devotee.” When we get the seed, what do we do with it after that? How will a tree grow from that seed? From that seed there will sprout a tree that will be adorned with the fruit-bearing creepers that bestow highest and most auspicious result—how will this happen? Who will explain all this to me? I can learn all this if Kṛṣṇa comes Himself. The Lord has told clearly in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.2.34):

ye vai bhagavatā proktā upāyā hy ātma-labdhave
aṅjaḥ puṁsām aviduṣāṁ viddhi bhāgavatān hi tāt

“No doubt, even ignorant people can reach the Lord if they follow the process prescribed by the Lord Himself, namely *bhagavat-dharma*, or devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

The Lord Himself tells the shortcut road to Him. Suppose I like *chana-dal* or *rasagulla*—if you give me a bitter subji, will I like it? I want the things that I like. In the same way, the Lord Himself says, “I am bound by devotees—I am completely satisfied through *bhakti-yoga*. I am a follower of My devotees.”

sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ sādhunāṁ hṛdayam tv aham
 mad-anyat te na jānanti nāhaṁ tebhyo manāg api
 (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 9.6.68)

This is simple language. The Lord Himself says, “Devotees are My heart, and I am the devotees’ heart—they do not know anything except Me, and I do not know anything except them.”

ye dārāgāra-putrāpta-prāṇān vittam imaṁ param
 hitvā mām śaraṇm yātāḥ kathaṁ tāmstyaktumutsahe

“When the sādhus give up everything—their homes, wives, children, relatives, riches and their very life and take exclusive shelter in Me, how can I ever leave them?”

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 9.4.65)

“When one leaves their wives, their very life, children, wealth, everything and surrenders to Me, worships Me, do you think I can ever leave such a great donor?”

In this way, the Lord Himself says in the scriptures, “Worship in the way that I like (do what makes Me happy), then you will get My entire wealth.”



Guidance

• Volume 3 •

*Drops of nectar collected from
the holy lotus mouth of
Ananta-śrī-vibhūṣita Om Viṣṇupād
Paramahaṁsa-kula-chūḍāmaṇi Jagad-Guru
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj*



What Is Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh and Its Distinctions

To explain to this world what is Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, what is its purpose, preaching matter or distinctions is an extremely difficult task, but it is even more difficult to make those who are engrossed in and inspired by the commonplace ideas appreciate it even partially. Still, this Maṭh's Founder-Āchārya Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, his successor Sevāite-Āchārya Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj and his appointed current President-Āchārya Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj, strive tirelessly to rescue the conditioned souls in India, as well as all over the world, through practising and preaching the teachings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in a pure way, following the path of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sāraswatī Ṭhākura.

The Founder-Āchārya of the worldwide Śrī Chaitanya Maṭh and Gauḍīya Maṭh Bhagavān Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Goswāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupād preached the teachings of Mahāprabhu all over the world, and among the *dikpāl* (worshippable guardian) *āchāryas* that came to help him, there was Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, a true scholar of Sanskrit and great teacher. Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj took shelter at the feet of His Gurudev Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sāraswatī Ṭhākura in 1926. Seeing Śrīla Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj's unflinching erudition and other devotional qualities, Śrīla Prabhupād conferred upon him the *sannyās* order in 1930. *Śrī Prabhupāda-padma Stavakaḥ* (*Sujanārvuda-rādhita-pāda-yuganī*) composed by

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj proved very dear to the devotees and to this day is chanted at all Gauḍīya Maṭhs. When Śrīla Prabhupād saw Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj's *Śrīmad Bhaktivinod Viraha Daśakam*, he was very happy. You all know that just before Śrīla Prabhupād disappeared, his heart was touched by the *kīrtan Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada* that he heard from Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's mouth.

After Śrīla Prabhupād's disappearance, feeling extremely dejected, Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj left for Vṛndāvan. There, he stayed at Pavan-sarovar, near Nandagrām. At that time, he received an *ākāś-vāṇī* (divine message) from Śrīla Prabhupād and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Śrīla Prabhupād told him, "I have kept you here so that you could preach Rūpa-Raghunāth's line and rescue the conditioned souls—why have you come to Vṛndāvan to practise on your own, in solitude?" Hearing this message, Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj immediately left Vṛndāvan and came to Śrī Kolergañj, Nabadwīp Dhām. There, he made a thatched house on the bank of the Ganges and named it Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh. It was 1941. After that, many of Śrīla Prabhupād's disciples came to Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj and many among them also took initiation into the *sannyās mantra* from him.

When the Founder-Āchārya of ISKCON Oṃ Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhaktivedanta Swami Mahārāj was preaching in various countries, his disciples asked him, "Who will we hear Hari-kathā from after you?" In reply to that, Śrīla Swami Mahārāj said, "Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj is my *śikṣā-guru* and a *bona fide* Vaiṣṇav and scholar. If you listen to Hari-kathā from him, you will achieve spiritual advancement and I will also be happy." Following that, many devotees from Western countries surrendered to Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj.

Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj took shelter at the lotus feet of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in 1947. When he first took *brahmacharya* initiation, his name was Śrī Gaurendu

Brahmachārī. During his *brahmachārī* life, Śrīla Gurudev did a lot of service to Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh and helped Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj in many ways. In 1985 Śrīla Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj conferred *sannyās* and the name Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj on our Śrī Gurupādapadma. At that time, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj handed over all responsibility for the Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh to him. After Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj's disappearance in 1988, Śrīla Gurudev tirelessly and assiduously preached the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya in various corners of the world and opened 130 branches of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh.

Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj took shelter at the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudev in 1992. When he first came to the shelter of Gurudev, the *brahmachārī* name he was given was Śrī Vinod Rañjan Brahmachārī. Since that time, following the order of his Gurudev, he has been expanding the branches of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh in various corners of India, West Bengal in particular. In 1999, Śrīla Gurudev conferred *sannyās* order onto him and his name became Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj. Inspired by Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj and striving to fulfil the strong desire of his Śrīla Gurudev, he renovated Govinda Kuṇḍa at Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Nabadwīp, and established there the temples of Śrī Girirāj and Lord Śiva. He also installed the Deities of Śrī Gaura Nityānanda at the birthplace of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu in Ekachakrā.

In 2009, on his holy appearance day, Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj declared and appointed Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj the future President-Āchārya of the Temple in front of Indian and foreign devotees.

After Śrīla Gurudev's disappearance in 2010, by his assiduous effort and blessings of Śrīla Gurudev he has been fulfilling Śrīla Gurudev's desire and establishing temples in various places in India and abroad.

Below we have tried to present an overview of some of the distinctions of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh:

1) Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is not one of the numerous organisations existent in this world, nor is it their competitor; nor does it claim that you must consider it the best in comparison to any of them because more or less the majority of the organisations in this world aim at religiosity, material prosperity, sense gratification, and liberation or claim to be preachers of some concocted religion in the name of devotion.

2) Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh preaches and practises selfless devotion to the Lord. In this world, there is no scarcity of organisations that practise false devotion or display external rituals of devotion. It is a distinctive characteristic of this holy Maṭh (temple) that it first studies what such show-off devotion or material pursuits behind it are (the frenzy of the desires for *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*—religiosity, prosperity, sense gratification, liberation), and then creates a moat around the fort of pure devotion that protects it carefully against them.

3) Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh does not consider devotion to be a faculty of body and mind. Devotion is realised as an unrestrained, causeless, natural and eternal propensity of the soul devoid of any material designations and fixed at the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Whereas various organisations accept the word ‘devotion’, some even go as far as to superficially claim that devotion is the best of the four goals of life (religiosity, material prosperity, sense gratification, liberation); others consider that devotion is one of the remedies comparable to other practices such as *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, etc.; yet others accept (superficially, lip-deep only) that devotion is the highest among such practices; but they all describe devotion as *per se* more or less a conscious or unconscious propensity of the mind. Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is ready to neither compromise devotion in any way nor jumble it with any mental faculty.

4) Concocted religious bigotry (fanaticism) and the so called unifying doctrines with their bitter experience create religions featuring ‘hidden religious fanaticism’ or ‘religious doctrine to suit your liking’—the message that Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh carries has nothing to do with the preaching of any such bigotry.

Just as people call an unrivalled, unchallengeable truth ‘truth’, when ‘one and only’ Supreme Absolute is called ‘*advitīya*’ (One without a second); when according to the *Upaniṣads*’ maxim “*na tat-samaś chābhyadhikaś cha dṛśyate*” (there is no one equal to Him or greater than Him) the Absolute Truth is called ‘unequalled and unsurpassed’; when a son says about his one and only father, “He is my father, the other person is not my father”, when a chaste lady says, “He is my husband, the other person is not my husband”—in the same way, when we consider and call someone ‘bigot’ or ‘arrogant’ (speaking in general or about somebody in particular), we think that such people are ignorant, i.e. it is an indicative of their absence of knowledge regarding the nature of the world (*sambandha-jñāna*). Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is not ready to sacrifice reality and integrity by thrusting it on the sacrificial pole of popularity and public opinion.

5) Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is not a servant of public opinion, but a servant of the opinion and views of exclusive followers of the Supreme Lord. According to this holy Maṭh’s vision, material public opinion is not the compass that ascertains the truth—the only tool to ascertain the truth is the transcendental opinion of Kṛṣṇa’s devotees. It is this kind of integrity amidst the age when public opinion prevails that distinguishes Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh from other organisations of this world.

6) The treasury of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh does not end at *anartha-nivṛtti*, i.e. striving to gain liberation from the adversities of this world. *Anartha-nivṛtti* is followed by *artha-pravṛtti*, which is the root pursuit of this Maṭh: to try to follow the ultimate practice that automatically removes all kinds of

worldly adversities and unwanted elements. To unleash the fountainhead of love of Kṛṣṇa, one must unleash himself from the clutches of illusory environment. It is the goal of this Maṭh to allow liberated souls entrance into the inexhaustible and ever progressive kingdom of love of Kṛṣṇa.

7) Opaque Guru is a person who stands in front of a disciple and through whom the disciple cannot see Kṛṣṇa, i.e. in order to cheat others, such gurus, disguised hypocrites, actually stand as an impediment on the path of seeing Kṛṣṇa. To fulfil their desires people accept such gurus or recognise them as gurus (?) as a result of their mental concoction and imagination resultant from their previously acquired disposition (*saṁskāra*); they may take their guru as 'God' or reject the guru altogether considering him a redundant third party standing in the way of 'devotion' and 'God'. Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh does not interfere with any of these concocted ideas that are explicitly or inexplicitly present at the market place of religion. Unless they accept a Guru and this Guru is completely transparent, the fallen and shelterless *jīva* souls can never become surrendered to the lotus feet of the Lord. It is the distinction of this Maṭh to whole-heartedly preach this truth.

8) When it comes to preaching, it is a prerequisite that one must practise himself and this practice should be in accordance with the precepts of the scriptures. Wherever Kali lives, Kali's associates (gambling, intoxication, attachment to one's legitimate wife or illicit association with other women, animal-slaughter, attachment to wealth for one's own enjoyment or resentment towards gold and money when one does not get riches for one's own enjoyment) are present there. Any material association you come in contact with trying to increase enjoyment is actually considered female association (and, therefore, an associate of Kali). When one indulges in female association in this way,

be it secretly or openly, when one nurtures in their heart any hankering other than exclusive service to transcendental Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or considers such mundane hankering of great importance or equals such mundane aspirations to the service of Kṛṣṇa—association of such persons is considered harmful and unfavourable (*asat-saṅga*). If the number of such people in this world is great—even if almost 100% people in this world are like this—then it is better to be wise and maintain life practising properly and preaching about the service activities and practices that are meant for the pleasure of the transcendental Supreme Lord for the eternal benefit of one's self and others while staying independent and cautious on one's own rather than associate with such people. It is a distinction of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh to exclusively follow such proper practice without dragging anyone into the filth of manipulated miscalculations or any compromised conceptions.

9) Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh's preaching does not try to rectify organisations that promote various meditations, austerities, vows, materially motivated activities, religiosity (limited to sin and piety), pleasing others or following other people's advice, nor does it try to bring spirituality into any social, political, etc. movements or get involved with them. This Maṭh's preaching does not have anything to do with the exploration of any sort of opportunism included in any of these worldly vocations. The sole subject matter of this Maṭh's preaching is to reveal the intrinsic propensity of consciousness to continually search for happiness and satisfaction of the fully independent Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

10) Kṛṣṇa is not a fiction. Kṛṣṇa is not an empirical mortal subject of history. Kṛṣṇa is not an allegory, not some metaphysical or theoretical sentiment or element. Kṛṣṇa is not merely some mental consolation. He is not an example of a debauchee. He is

not an IPC (Indian Penalty Code) defendant. Kṛṣṇa is not some object of temporary worship. Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh does not preach about such concocted ‘worship’(?) of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the main hero of the entire poetry of this world—if, appealing to our entire reasoning, judgment and historical accounts, we worship the radiance emanating from the toe nails of Kṛṣṇa that are entirely hitherto unseen and transcendental, then we shall be supremely benefited.

Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of the nectar relished by the immortal souls. The beauty found in the entire creation is illuminated by the light emanating from the lotus toe nails of Kṛṣṇa. All sorts of consolation and peace come in abundance as primary concomitants of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. The goal of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is to practise and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness—to do away with the notion that Kṛṣṇa *līlā* has anything to do with the gross debauchery of this world, to preach about the eternal Absolute Truth who is by Himself and for Himself, about Kṛṣṇa who is the absolutely independent Supreme Personality of Godhead and who is the highest eternal Being amongst all eternal souls.

11) Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is not to be wrongly perceived as a reformer, nor is it a pioneer. It should rather be considered a re-establisher of the eternal religion of the soul. *Vaiṣṇava-dharma* is eternal and beginningless. It is not created at any particular period of time, nor can any history provide its original account. When a religion is subject to time and history, then it is not *Vaiṣṇav-dharma* but a random *mano-dharma* (mental concoction, or illusion). Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is the preacher of the ever-existent, eternal and original religion of the soul. That which is eternal and inherent to the soul must not be hampered with or reformed in any way. In the course of time, eternal religion of the soul disappears or becomes obsolete, but that is why *āchāryas* come to preach about the eternal religion of

the soul and help re-discover it. Reference about *bhāgavat-dharma* can be found in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

12) Many *sampradāyas* attribute *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* to some historical period; some compose 'post-Vedic' *Veda-saṁhitās* and *Upaniṣads*; there are also some who claim that the composer of *Brahma-sūtra* Vedavyās is not the same Vyāsa who composed *Bhāgavatam*; some publish contemporary *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* calling it a historical manuscript. The truth is that "*purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ* " ("this brilliant *Bhagavata Purana* has just arisen") means, "*Dharmam tu sākṣād bhagavat-praṇītam na vai vidur ṛṣayo nāpi devāḥ / dharmam projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām*: although fully situated in the mode of goodness, even the great ṛṣis who occupy the topmost planets cannot ascertain the real religious principles, nor can the demigods or the leaders of *siddhaloka*. Real religious principles are enacted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart." (SB, 6.3.19)

It is a fully ripened fruit of a desire tree ("*nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam*"), the essence of *Vendānta* philosophy ("*sarva-vedānta sārām hi*"). If we discuss these and other *ślokas* written in glorification of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, we can understand that when the morning comes and the sun appears to our vision, it seems to us new, or we think that we take birth in some particular year or on some particular date, but the truth is that the sun is eternal, permanent and self-manifest. The sun-god propels the wheel of time (*kāla-chakra*), but the sun-god is not created at any time within it. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* manifests in the heart of different Vyāsas and through different writers in each age. That is why *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* said that *bhāgavat-dharma* (teachings of devotion to the Supreme Lord) is created by the Lord Himself, it is not a creation of a ṛṣi or a demigod. *Śrīmad*

Bhāgavatam is a ripened fruit of the *Vedas* and is worshipped by all pure *sādhus* (who are devoid of envy). There, liberation, meditation, deceit, etc. are kerbstones. The gist of *bhāgavat-dharma* is found exclusively within the practice of chanting God's Names, and this practice is eternally worshipped and revered by the crest jewels of the *Vedas* and all the *śrutis* (Vedic knowledge received aurally). The Lord's Name is the fully-blown form of *praṇava* (*omkāra*). *Praṇava mantra om* is the mother of all *Vedas* and the root or original seed of *gāyatrī*. The auspicious wish-fulfilling tree of the *Vedas*, the very embodiment of *bhāgavat-dharma*, has spouted from this seed and bore a necterean fruit—aspiring to taste it, *sādhus* come to this world within the *śrauta-paramparā* (disciplic succession based on aural reception). Standing at the moat of this *paramparā*, Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh worships the *bhāgavata-dharma* that has come down from the Lord Himself to Brahmā, from Brahmā to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsa, from Vyāsa to Śuka or Mādhvāchārya, and in this way it comes all the way to Śrī Chaitanyadev and is then spread by the *gosvāmīs*, the followers of Śrī Chaitanyadev. Śrī Chaitanyadev Himself is a divine tree of transcendental love, yet He distributed this fruit like an unsurpassed gardener. The actual and genuine meaning of preaching and '*jīve dayā*' (mercy to the *jīva* souls) is to relish this fruit and distribute it all over the world.

**bhārata bhūmite manuṣya janma haila yāra
janma svārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra**

"One who has taken his birth as a human being in the land of India should take advantage of his birth and bring benefit to all other people."

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, *Adi-lila*, 9.41)

This is the order and instruction of Śrī Chaitanyadev, and having entered this *śrauta-paramparā*, Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh has vowed to preach about this.

Śrī Chaitanyadev predicted, “*Pṛthivīte yata āchhe nagarādi grāma sarvatra prachāra haibe Mora Nāma*: My Name will spread to every village and town on this earth.” (*Chaitanya-bhāgavata*) To fulfil this prediction, the *brahmachārī*, *sannyāsī*, and *sadāchārī gr̥hastha* devotees of this holy Maṭh go house to house and preach continuously. This Maṭh preaches all over the world about the all-auspicious Holy Name, Abode and Pastimes of Śrī Chaitanya.

Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is trying its best to bring eternal benefit and auspiciousness to all *jīva* souls employing various modern scientific facilities to turn the heart of every person into a temple (an abode of *kīrtan*), trying to practise and preach, to establish proper practice (*sadāchār*), to organise in accordance with the supreme conclusions of the scriptures *kīrtans*, festivals in remembrance of the Lord and His devotees, *nagar-saṅkīrtans*, *parikramās* of Śrī Gauḍa-maṇḍala, Vraja-maṇḍala, Kṣetra-maṇḍala and other holy abodes of the Lord.

This holy Maṭh’s programmes are harmoniously held based on two principles: first, rejecting all kinds of unfavourable association, and second, following the five best practices as instructed by Śrīman Mahāprabhu—association of devotees, chanting of the Holy Name, hearing *Bhāgavatam*, residing in Maṭhurā and worshipping the Deities with faith.

13) Generally, when people hear about ‘service to the *jīva* souls’ (*jīva-sevā*) and ‘mercy to *jīva* souls’ (*jīva-dayā*), there arise various misconceptions. The general notion or perception of the word ‘service’ that many have is actually incomplete in its meaning. ‘Service’ means giving happiness and love to the object of the service. If the service is not eternal (*nitya*), then there is no eternal benefit in such service offered by the servant; at the same time, if the servant is also not eternal, then he or she will not be able to serve eternally—when ‘service’ is not eternal, then servitor is merely temporarily and futilely cheating the object of the service.

Most of us in this world are roughly *jīva* souls who have been averse to the Lord since the time immemorial, and within the span of different ages there are only one-two great souls who come to this world to save the averse souls like us. Therefore, if someone tries to serve the averse *jīva* souls by satisfying their senses, they merely increase their aversion to the Lord and therefore are being actually cruel and merciless towards them. That is why there is no such notion of so called “service to the *jīva* souls” (*jīva-sevā*) in the entire literary scope of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, among the teachings of Śrī Chaitanyadev or within the conception of *bhagavat-dharma*, however there are mentions of “*Vaiṣṇav-sevā*” (service to devotees), “*Hari-seva*” (service to the Lord) or “*jīve dayā*” (mercy to the souls) because Vaiṣṇavs (devotees) are always favourably disposed towards the Lord, they are engaged in the selfless service of the Lord, therefore if one serves a Vaiṣṇava in any way, they automatically serve the Lord. Chanting *kīrtan* in front of the averse souls provides eternal mercy, kindness to the souls and is a model of supreme benefit to others.

If you give food to the hunger-stricken, clothes to the homeless or to those who have no clothes, console the distressed, teach mundane knowledge about this world to the uneducated, etc. the help or mercy you offer to them is extremely short-lived. After the conditioned souls receive such temporary help, they will again suffer from hunger or they will soon again lack clothes, etc. If you cure a disease of a patient, they will eventually get some other disease or can be attacked by some mental disturbance. Even if one is healthy, there is always some trouble-maker in the society who will engage in sinful activities. Even if one becomes enriched with material knowledge, they still remain desirous, angry, cruel, hateful—they still have animal consciousness and involve themselves in low and objectionable activities. If one increases their physical strength, they fall prey

to various false practices and procedures that only increase animalistic strength. In other words, whatever momentary benefit one may get, it can be destroyed at any moment by the three-fold sufferings of this world (suffering caused by one's body, other souls, and environment).

Therefore, to awaken the consciousness of each and every soul, it is first of all necessary to have proper spiritual education and maintain life by accepting basic necessities that are favourable to such spiritual cultivation—then the *jīva* souls can individually and collectively receive benefit. Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh has taken up the responsibility for providing such “mercy to the *jīva* souls”. Striving to help the conscious is not of no use to those who are unconscious—that is Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh's message; however if we waste time trying to help only those who are unconscious (conditioned souls who are unaware of their true nature), then there will be no time left for them to enter the kingdom of consciousness.

14) In order to cheat people and lead them away from the true religion of the soul and charm them more with the religion based on the bodily conception, there are many perverted ideas preached in this world. For example, there is a famous saying, “Body is the tangible means of practising *dharma*.”

As far as the preaching of the *bhāgavat-dharma* is concerned, the main *mantra* of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is, “*Tūrṇam yateta na pated anumṛtyu yāvan niḥśreyasāya viśayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt*: a sober human being should quickly endeavour for the ultimate perfection of life as long as his body, which is always subject to death, has not fallen down and died. Sense gratification is available even in the most abominable species of life, whereas Kṛṣṇa consciousness is possible only for a human being.”

Our first and foremost duty is to strive to revive our conscious form, or body. That is the highest religion of every *jīva* soul. It is necessary to first of all try to engage in the practices

that help embodied souls revive the soul-consciousness, because every *jīva* soul will get a gross body in every birth, but it is very difficult and rare to get a human birth that affords the best opportunity to render service to the Lord—such birth is attained only by a great fortune. Therefore, the root of service to the Lord is attainable only in a human body, and those people who do not take shelter of a *guru* are definitely committing suicide. The first and foremost duty should be to try to dedicate oneself exclusively to the service of the Lord without heeding any of the innumerable apparent and evident temporary duties.

Those who do not desire real benefit in their life, give importance to the ostensible things—their first concern is with various bodily practices, then only the spiritual practices; they first see the worldly, mundane benefit, the benefit of the country or society, and the thoughts about spiritual kingdom are stored for future—they put off the search for their real eternal home. On the other hand, those who consider that the natural function of the soul (eternal service of the Lord) is the bestower of the greatest benefit, are always firmly guided in their all-auspicious service to the Lord by the principle, “*Śubhasya śīghram aśubhasya kāla-haraṇam*: if you think something is auspicious and good for everyone, do it immediately, and when you think that something is inauspicious or not good, delay doing it.”

Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh has firmly resolved to take up the highest duty of serving the Lord adhering to relatively neutral views (unaffected by anything material).

15) Many think that a great *sādhū* or spiritualist is someone who can smear ashes on their body, who can mat his hair and wear tree bark instead of clothes, someone who can leave all the material facilities that the consumer society is entrusted with and go to live in a forest, or someone who can live naked sustaining himself on some fruit or on air only. One of the noteworthy

distinctions of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh is that if one decides to live austere or give up all material things, it is neither proper utilisation of things nor will it bring benefit to the one who renounces material things. It is our duty to search the method by which both the one who renounces and the objects that are renounced get eternal benefit and ultimate fulfilment.

When one gives up material things, the share of material things for the society of enjoyers increases, and this automatically brings about ruination because the proper utilisation of things becomes disturbed. This holy Maṭh utilises all objects in the service to the One whom they belong to and therefore fulfils the purpose of all things. In this way materialists can get benefit because the wealth that has been entrusted to them by the Lord, is in some way or another utilised in the service of the Lord, and as a result those who are averse to service get some *sukṛti* (spiritual merit) and the path towards awakening of the service mood becomes cleared. At the same time, everything that needs to be attained is achieved in all respects because when one enjoys material things, one gets some bad result, when one gives up material things, one gets some auspicious result, and both leave the person deprived, but when one gives up both propensities to enjoy and renounce and utilises material things in the proper way then it can bring supreme auspiciousness—then positive attainment is reached. When material things are utilised for the service of the Supreme Lord, it brings supreme result. On the other hand, when one renounces material things and becomes a renunciate sitting in one place rejecting all sense organs, making no effort towards any end, they commit suicide, and as a result they may be pardoned and get an opportunity to use material things in the proper way. That is why in this day and age Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh uses all benefits of science, such as the internet, websites, facebook, telephone, electric equipment,

planes, printing press, electricity—by utilising the materials that enjoyers use in their own service and for their own enjoyment incurring thus material result, in the preaching of the message of the Lord, the proper utilisation is accomplished.

Money or wealth (*artha*) is the root of all evils (*anartha*), but Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh utilises wealth (*artha*) for preaching about the supreme wealth (*paramārtha*, spiritual matters). The Maṭh maintains and preserves monasteries and buildings not for the sake of luxurious life, but in order to chant there *kīrtan*, speak Hari-kathā, to organise various gatherings, assemblies and conferences. Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj and Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj have constructed this holy Maṭh's building and towering temple, and just by observing it externally everybody can see how the Maṭh functions under the supervision of the *āchārya*. This building is the dwelling place of the Lord Himself (Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Gāndharvā Govinda Sundar jiu). One may say that installing Deities and calling some place a dwelling place of the Lord is merely an excuse for collecting some materials for enjoyment, but the *āchāryas* of this holy Maṭh do not indulge in this—on the contrary, they constantly inspire by preaching and their example those who engage in the chanting of the glories of the Lord to always, at every moment keep Śrī Hari-kīrtan resounding within this holy Maṭh. Therefore the name of the place where such gatherings are held is “*sārasvata-śravaṇa-sadan*”, i.e. a hall where the message and the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya are heard.

Here, electric lamps help see the beauty of the lotus toe nails of Kṛṣṇa, the beauty of the lotus toe nails of the *sādhus*. Here, electric lamps help to give lectures and discuss the teachings *Vedas*, *Bhāgavatam*, *Gītā*, *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*, etc. Here, electric fans are used for the service of the devotees who assemble to hear Hari-kathā and those who assemble to chant the glories

of the Lord and speak Hari-kathā. Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh uses a motor van to reach many places for preaching Hari-kathā and engaging in other activities favourable to the service of the Lord in a much shorter time and spending much less energy.

Therefore, when one engages in the service of the Lord, material things utilised in their activities indirectly help them in their service. For example, the temple uses a gatekeeper to protect the people assembled to hear Hari-kathā and to guard the property used for the service of the Lord. In other words, what seems to the eyes of an averse materialist to be somewhat similar to material enjoyment and even all the material paraphernalia for service that shall be created in future also, should not be renounced in vain—if this paraphernalia is used for the preaching about the Lord, for practising Krishna consciousness under the supervision of the *āchārya*, then the purpose of all these things is fulfilled and the entire world can get benefit. This shows the practical distinction of this holy Temple.

The two instructions of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rupa Goswāmī given below are the main motto of this Maṭh's preaching:

prāpañchikatayā buddhyā hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ
mumuksubhiḥ parityāgo vairāgyaṁ phalgu kathyate
anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayūñjataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam uchyate

“One who rejects everything without knowledge of its relationship to Kṛṣṇa is not as complete in his renunciation. When one is not attached to anything, but at the same time accepts everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, one is rightly situated above possessiveness.”

(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, 1.2.255-256)



“Without Lord Kṛṣṇa Life Is Meaningless”

Today is the holy appearance day of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and tomorrow is Śrī Nandotsav. On this occasion, a festival of glorification of the Lord and chanting of the Lord’s Holy Names is being held on the order of the Maṭh’s Āchārya. Great teachers tell us, “If Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa had not appeared, the life of the *jīva* souls would be useless,” but the meaning of these words does not enter our ears! We futilely enjoy many petty senses and the distress it causes makes us so thirsty that we create a petty phoney version of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Because of our false identification, we are fed the idea that instead of Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa a demon-killer Kṛṣṇa is born on this day.

Being engrossed by enjoyment, does anyone of us ever think what is the necessity of worshipping Kṛṣṇa? We accept an exclusive designation of an enjoyer of this world and from Lord Brahma down to the lowest life form everyone roams all planes of life, from hell to heaven, in this ego of an enjoyer; this is the driving force of all living entities’ actions. Some become worms in stool and explore their world of enjoyment; some are born as humans and strive to attain high ranks, position, aristocracy, beautiful body, opulence, etc. Sometimes we are born as German Kaiser, sometimes as Chancellor Hitler, sometimes as a state leader, sometimes as a hero of a national movement, sometimes as a social reformer, sometimes as benefactor of the distressed—philanthropists, poets, writers, historians, archaeologists, capitalists, socialists, economists, politicians, journalists,

sometimes singer, sometimes actors, sometimes musicians, speakers, beggars for food, sometimes we are stricken by famine, sometimes by earthquake, sometimes we stay without house after a flood, we lose our family, wealth, sometimes we are farmers, sometimes workers, sometimes rich, sometimes gross sensualists—how many forms have we assumed being swooned by enjoyment and how long have we been rejecting the necessity of Lord Kṛṣṇa's existence and appearance!

We have no relation to the appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa any more. We merely spend our lives revolving within the cycle of birth and death. We always count the birth and death rate among humans or beasts, we are always busy reading the news about floods and famine, and just to get some happiness we become obsessed with various gross and subtle enjoyment. When a demon of enjoyment is born within our hearts at every second, what is the necessity of Kṛṣṇa's appearance?

The Lord is known as *viśuddha-sattva*, One whose existence is free from contamination of the three material modes; it means if it was not for such heart as that of Vasudev (Lord Kṛṣṇa's father), Lord Vāsudev (Kṛṣṇa) would not appear today. We do not want to give even a second's thought to this, neither do we think it is necessary to think about this. We think that the directives given in the scriptures are merely some children's stories about bogeymen or some nursery rhymes. We feel tortured terribly when we get into some temporary difficulties and adversities, but the next moment, as the saying goes, "the dog's tail curls up again" (once the danger is over we immediately get excited again).

Sometimes posing as theists, sometimes posing as moralists, sometimes posing as atheists, we refuse to believe in the appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In *Śrī Gītā* (4.6, 9) Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

aho 'pi sann avyāyātmā, bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san
prakṛtiṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya, sambhavāmy ātma-māyayā.

“Although My eternal form is transcendental to birth and death, and I am the Lord of all beings, I appear within the world in My divine nature, by My sweet will, extending My internal potency.”

**janma karma cha me divyam, evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma, naiti mām eti so ’rjuna**

“O Arjuna, one who comes to know thus the truth of My pastimes of divine birth and activities, does not undergo rebirth. After giving up this body, he attains Me.”

Even if one claims that they believe in the transcendental instructions of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they perceive it in a distorted way. We are unable to accept or grasp the Lord’s transcendental and eternal pastime of birth because out of religious pride we actually do not understand that the Lord possesses all potencies, He possesses transcendental powers and is absolutely independent Supreme Personality of Godhead who enjoys His pastimes with His associates (Līlā-Puruṣottama)—instead we want to squeeze the Lord within the tiny boundaries of our intellect. If we say we are moralists, then we think that the world is ruled, controlled and preserved by the moral principles, and there is no need for any separate God. Even if we say that we believe in God, that we believe that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then there arises the problem of sectarianism—that is why it is thought that there is no harm and no gain if one rejects the bias towards the conception of one and only Supreme Absolute in favour of the numerous so called religious doctrines that are perceived to be on equal footing with the material opportunism.

Sādhus give us innumerable advice and always incite us to remove unnecessary things from our life—the jungle forests of impurities, termite mounds, thorns and the stagnant mouldy water of material desires that nurture life after life, etc. When will we get the time to see the variegated beauty of transcendental Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance? There is so much inexhaustible beauty

in the realm of Kṛṣṇa's appearance, the liberated souls possess so much astounding and unrestrained par excellence in the realm of Kṛṣṇa's appearance; there, the bliss of service life reprimands the bliss of sheer spiritual existence and is dancing on its head—when will we get the chance to see it? We either lose ourselves in the enjoyment in the lower base species of beasts and birds, or we consider that the purpose of human birth is realised when we gain petty release from animal life, and this is what we call being a *sādhū* or religious. It is extremely rare to come across people who would be worth teaching that the supreme goal of human life is the abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance—as much so as the mount of our aversion is also insurmountable.

Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared as a son of Śrī Vasudev and Devakī, He did not take birth having been conceived by semen, etc. like an ordinary common man. Enveloped by the transcendental goodness of Devakī and Vasudev, who are situated in pure spiritual goodness within and without, the eternal, blissful, cognisant holy form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa comes up with His appearance pastime. In this regard, it is said in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.2.19) that just as the east captures the delightful moon, in the same way Devakī Devī, being fully aware of all the *Vedic* knowledge, had captured through Vasudev the all-auspicious, omnipotent, original, all-blissful form of Supreme Lord as her son within her heart. It is due to their parental love that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's appearance took place.

There is one more proof that the birth of Lord Kṛṣṇa cannot be compared to the birth of common mundane people: when a common child is born, it is born naked from the mother's womb, but as *Bhāgavatam* described it, when Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa appeared, He appeared in His four-armed form holding conch, disk, club and lotus, adorned with various ornaments such as a helmet, earrings, etc., He had dense fully grown hair and was clad in yellow clothes. Common children are never born from the womb

of their mothers fully clad and adorned with ornaments. In this way, it can be proved that the ornaments and beauty of the Lord Kṛṣṇa are as eternal and transcendental as Lord Kṛṣṇa's Name and Form.

The Lord Himself explained why He appears in four-armed form: His original form is two-armed, but He revealed His four-armed form only to remind His two devotees who possessed parental devotional mood mixed with opulence and knowledge about His previous birth and pastimes.

When the soul becomes again favourable towards Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa appears at that time in the heart of this soul. By the mercy of Śrī Gurupādpadma, Lord Kṛṣṇa descends within the hearts of the souls covered by the darkness of ignorance every year in the rainy season (August-beginning of September). His appearance occurs at midnight on the eighth lunar day of the dark fortnight in the month of Bhādra. 'Jayaśrī' Vṛṣabhānundinī (Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī) appears every year at midday on the eighth day of the bright fortnight. Despite this calculation, Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance day occurs eternally. His appearance is not just some historical fact, it is an eternal truth.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Jayaśrī unite, They become Śrī Gaurasundar. Although He is Kṛṣṇa, He comes taking the heart (exclusive devotional mood) and halo of His devotee to bring the appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa into the hearts of all souls devoid of spiritual consciousness and to bestow upon such souls the gift of spiritual consciousness—taking this exclusive form, He appears on *dol-pūrṇimā* [known as 'holi' in the West], the day when Kṛṣṇa enjoys the most.

Śrī Gaurasundar appears in this combined form, taking the heart and halo of divine separation, to teach the world about the union with Kṛṣṇa and the devotees' service in separation from Kṛṣṇa. On this day of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's appearance, we

take the dust from the lotus feet of the Rūpānuga guru-varga and the Gauḍīya-āchārya-varga on our heads and beg for the qualification to be able to sing the glories of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's appearance:

yad advaitaṁ brahmopaniṣadi tad apy asya tanu-bhā
ya ātmāntar-yāmī puruṣa iti so 'syāṁśa-vibhavaḥ
ṣaḍ-aiśvaryaiḥ pūrṇo ya iha bhagavān sa svayam ayaṁ
na chaitanyāt kṛṣṇāj jagati para-tattvaṁ param iha

"What the Upaniṣads describe as the impersonal Brahman is the effulgence of My Lord; what the yoga-śāstras describe as the Supersoul or Paramātmā is My Prabhu's plenary portion, and who is described as the Supreme Lord, full with six opulences, the shelter of Brahman and Paramātmā, He is My Master, the Lord Himself. Therefore, there is nothing greater in this world than Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya."

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, 1.1.3)



The Unrenounceable

Even if you renounce everything, there is still something that cannot be renounced—that is either '*paramārtha*' (greatest wealth; spiritual asset) or '*parama anartha*' (greatest evil; unwanted elements). The object of spiritual thirst is spiritual asset: you give up everything to attain service to Kṛṣṇa, and what you give up does not include spiritual matters and service to Kṛṣṇa. In other words, you cannot give up Him for whom you give up everything. If those who give up everything give up service to the Lord or spiritual assets, then they are called '*māyāvādī*', '*śūnyāvādī*', etc. That which is not to be given up when you give up everything is the true sense of the word 'spiritual asset' (*paramārtha*).

Anartha (unwanted elements, evils) is to be renounced. The meaning of the word '*artha*' is 'necessity'. There are unnecessary (*anartha*) things that can be used to keep the body healthy and nourished, but there are such things as food waste, excrements, things that are unnecessary for the bodily upkeep, and they are to be rejected—if one does not give up such things, their health goes down. It is necessary to see what things are necessary and what things are unnecessary for one's own body, i.e. the transcendental body.

The things that are of paramount necessity for the transcendental body, or the well-being of the soul, are called spiritual (*paramārtha*), and the things that are not necessary for the transcendental body are called unwanted, valueless (*anartha*). Such unwanted things are to be rejected like stool, urine, etc. If one gives up all *anarthas* and there remains one *anartha*, it is called *parama anartha*, or the greatest evil. What is it? The scriptures say:

sarva-tyāge 'hy pyaheyā yāḥ sarvānārtha-bhuvas cha te
 surṣyuh pratiṣṭhā-viṣṭhāyā yatnama-sparśane varam
 (Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilasa, 20.18)

It means: that which remains unrenounced when you renounce everything is the cause of all *anarthas*; it is called *pratiṣṭhā* (name and fame) and it is compared to stool. One must try to steer clear of it.

Great souls compare *pratiṣṭhā* to pig's stool. Stool is an unnecessary and renounceable matter, yet even though it is to be rejected, there are souls who hold it as necessary and acceptable. There are species like dogs, pigs, etc. that actually take refuse considering it necessary and essential. Such is the nature of the desire for name and fame. One may give up all *anarthas*, but the desire for *pratiṣṭhā* will be still there. When you advance and try to become religious-minded, you say "*artham-anartham bhāvaya nityam*" and renounce money; you say "*kā tava kāntā kaste putraḥ*" and give up you wife and sons—you can give up your beloved and all your wealth and become a renounced person, but then you cannot give up the pride that you have become a renunciate!

You can see in this world: what people do not do out of greed for honour, out of desire for name and fame! If you look at the mentality of everyone, from a young boy to an old man, even of some of the more intelligent animals, then you will see that for the sake of fame everyone can put their dear and near ones down. You may speak to some small child affectionately, you may pet some low species (e.g. a dog that ran away from home), but after that you will use them when you need it. At the same time, when you ill-treat another living being, they get so angry that many unthinkable, gruesome things are done by them. University students put their life at stake trying to study. The competition among the worldwide nations causes irreparable loss. Becoming crazed by the desire for fame, people put their heads into the jaws of ferocious animals (mad lions, tiger, etc.) without hesitation.

Driven by the desire for *pratiṣṭhā*, people sacrifice their lives on battlefields. To win public opinion people venture to fight against the government and become imprisoned. To this day terrorism still poses a great problem, but even its root cause also lies within that strong drive for name and fame. Even if people cannot enjoy fame during their life, they want to secure fame after their life! Such is the play of *pratiṣṭhā*! This race, driven by the desire for women and wealth, continues eternally for as long as one is alive, but the desire for name and fame stays there even after death. That is why moralists say, “*Kīrtir yasya sa jīvati*: those who leave a good name behind them live forever.” Lured by this proposal, people do not hesitate to give their life—even if they know very well that they cannot attain fame during their lifetime, obsessed with the desire to enjoy their mind, people stake their death in an attempt to gain fame for future, when they are no more. Obsessed by this drive, some write books; some become historians; some, poets; some, artists; some, marine researchers; some, conch and horn poachers; some, North Pole and South Pole explorers; and some stake their lives by living among ferocious animals in a forest.

Some may say that all these explorers were driven in their various exploits by the desire to help mankind, or altruism, rather than the desire for *pratiṣṭhā*, recognition. Today, but for their exploration spirit, Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama would not have discovered the Cape of Good Hope on his way to Africa, Italian sailor Christopher Columbus would not have discovered America on his way to India—even today, if Nansen, Peary, Scott, Ross, Shakleton, Amundsen and others had not risked their lives trying to research the North and South Poles—if the Victoria Falls, African desserts as well as various forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, islands, etc. had not been discovered—our fund of knowledge, our civilisation would have been very poor. Therefore, we must not say that explorers and researchers are driven in their various endeavours by the desire for fame.

The founder of homoeopathy Dr. Samuel Hahnemann had applied so much poison to his own body to eventually achieve worldwide recognition for helping future mankind. Was he driven only by the desire for *pratiṣṭhā*? When Prof. Charles and his assistant Robert launched a hydrogen-filled balloon into the air, they risked their lives, but who could have known that in the future, at the end of the century, there would be invented an aership and an aeroplane? Scientists like martyrs sacrifice their lives in order to invent every single thing for the benefit of the world! How can it be said that their endeavours are driven by the desire for fame?

Our brain is filled with the thoughts of how to take advantage of the world (so-called opportunism), and there is no space in it for any other, however tiny, higher thought! It is considered that this great materialist mankind is driven by altruism, but unless their vision is directed exclusively towards the Supreme Lord, then no matter how ostensibly beautiful and exalted their altruism may seem, it is nothing more than just another form of the quest for name and fame in disguise of individual or collective opportunism. People either enjoy honour and fame in a narrow, localised way by applying it to their mundane self only or they expand it and extend this desire for name and fame from the self to a particular nation or country. This individual desire to enjoy name and fame and the feeling of pride for oneself unites the entire world whereas extended selfishness is actually much greater, much more widespread.

If there is no pursuit of universal or national altruism, why must people give a particular person monopoly and pay the tax of *pratiṣṭhā*? The question that arises is whether this altruism is selfless or not. If you look into altruism and its nature, you can see that it is tinted by the rays of a very subtle ego of a great scientist; therefore, it can be said that if the goal of altruism is to make other souls or a particular nation happy instead of

making the Supreme Being happy, then such altruism can never be selfless. As the saying goes, it is like “killing a cow to donate shoes” [*the Indian version of the proverb “the road to hell is paved with good intentions”*].

In India, a *ṛṣi* invents a medicine made of fat of a castrated goat, and in Germany, Dr. Hahnemann invents new medicine for the mankind risking his own life—this is accomplished through the cruelty towards other species, not through altruism towards them. Homoeopathic medicine is based on alcohol, cantharis (insects), etc.—it cannot be obtained unless some low life-form is destroyed in one way or another. At the same time, neither Indian ayurvedic propounder Charak, not Dr. Hehnemann, nor anybody else is capable of giving life to a man, what to speak of creating even one ant. In many fields it can be observed that scientists can only give relief to the intensity of a particular disease, because when they, driven by altruism, try to help one species, they inevitably cause disservice to some other species (moreover, in medicine sometimes to help one person, the doctor has to take blood from another person, and sometimes they are even compelled to let one person lose their life in order to save another person’s life).

In this way, such faulty communal thinking, driven by the desire to help others and couched externally as altruism, is actually internally infested with the intoxicating hidden desire for recognition and prestige.

When we become possessed by a ghost, we do not realise it—that is called *māyā* (illusion). Not to mention the economic field, when we call ourselves spiritual seekers, we become overwhelmed by the *anarthas* of material gain, worship, and prestige, and we are not aware that we are being attacked by them. Women, money, and renunciation go side by side with false renunciation, and the person does not realise that he may give up everything but may not be able to give up the desire

for *pratiṣṭhā*. One may wear the clothes of a renunciate, one may renounce all clothes and stay only in a loincloth, one may stay in a forest of Vraja(?) and live on *mādhukarī*, not touch anything material, not take disciples, not lock the house, not stay in one place for more than a day—one may seem to be absolutely alone(!) externally—but even having given everything up (not even touching anything material, not living in any house, etc.), one may still be unable to give up *pratiṣṭhā*. That is why Śrīla Sanātan Goswāmī Prabhu said that *pratiṣṭhā* is what you cannot give up even when you give up everything; *pratiṣṭhā* is the mother of all *anarthas* (unwanted elements, evils).

A peculiar power of this desire for *pratiṣṭhā* is that when you have it, you do not realise it, just as when you are possessed by a ghost, you do not realise it. Economists describe it as “last remains of noble mind.”

Materially speaking, this can be described as “last remains of noble mind”: even if you give up everything out of good intention, you still cannot give up this desire for self-establishment. As altruistic movements are deemed great and noble, there is no objection against this matter, but even if you have good intentions, you will not be able to avoid entering into slavery to the desire for name and fame.

If it is impossible to give something up, why should one fight against it? If it is impossible to give something up, then it would be wise to try to find a way how to make the best of a bad bargain. However, we must not jump out of the frying pan into the fire by trying to find this way ourselves, relying on our imagination and ideas, for that would bring about an even greater danger. There are perfect experts in this matter who have explained the method, and it would be best for us to take their guidance. As we have told before, if you renounce everything and there is still something that cannot be renounced, that is either ‘*paramārtha*’ (spiritual asset) or ‘*parama anartha*’ (greatest evil). What we must

ask is whether it is possible to turn *pratiṣṭhā* into a spiritual asset without it being the greatest of evils. We can find the solution in a song written by a great soul:

jaḍera pratiṣṭha, śūkarera viṣṭhā
 jāna nā ki tāhā māyāra vaibhava
 vaiṣṇavī pratiṣṭhā tā'te kara niṣṭhā
 tāhā nā bhajile labhibe vairava

“Material name and fame are pig’s stool. Do you not know that it is a part of māyā, illusory environment? You must firmly establish yourself as a servant of the Lord; otherwise, if you disregard it, you will go to hell.”

Mundane prestige (*pratiṣṭhā*) is like the stool of a stool-eating pig—it is abominable and must be rejected, but for the people of this material world who are averse to the Lord and compared in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* to wild, or village, stool-eating hogs, it is the most covetable food. That is why it is called a play of *māyā*. There is no greater play in the kingdom of *māyā* than this.

When one uses all things as ingredients and articles for the service of the Lord and turns everything into a spiritual matter, then for them even *pratiṣṭhā* is utilised as an article or ingredient for the service of the Lord and becomes spiritual. That is called *Vaiṣṇavī pratiṣṭhā*, and we must firmly fix ourselves in this realisation. If we do not become fixed in this self-realisation, then the football can bounce off to either enjoyment or atheistic renunciation. “I am the carrier of the shoes of the Lord’s servants”—if we do not have this deep feeling of self-identity within our hearts, if while giving up various *anarthas* we are also ready to give up that which is favourable to the service of the Lord because due to our ego we consider it to be one of the *anarthas*, then it will never be possible for us to accept the only one thing that is necessary for the service to the Lord with the strongest faith. That is why Lord Śrī Gaurasundar, as a gardener

who strings garlands with flowers from the wish-fulfilling tree of divine love (*prema-kalpa-vṛkṣa*), said:

ataeva saba phala deha' yābe tāre
khāiyā hauka loka ajara amare
jagat vyāpiyā mora ha'be puṇya khyāti
sukhī haiyā loke mora gāhibeka kīrti

"Distribute this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world. Let people eat these fruits and ultimately become free from old age and death. If the fruits are distributed all over the world, My reputation as a pious man will be known everywhere, and thus all people will glorify My name with great pleasure."

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, 1.9.39–40)

From the conversation that took place between Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu and Rāmānanda Ray we also hear:

kīrtigaṇa madhye jīvera kona baḍa kīrti ?
'kṛṣṇa-bhakta' baliyā yāhārā haya khyāti

"Out of all glorious activities, which is the most glorious? That person who is reputed to be a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys the utmost fame and glory."

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, 2.8.245)

The stance of Kṛṣṇa's servitor is the best pride and fame. It is not necessary to think that the name and fame that always follow a Vaiṣṇav is temporary or a play of *māyā*:

vaiṣṇavera pāchhe, pratiṣṭhāśa āchhe,
tā'ta kabhu nahe anitya vaibhava
se hari-sambandha, śūnya māyā-gandha,
tāhā kabhu naya jaḍera vaibhava

"Desire for name and fame follow Vaiṣṇavs, but this is never a temporary effect. This kind of pratiṣṭhā is related to the Lord and is devoid of any scent of māyā (illusion), therefore it is never a mundane manifestation."

Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dās Kavirāj Goswāmī Prabhu wrote about Śrīla Madhavendra Puri:

“Name and fame come of their own accord; one may not wish for them, but they come as ordained by the providence. Mādhavendra Purī ran away for the fear of pratiṣṭhā, but the fame that Kṛṣṇa-prema brings along follows the devotee everywhere.”

Śrīla Madhavendra Puri did not make any deceitful hidden attempt to earn *pratiṣṭhā* either on the pretext of service to Lord Kṛṣṇa or on the pretext of giving up *pratiṣṭhā*; therefore, those who imitate him are merely putting on a show while actually trying to gain *pratiṣṭhā* on the pretext of giving up *pratiṣṭhā*. That is why it is said by a great soul:

tomāra pratiṣṭhā, śūkarera viṣṭhā
tā'ta saha sama kabhu nā mānava
matsaratā-vaṣe, tumi jaḍa-vase,
majechha chhādiyā kīrtana-sauṣṭhava

Mundane name and fame are the birthplace of envy. Envy means inability to tolerate others' progress. When one progresses or gets fame, we cannot hear them well anymore because we

expect mundane fame for ourselves and become distraught when someone else gets it. What to speak of material prosperity, we pretend to have entered into the spiritual kingdom, but when we hear that another person progresses spiritually, we feel as if an arrow has pierced our heart. When such a mood and feeling come to someone, then we must know that they have not got even a tiniest trace of *Vaiṣṇavī pratiṣṭhā* (the realisation that “I am a servant of the Lord’s servants”) and their hearts are overcast by mundane *pratiṣṭhā*. Therefore, *bhāgavat-dharma*, or *Vaiṣṇav-dharma*, is the religion of great *sādhus* who are devoid of envy. When a godbrother hears that another godbrother has more qualification in the service to the Lord, or has made more spiritual progress, and instead of becoming joyful, he feels pain and distraught, it means that his heart is possessed by the desire for name and fame, which is compared to a witch, a shameless dog-eating woman. Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī is teaching us in his *Manaḥ-śikṣā*:

pratiṣṭhāśa dhr̥ṣṭā śvapacha-ramaṇī me hṛdi naṭet
 kathaṁ sādhu premā spr̥ṣati śuchir-etan-nanu manaḥ
 sadā tat sevasva prabhu-dayita-sāmantam-tulaṁ
 yathā tāt niṣkāśya tvari tamiha tat veśayati saḥ

“O mind! When this desire for *pratiṣṭhā*, a lowly dog-eating woman, is dancing in my heart, why will pure love ever touch my heart? Mind, you are always serving petty kings and worldly leaders instead of devotees of the Lord. *Sādhus* expel this lowly dog-eating woman from the heart and establish there the divine love for the Lord and His devotees.”



Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī

Tomorrow, our holy Maṭh observes the festival of Śrī Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī. Śrī Rādhā is the only worshipping Deity of Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavs—we say ‘the only’ because if it had not been for the Gauḍīya line, no one would have been able to get the qualification to serve Śrī Rādhā, nor would anyone have had any appreciation for it. The Lord of the Gauḍīyas (Gauḍīyanāth) has revealed to the world the deepest secret of this service and worship:

premā nāmādbhutārthaḥ śravaṇa-patha-gataḥ kasya nāmnām mahimnaḥ
ko vettā kasya vṛndāvana-vipina-mahā mādhuṛīṣu praveśaḥ
ko vā jānāti rādhām parama-rasa-chamatkāra-mādhurya-sīlam
ekā chaitanya-chandraḥ parama-karuṇayā sarvam āviśchakāra
(Śrī Chaitanya-chandrāmṛta, 10.130)

“Would anyone have heard that ‘prema’ (divine love of God) is the highest destination? Would anyone have known the glory of the Holy Name? Would anyone have had access to the *kadamba* forests of Vṛndāvan, filled with unfathomable sweetness? Would anyone have known Śrī Vārṣabhānavī (Śrī Rādhā, the highest worshipping Deity), who is the resplendent embodiment of superb excellence of sweet ecstatic love (*mādhurya-mahābhāva*)? Śrī Chaitanya-chandra has revealed all this manifesting His supreme magnanimous pastimes.”

Revealing is not the same as creating. Those who are covered by the external shadow-potency of the Lord (worldly writers, archaeologists, material academic scholars, et al.) consider that Śrī Chaitanyadev, Śrī Rādhikā or Their predecessors are a creation of song-writers or Purāṇas! Actually, if they broaden their narrow, fossil conception just a little bit, they will never

think that the transcendental may take some ‘form’ being subject to birth and death.

There are authors who write statements like this about Śrī Rādhikā, saying that many exaggerate Her greatness. One author wrote, “Śrī Rādhikā-sundarī is created by devotion and love. She is neither anyone’s daughter nor born from a pond. There is no such image of a woman in the entire scope of poetry on this planet that could convey a particle of Her separation or could accommodate even a single wave of Her happiness.” Some other author takes liberty to write, “At first, Śrīmatī Rādhā appeared in *Brahma-vaivarta* and several other Sanskrit books, and then She entered the assembly of gods on an auspicious day in the Age of Aryans (Dvapara-yuga). The eternally worshippable gods and goddesses were shadowed by Her stark beauty. Poets and devotees were overjoyed to see this Goddess, who is like an untouched *mālatī* flower fallen from the tree—they took the flowers they had collected for Durgā Devī and Kālī Devī, their permanent worshippable Deities, and let them swing on the neck of Śrī Rādhikā.”

If we were to decry all these modern-age defaming produced by writers in the veil of ancient wisdom, it would require explaining many things. As this most secret great ocean is not revealed at the market of common people attached to lust and anger but is kept carefully amidst the hidden treasure, these writers, scholars, wisers or commonplace devotional movements with their gross intellect do not get the qualification to see Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī (to have Her *darśan*) within *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. How can this most profound fact be explained at a large scale to those who are engrossed in the material world? Because Sir Isaac Newton observed the law of gravity in a garden in a town called Woolsthorpe, it is considered that this is the ‘birth’ of this law—before that, nobody knew about the existence of this law, neither did the spoken law actually exist

before that. This is when the domain of guesswork terminates. Perhaps, America had been known to people long before 1492, when Columbus discovered it, but the ancient evidence is now probably buried within some archaeological site. Before the ancient archaeological site at Mohenjo-daro was discovered, nobody could even think about the existence of this civilisation. Therefore, when the scope of human knowledge is insufficient to know about the material creation, when we try to judge about the transcendental world using imperfect modern tools, our imperfect senses and our brain covered by lust, anger, etc.—it is not only hazardous, but we may consciously or unconsciously take a strong vindictive stance towards the truth.

Once, a modern traditional guru-cum-writer Ray Gunakar Bharata Chandra, being unable to understand the true nature of Śrī Rādhikā, wrote about Her as being under the influence of the Lord's external shadow-potency! Although he actually lived at Sātāsana Maṭh, Śrī Purī Dhām (the place where Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī lived and served, immersed into the service of Śrī Rādhā), and pretended to practise with disinterested nature, he had to eventually give it up—he created a fictional character of Hīrā Mālīnī, a beautiful mundane enchanting courtesan, which is an imitation based on the resemblance with the transcendental, and couched this similarity in the a fine poetic form—as a result, he actually brought about a flood of lust that filled the moat of Bengali language and literature of the time. We do not blame Ray Gunakar, for he is an extension of illusory environment, *māyā*, who is capable of producing even the impossible! Māyā (the illusory potency of the Lord) has cast a cataract on the eyes of nearly the entire world—all ancient and modern writers, archaeologists, et al.; and to this day Māyā, who is the origin of Durgā Devī, the mistress of the entire creation, and the personal potency of the Lord, guards and protects the unparalleled, highly confidential wealth of Śrī Rādhikā.

Śrīla Prabhupād laid a special stress on this and expressed it in very appropriate Gauḍīya terms and conclusions. Unless we serve the transcendental Govardhan, we will not be able to realise the supremacy of Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa that lies beside Govardhan and is inundated with the nectar of divine love. ‘Go’ means senses or knowledge. If you serve the external, physical Govardhan, i.e. cultivate knowledge merely to increase or indulge your selfish material senses, then you are actually dunking yourself into the waters of Niraya Kuṇḍa (Hell Pond) that is created by the *mahāmāyā*, the external shadow-potency of Śrī Rādhā; only when you foster transcendental senses and cultivate transcendental knowledge can you consider it service to Govardhan for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa’s senses. When the demon Ariṣṭāsura attacks Govardhan with his horns, trying to expand his own enjoyment (when mundane rationalism attacks theism and is about to destroy the truth of five spiritual relationships with the Lord: namely, neutrality, servitude, friendship, parenthood and consortherhood), then Kṛṣṇa kills this demon and establishes the truth. When the bull-demon Ariṣṭāsura was slain, an elderly *gopī* named Madanikā handed Śrī Rādhikā Sundarī over to Kṛṣṇa as a reward for that.

Ariṣṭāsura assumes the form of a bull. ‘Go’ (a cow) is considered among religious-minded people to be a symbol of *dharma*, religion, and it is also known as the carrier of Lord Rudra, who is in charge of universal annihilation. So, when the bull-demon of rationalism comes to charge the banner of religion, Kṛṣṇa destroys this promoter of rationalism.

Lord Rudra (Śiva) rides a bull and carries Ganga on his head—the water that washes the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu, a personal expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. This Lord Rudra, when defeated by Cupid, wanted to understand the transcendental pleasure Madan Mohan (Kṛṣṇa, the Enchanter of Cupid) experiences during His *rāsa-līlā* and prayed for the mercy

of the *gopīs*. This Lord Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by dancing *sādhārāṇī* and *samañjasā gopīs* (*gopīs* with general and particular attraction) during the *rāsa-līlā*, left the place of *rāsa-līlā*. Being attracted only to the love of His dearest Ānanda-vidhāyinī Śrī Rādhikā, He left the place of *rāsa-līlā* and followed Her. Those common *gopīs* then spoke about Her, the main heroine of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, in this way:

anayārādhito nyūnaṁ bhagavān harir-īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yām anayad rahaḥ
(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, 10.30.24)

“My friend! Kṛṣṇa has abandoned us and took Her to a secluded place. She must have worshipped the Supreme Lord very much.” The hidden meaning of these words is that because She is the crest jewel among all the beloved of Kṛṣṇa, Her name is Rādhikā.

We hear also that after Aviṣṭāsura (the bull-demon) was killed, two *kuṇḍas* were created, Śrī Śyama Kuṇḍa and Śrī Rādhā Kuṇḍa. At this Rādhā Kuṇḍa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa always enjoys the *rāsa-līlā* with Śrī Rādhikā and Her group at midnight. These nocturnal pastimes are far more captivating than His midday pastimes, and the general *gopīs* have no entrance there. Those who are attracted by the flute of Śrī Kṛṣṇa but, not waiting for the guidance of Śrī Rādhikā, come to play with ‘Dhīra Samīra’ Kṛṣṇa have no right to enter the *rāsa-līlā* performed at Rādhā Kuṇḍa—Chandrāvalī has no right to enter there.

The dancing and loving pastimes of Rasarāj Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the King of Love) have nothing to do with the frenzied dance of Naṭarāj Rudra or any of the imitative various modern and traditional indigenous dances. In fact, Gopīśvar Sadāśiva learned to dance at the *rāsa-maṇḍalī*, and based on that, his plenary expansion Rudra manifests his Naṭarāj form (Lord Śiva dancing at the time of universal annihilation). We can see in

Śrī *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* that Rudra is a servant of Saṅkarṣaṇ and, being always absorbed in the chanting of the name of Rāma, he creates his frantic dance that drives the world mad. Imitating the ever-increasing enjoyment of this dancing of Rudra, the world is heading towards its tryst with annihilation.

Pure devotees who are devoid of *anarthas* have revealed the service pastimes of Śrī Rādhikā in the scriptures dealing with the transcendental mellows of divine love, such *Karṇāmṛta*, *Śrī Gīta Govinda*, books written by Chaṇḍīdās, Vidyāpati, etc., but the associate followers of Śrī Gaurasundar, the Supreme Lord adorned by the heart and halo of Śrī Rādhikā, can reveal far greater super-excellence of Her service than what is described in these scriptures. That is why so many transcendental literatures on the transcendental mellows of divine love were composed: Śrī Rāy Rāmānanda composed his *Śrī Jagannāth-vallabha Nāṭaka Gīti*, Śrī Rupa Goswāmī composed *Vidagdha Mādhava*, *Dānakeli-kaumudī*, *Stavamālā*, Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī, the greatest follower of Śrī Rupa Goswāmī, composed *Muktā-charita*, *Stavā-valī*, and Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dās Kavirāj Goswāmī Prabhu, a follower of Śrīla Raghunāth, composed *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta*, etc. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavs' reading of *Gīta Govinda*, *Karṇāmṛta*, Vidyāpati, Chaṇḍīdās and the reading of non-Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavs are worlds apart. It is impossible to understand it through mundane examples or analogies—even if you compare a lecture on Shakespeare and Kalidas by a hardly literate person and a lecture on their works by an expert professor, this analogy would be still insufficient.

To the south of Nandīśvara Hill there is a beautiful mountain called Varsānu. A king of cowherds Vṛṣabhānu with his virtuous spouse Kirtikā lived there, on the plateau of this Varsānu Hill, worshipping the Lord. On the eighth day of the bright moon in the month of Bhādra, in the *nakṣatra* called Viśākhā, at midday, a precious jewel-daughter appeared in the house

of Rājā Vṛṣabhānu, illuminating the house, the town and all the ten directions. Overwhelmed with joy, Goparāj Vṛṣabhānu, Ratnabhānu and Subhānu, the three brothers who stayed in Vṛṣabhānupur, began to dance. Greatly fortunate Kirtikā was beside herself with joy when she saw her budding moon-like daughter. A wave of joy engulfed Surapur and Vrajabpur. This transcendental jewel of a daughter became renowned as Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrī Rādhikā.

**“tata ārabhya nandasya vrajaḥ sarva-samṛddhimān
harer nivāsātma-gunai ramākriḍam ābhūn nṛpa”**

“O Mahārāj Parīkṣit, the home of Nanda Mahārāja is eternally the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His transcendental qualities and is therefore always naturally endowed with the opulence of all wealth. Yet beginning from Lord Kṛṣṇa’s appearance there, it became the place for the pastimes of the goddess of fortune.”

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 10.5.18)

For as long as the son of Nanda Mahārāj enjoyed His pastimes confidentially in the abode of Lord Hari in Nanda-Gokula, all the *gopīs* of Vraja, headed by Śrī Rādhā, enjoyed with Him confidentially. However, when Śrī Nanda Kumār enjoyed His pastimes openly, the crest jewel of the Vraja-*gopīs* Śrī Rādhikā expanded Herself into many *gopīs* and enjoyed Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes openly.

If one thinks “the flowers collected for Durgā and Kālī garlanded the neck of Śrī Rādhikā” or that “appearing in *Brahma-vaivarta*, Śrī Rādhikā entered the assembly of gods on an auspicious day in the Age of Aryans (Dvapara-yuga),” then it will not only terminate their archaeological escapades but will also leave them cheated in their attempts to research the scriptures.

Durgā is described in *Brahma-saṁhitā* as an internal potency of Govinda—she enchants, creates, maintains and annihilates the entire world. She is also described as a shadow potency of

Śrī Rādhā, who enchants the mind of Govinda, the enchanter of the world. Unless one becomes fully initiated into the service of the transcendental eternal Deity who is the origin of this internal potency, no one can understand this matter easily with their intellect or intelligence. They are not infertile though—if the intelligence of such writers becomes cleansed, they can understand the reality. The fact is that if imperfect *jīva* souls cannot recognise Vṛṣabhānu Nandinī considering Her a mere fiction, an idol of literary works, then they bring about their own destruction, submerging themselves into the filth of amusing literatures. Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī Prabhu, a master of transcendental literature and a follower of Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī Prabhu, sang:

tasyā apāra-rasa-sāra-vilasā-mūrter
 ānanda-kanda-paramādbhuta-saumya-lakṣmyāḥ
 brahmādi-durlabha-gater vṛṣabhānu-jāyāḥ
 kaiṅkaryam eva mama janmani janmani syāt

“May I attain the service of Vṛṣabhānu-nandini birth after birth. She is the personification of the essence of the transcendental mellows of divine love. With a form of the most wonderful transcendental bliss, She is the supreme goddess of fortune. Her lotus feet are difficult to attain even for the demigods headed by Lord Brahmā.”

ha devi kāku-bharagada-gadayādyā vāchā
 yāche nipatya bhuvi daṇḍavadudbhaṭārtiḥ
 asya prasāda-mavudhasya janasya kṛtvā
 gāndharvike tava gaṇe gaṇanām vidhehi

“O Devī! In great distress I fall to the ground offering You obeisances and prayers in a voice choked with emotion. O Gāndharvikā! Please bestow Your mercy on this pauper: count me amongst Your own associates.”



Proper Renunciation

For many people the word ‘*yathārha*’ may be unfamiliar, but there are two *śloka*s from Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s teachings that are included into Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī Prabhu’s *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and always attract every reader’s attention—one of those *śloka*s presented below contains this word:

anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayuñjataḥ
nirvandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam uchyate
(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, 1.2.253)

The poetic translation of this *śloka* is:

āsakti-rahita, sambandha-sahita
viṣaya-samūha sakali mādḥava

So, the word ‘*yathārha*’ means ‘*yathā-yogya*’—appropriate, or proper. Rightful appropriation is called *yukta-vairāgya*, or proper renunciation. In this sense, the word ‘appropriation’ (*bhog*) does not mean trying to satisfy your ego and senses. The word ‘*bhog*’ is used here only for the sake of explanation, i.e. even though appropriation might resemble enjoyment (*bhog*), it is not enjoyment or false renunciation—on the contrary, it means accepting the things that are favourable to the service of the Lord and that are necessary for maintaining life. Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur quotes in his *Manaḥ-śikṣā*:

kanaka, kāmīnī, pratiṣṭhā-bāghinī
chhāḍiyāchhe yāre, sei ta vaiṣṇava
sei anāsakta, sei śuddha-bhakta
saṁsāra tathāya pāya parābhava

yathā-yogya bhoga, nāhi tathā roga
 anāsakta sei, ki āra kahaba
 āsakti-rahita, sambandha-sahita
 viṣaya-samūha sakali mādharma
 se yukta-vairāgya, tādā ta' saubhāgya
 tādāi jadete harira vaibhava

“Those who give up money, women, and fame the tigress, are the true Vaiṣṇavs—they are detached, they are pure devotees, and they can defeat the entire material world. Those who take only what is necessary have no heart disease and are truly detached. What more can I say? When you are free from material attachment and establish relationship with the Lord, then you will see that everything around you is Lord Mādhav Himself. Those who practise such proper renunciation are extremely fortunate—they become an extension of the Lord in this material world.”

Dear reader, what Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī Prabhu expressed in his writing about the true meaning of proper renunciation (*yukta-vairāgya*) and detachment (*anāsakta*) and what Mahāprabhu taught about it is fully presented in this poetry. Many of us swear to have ‘detachment’, ‘proper renunciation’, etc., but if we look deep within ourselves—if we sincerely look within our hearts, without cheating ourselves—then we will see and have to say that our detachment or proper renunciation is just big words and a pretext to enjoy as we please. In response to that, we can see a class of religious hypocrites who make a great deal of renunciation. In fact, they exterminate themselves eternally through both deceit and inauspiciousness. Trying to enjoy material things on pretext of detachment and proper renunciation is as hypocritical as the attempts to show a great feat of renunciation feeling repulsed by enjoyment. Pure devotees do not fall into the trap of these two kinds of deceit; therefore, those who know how to save oneself from the grip of these two types of deceit are called pure

devotees; in other words, they are the ones who can realise the meaning of Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī's teachings.

Many people celebrate and preach about the similarities between detachment or proper renunciation and enjoyment of the masses. Rubbing oil on your hands to clean a jackfruit [making so that no dirt sticks to you], butter swimming in water or a lotus leaf always remaining untouched by water, or a professional dancer who impromptu demonstrates her skills in dancing with a pot filled with water on her head—many examples and analogies can be cited of how, internally, enjoyers' community always tries to invent new tricks to preserve their madness after all the oblations have been offered into the fire sacrifice of enjoyment. When *sādhus* and Vaiṣṇavs give us advice on how to take exclusive shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord, when they extol the śloka "*labdhvā sudurlabham idam*" from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, when they come to us to teach us about Prahlaḍ Mahārāj's advice from the seventh canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, we think, due to our propensity to enjoy, that the nectar of all this advice is like poison and that we must be ready to "rub oil on our hands to clean a jackfruit", i.e. use detachment and proper renunciation as a pretext to counteract our desires. Suppose a man becomes eager to live in the house of his *guru* and serve the Lord—his father will then use proper renunciation as an excuse: if *sādhus* advise him to go to the forest, give up all material things, all bad association, and worship the Lord, he will seek a way how to protect (?) himself with the *kavacha* of detachment and proper renunciation from this advice. In other words, everyone is prone to using, or uses, detachment and proper renunciation as a pretext, but it is very rare, if at all possible, to find real practitioners of proper renunciation.

Once, Śrī Jagannāth Miśra, relishing the transcendental parental mellow of love of God, saw a dream that his son Nimāi had accepted *sannyās-veś* and was dancing, chanting and crying

False renunciates, i.e. those whose are devastated by the destruction of faith in the material world, who feel dissatisfied and extremely annoyed and angry towards anything material, advise others about detachment (this is the doctrine of the so-called '*tyāgi-*' or '*māyāvādi-sapradāyas*'). They advise to be detached, but in fact they merely propagate absence of feelings,

which does come from the same place (detachment) but is merely transgressive imitation. Giving up material attachment without becoming attached to Lord Kṛṣṇa is a eunuch conception—it is incapable of producing any good result.

Māyāvādīs say that you must give up attachment to material things, and if they say that you can accept some material things, there is no positive thinking in that—they promote negation of feeling, which is only a prohibition, i.e. there is no search for spiritual reality because, according to them, the reality is impersonal and devoid of variegatedness. If material things do not become ‘Kṛṣṇa’—if there is nothing favourable to the service of Kṛṣṇa, and if Kṛṣṇa is not transcendental, that is eternal, if Kṛṣṇa’s Name, qualities, form, pastimes and associates are part of the material world and non-eternal—then giving up material attachment exhibiting the show of detachment and lip-deep attachment to Kṛṣṇa is nothing but hypocrisy. This is not what is called detachment—rather, this is an abuse of detachment or an embodiment of reactionary or concealed material attachment.

Therefore, one must consider what is true detachment and true proper renunciation. Suppose a person exorcises ghosts with the help of *mantras* or some medicinal herbs, but if the *mantras* and herbs they use are fake or they themselves become possessed by a ghost, what can be worse than that?

Māyāvādīs, however, do not like to worry about the benefit of the soul—they only wait for a chance to throw the conditioned souls like us into such a predicament—this is how we become enjoyers and fake renunciates on the pretext of proper renunciation; we think that we strive to learn the proper utility of things, but internally we embrace the whims of our minds. Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍit, Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s associate, expressed the true meaning of proper renunciation in this way:

“yathā-yogya” ei śabda—dutira marmārtha bujhe laha
kapaṭārtha lañā yena dehārāmī nā ha’

“Understand the two purports of the phrase ‘as appropriate’ so that you do not accept the false meaning and become a sensualist.

śuddha-bhaktira anukūla kara aṅgikāra

śuddha-bhaktira pratikūla kara asvīkāra

“Accept everything favourable to pure devotion, and reject everything unfavourable to pure devotion.

marmārtha chhāḍiyā yebā śabda-artha kare

rasera vaśe dehārāmī kapaṭa-mārga dhare

“Those who reject this purport and misinterpret the phrase are sensualists controlled by pleasures; they follow the path of deceit.

bhāla khāya, bhāla pare, kare bahu dhanārjana

yoṣit-saṅge rata hañā phire rātra-dina

bhāla śayyā aṭṭalikā khōje arvāchīna

“They eat fancy food, wear fancy clothes, accumulate immense wealth. Attached to the company of women, such fools roam about night and day searching for a mansion with a fancy bed.

deha-yātrāra upayogī nitānta prayojana

viṣaya svīkāra kari’ kara dehera rakṣaṇa

“Instead of all this, maintain the body by accepting things that are suitable and actually necessary for its preservation.

sāttvika sevana kara āsaba varjana

sarva-bhūte dayā kari’ kara uchcha saṅkīrtana

“Eat food in the mode of goodness and reject intoxicants. Be kind to all beings and loudly chant the Name.

deva-sevā chhala kari’ viṣaya nāhi kara

viṣayete rāga-dvesa sadā parihāra

“Do not engage in worldly affairs on the pretence of Deity worship, and always avoid attachment and aversion to worldly matters.

para-himsā kapaṭatā, anya sane vaira

kabhū nāhi kara bhāi! yadi mora vākya dhara

“Never behave enviously, deceitfully, or inimically with others, brother, if you want to follow My advice.

**vaiṣṇave ādara kara prasādādi diyā
artha nāi dainya-vākye toṣa minati kariyā**

“Honour the Vaisnavas with prasād and other remnants. If you have no wealth, then submissively satisfy them with humble words.

**parijana parikara kṛṣṇa-dāsa-dāsī
ātma-sama-pālana ha-ibe miṣṭa-bhāṣī**

“Consider your friends and relatives servants of Kṛṣṇa, care for them as well as you care for yourself, and speak to them sweetly.

**smaraṇa-kīrtana-sevā sarva-bhūte dayā
ei ta’ karibe yukta vairāgī haiyā**

“Remember, glorify, and serve the Lord, and be kind to all beings. Do all this as a proper renunciant.

**kṛṣṇa yadi nāhi deya parijana-parikara
athavā diyā ta laya sarva-sukhera ākara**

“Kṛṣṇa may not give you friends and relatives, or He may give them and then take them away. Accept all such conditions as a source of joy.

**śoka-moha chhāḍa bhāi nāma kara nirantara
jagāi bale, e-bhāva gaurera sane mora kōṇḍala vistara**

“Brother, leave behind all lamentation and bewilderment, and always chant the Name.” Jagāi says, “I have many quarrels with Gaura about this.”

(Śrī Prema-vivarta, chapter 9)

The true proper renunciation means accepting that which is favourable to pure devotion and rejecting that which is unfavourable to pure devotion. But even this is not going to save one. To choke the path of pure devotion, *māyāvādis* scatter around enchanted garlands of various pitfalls and thorns. We try

to understand what is favourable and what is unfavourable, but then different kinds of deceit arise. If we think that if something is gratifying to my perverted taste then it is favourable, and if something is unpleasant to my perverted taste then it is unfavourable, then we become followers of the path of deceit and *deha-rāmī* (seekers of body-pleasure), which is told about in *Śrī Prema-vivarta*. Following such independent thinking, there is no relation with Kṛṣṇa remains—then the word ‘*yukta*’ (proper) has no sense anymore because when it comes to ‘*sambandha-sahita*’ (seeing everything in relation to the Lord) there arises only animosity. Renunciation is called proper when it is in relation to Kṛṣṇa, i.e. when one renounces that which is unfavourable to the service of Kṛṣṇa: when one leaves enjoyment out of love for Kṛṣṇa (“*Kṛṣṇa-prīte bhoga-tyāga*”) or rejects non-devotional association.

Here, too, there is a chance that deceit will appear: if Kṛṣṇa is my ‘imaginary Kṛṣṇa’(?) and if I decide what is favourable and what is unfavourable based on the connection with this ‘imaginary Kṛṣṇa’, which is in fact my idea and ideal of enjoyment, then this is neither proper renunciation nor detachment. Those who can establish relation with Kṛṣṇa in this world can also teach ‘disconnected’ *jīva* souls how to connect everything with Kṛṣṇa—they are always situated in their eternal form full of eternity, knowledge, and bliss, and they know the real nature of the eternal (*sat*) and temporary (*asat*), so they can advise how to connect with the eternal and how to reject the temporary. Such Śrī Gurupādpadma can show the path to transcendental Lord Kṛṣṇa—if we do not have a clear and unadulterated relationship with such Kṛṣṇa, then we can never practise proper renunciation.

Here also people’s aversion can hurdle them into some wrong motive or illusory environment. We have accepted that Śrī Gurupādpadma establishes our connection with Kṛṣṇa, that he shows the path towards genuine proper renunciation, but there again arises the danger we have mentioned before. If an exorcist

becomes possessed by a ghost and if I consider this person an exorcist, or even if I happen to come to a genuine exorcist—if by bad luck I approach him with a deceitful mind and keep away from his real shelter—then proper renunciation cannot be possible. In other words, if we take shelter of a bogus person who claims to be a *guru*, we will not be able to understand the meaning of proper renunciation. At the same time, if I say or think, “Oh, I have taken shelter at the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*” only to impress others or with some other intention and establish my own free thinking and independence and by that actually make myself a *guru*, then I will not understand the meaning of proper renunciation, then it will be not following the conception of proper utilisation—it will be following my own mind, or, in other words, my own whims and self-aggrandisement will become my advisors, leaders or controllers. Therefore, when one first and foremost practises, adorned with sufficient *sukṛti*, harmonising their own independence with the will coming from the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*, only then does the word ‘*yukta-vairāgya*’ coming from their mouth blooms with beauty, only then can one describe what *yukta-vairāgya* is, and only then can one realise the secret of proper renunciation.

We must not become hopeless thinking that we do not have sufficient *sukṛti*, so we will just resign, sit and do nothing—even if Māyā Devī comes at this time to advise you and whispers into your ear that you should indulge in such laziness and sluggishness, you must untiringly, constantly remember to humbly pray to Kṛṣṇa and the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru* to fully surrender in the association of bona fide devotees. How will I be able to accumulate *sukṛti* if I do not keep the sacrificial fire of hankering always bright aflame within my heart? If you wait for *sukṛti* to come on its own while the boat of your life is floating in the waters of bad fortune, it is virtually impossible to attain any auspiciousness.

We find that *yukta-vairāgya* is nurtured and guarded in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.49)—this beautiful *śloka* is also found in *Nāradiya Purāṇa*:

yāvatā syāt sva-nirvāhaḥ svī-kuryāt tāvad artha-vit
ādhikye nyūnatāyām cha chyavate paramārthataḥ

Meaning: A wise man should accept as much as it is necessary for practising life. If one accepts more or less than necessary for practising life, then they will be removed from spiritual life.

Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī explained in his commentary *Durgama-saṅgamanī* the meaning of the word '*sva-nirvāha*' (for one's own accomplishment) from the above-mentioned *śloka* as "*sva sva bhakti-nirvāha*" (for one's own devotional practice). If some hidden thirst for enjoyment that obstructs devotion arises in one's heart on the pretext of appropriate utilisation of material things or proper renunciation, one must nip it in the bud. Accepting material paraphernalia for the devotional service is called *yukta-vairāgya* (proper renunciation)—accepting more or less than that, i.e. both improper enjoyment or improper renunciation, is the cause of spiritual downfall. Unrestrained enjoyers swoon by the greed for more enjoyment, and unrestrained renunciates are prepared to commit suicide by accepting fewer and fewer things (it destroys their self-realisation and service mood). Therefore, the word '*yathārna*' (proper) establishes the appropriate measure of 'proper'—without excess or deficiency.



Aṣṭakāla-Līlā

There are two different types of pastime of independent Supreme Personality of Godhead Adhokṣaja Śrī Kṛṣṇa—manifest and unmanifest (visible to the eye and not). The theological basis of these two types of pastimes is one. When transcendental Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa enjoys at His own abode in Goloka Dhām, these pastimes are called unmanifest (*aprakṣ-
līlā*); and when by His own desire Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears in this world with His associates manifesting His own transcendental abode, these pastimes are called manifest Vraja pastimes (*prakṣ-
vraja-līlā*)—this is when Goloka appears within Gokula. The holy abode is situated beyond cosmic creation, but it appears within it, and by the influence of the Lord’s inconceivable power, His abode and pastimes retain their transcendental form. Therefore, the historical time, place and participants of these pastimes are not just metaphors, some spiritual imagination, ascription or imagined sentiment.

There are two types of pastime in the manifest *Vraja-līlā*, eternal and necessitated, or occasional. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa reveals His pastime at a certain time and according to a certain necessity, these pastimes are called necessitated (*naimittika-līlā*—for example, killing Putanā, staying away, etc.). The pastimes that the Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests every day, eternally are called *nitya-līlā*, eternal pastimes. The *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* of Vraja is eternal pastimes.

The day and night (24 hours) are divided into eight parts, three hours (7.5 *danḍas*, or 1 *prahar*) each [1 *danḍa* is 24 minutes,

2.5 *daṇḍas* is 1 hour, and 7.5 *daṇḍas* is 1 *prahar*, or 3 hours]. During all these *aṣṭa-praharas* (24 hours), Kṛṣṇa's dearmost transcendental maidservants and their companions serve transcendental Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of loving association. United with their Lord, they are free from any unwanted elements, i.e. they are devoid of any male or female ego, they are completely free from any mundane desires, they are eternally established in the service drive within the spiritual conscious realm—in this way, the expert devotees practise remembrance by chanting the glories of the Lord under the guidance of Kṛṣṇa's maidservants. Just as materialists always talk and hear about material topics and by constantly thinking about the material world become totally absorbed by it; just as lustful men and women, overwhelmed by the feelings, always talk and listen to amorous topics and devise various ways how to gratify their amorous thoughts and desires—in the same way, those who are completely free from any material contamination, who are devoid of mental concoctions and of all mental doubts related to acceptance and rejection of enjoyment or material renunciation, are situated beyond the path of material thoughts and absorbed in pure service in exclusive transcendental conjugal relationship—with this feeling they surrender to a bona fide *guru* and, following his guidance, constantly remember the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* of Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The *aṣṭakāla-līlā* is divided into eight (*aṣṭa*) periods, or *yāmas*:

niśāntaḥ prātaḥ pūrvāhno madhyāhnaś chāparāhnakaḥ
sāyamṁ pradoṣo-rātriś cha kālāṣṭau cha yathā-kramam
madhyāhnau yāminī chobhau yan muhūrtomitau smṛtau
tri-muhūrtam ito jñeyā niśānta pramukhā 'pare

Purport: (1) *niśānta* (3.36-6.00 a.m.); (2) *prātaḥ-kal* (6.00-8.24 a.m.); (3) *pūrvāhna* (8.24-10.48 a.m.); (4) *madhyāhna* (10.48 a.m.-15.36 p.m.); (5) *aparāhna* (15.36-18.00 p.m.); (6) *sāyamṁ* (18.00-20.24 p.m.); (7) *pradoṣ* (20.24-22.48 p.m.); (8) *rātri* (22.48-3.36 p.m.).

This *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* is described in some of the books of *Pañcharātra* (*Sanat-kumār Samhitā*, *Padma Purāṇa*, etc.) and only those who are devoid of material contamination and who hear about it from the holy mouth of Śrī Guru, on the order of Śrī Guru, have the right to listen about it. Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī Prabhu composed several *śloka*s about the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā*, and, based on those *śloka*s, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dās Kavirāj Goswāmī composed a book called *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta* consisting of twenty-three cantos. This *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* is extremely abstruse. Even ascetics and scholars of pure practices cannot approach it, what to speak of mundane writers controlled by the faults of lust, anger, etc. or gross materialists.

śrī-rādhā-prāṇa-bandhoś charaṇa-kamalayoh keśa-śeṣādy-agamyā
yā sādhyā prema-sevā vraja-charita-parair-gāḍha-laulyaika-labhyā
sā syāt prāptā yayā tām prathayitu-madhunā mānasīm asya sevām
bhāvyām rāgādhva-pānthair-vrajam-anu-charitaṁ naityikaṁ tasya naumi
(*Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta*, 1.3)

Meaning: The loving service to the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā's lover Śrī Kṛṣṇa is unknown to the great souls headed by Brahmā, Śiva, Ananta; it is the only intense craving of the Vraja devotees possessing spontaneous love and those who follow their footsteps; this loving service is attainable through the transcendental internal (mental) service to Adhokṣaja Śrī Kṛṣṇa; it genuinely arises on the path of remembrance when one surpasses internal (mental) service on the path of meditating on Śrī Guru's guidance and, by chanting the Lord's Name, enters the land of pure consciousness; I am bowing in obeisances to offer glorification of the character of Lord Kṛṣṇa (i.e. His eternal daily pastimes) that is being constantly thought about by the followers of the path of spontaneous love.

Dear reader, you have seen this verse from *Govinda-līlāmṛta*—you can understand how abstruse this *aṣṭa-līlā* is! When these

pastimes are unattainable for great souls headed by Anantadev Himself, Śiva, even Lord Brahmā, what to speak of people who constantly suffer from material and selfish desires, who are bewildered by material faults (lust, anger, etc.) and obstructed by various mental fickleness (who are always busy deciding what to do and then changing their mind).

If a person, claiming to be a follower of *rāgātmika* (spontaneous) devotees, displays false ego, is externally driven by various propensities for enjoyment and renunciation and overcome by various material faults (*anarthas*), then the learned readers seeking spiritual benefit can judge themselves what kind of result and mundane garbage, as well as an offence to the feet of Bhakti Devī, such pretence of forced remembering or thinking about the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* will entail. Those who try to enjoy in the name of practising the most confidential pastimes and service or speak about it freely anywhere and everywhere, are called *prākṛta-sahajiyās*, and they will never get entrance into Kṛṣṇa-līlā. Just as a bee that sits on a glass jar cannot reach and taste honey but imagines that it is touching honey just by sitting on the transparent and hard glass jar, in the same way those who travel the path of artificial remembrance of the Lord's pastimes also think that they are overflowing with divine sentiments, but actually they are being eternally cheated and denied the taste of real pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Those who pretend claiming to be 'humbler than a blade of grass' that they 'pray for the mercy of Rādhārāṇī(?)', etc. experience some transformations arising from their mental enjoyment, but this is merely deceit and hidden desire for name and fame—such people are forever barred from the path of devotion.

There is a certain *prākṛta-sahajiyā sampradāya* that starts *aṣṭakālīya-līlā-kīrtans* from the nocturnal pastimes, but Śrīla Bhaktivinod Thākura, following Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī's guidance,

did not advise to start service to *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* from the nocturnal pastimes. Śrīla Kavirāj Goswāmī Prabhu composed a *śloka* in his *Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta* that summarises the *śloka*s that Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī Prabhu wrote concerning the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* and shows which pastimes must be remembered first. According to this *śloka*, one must serve the eternal pastime of the Lord starting from the dawn pastimes (the *kuñja-bhaṇiga* pastimes—when Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa leave Their grove).

kuñjādegāṣṭhaṁ niśānte praviśita kurute dohanānnāśanādyāt
prātaḥ sāyaṇcha līlāṁ viharita sakhibhiḥ sangave chārayan gāḥ
madhyāhne chāth naktam balasita vipine rādhayāddhā parāhne
goṣṭhaṁ yāti pradoṣe ramayati suhṛdo yaḥ sa kṛṣṇo 'vtāraḥ

He comes with His beloved associates out of the groves at dawn (at the end of night) and comes to His own home in the pasturing grounds of Nanda-grām; He performs His pastimes of milking cows, eating, etc. in the morning and at dusk; He herds cows and plays with cowherd boys in the forenoon; He enjoys His pastimes with Śrī Rādhā in the forests at noon and night; He comes back to His home in the afternoon and plays with His dearest devotees at nightfall (when the night shows her face)—may this Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa protect me.

Śrī Govinda-līlāmṛta describes (1) the pre-dawn pastimes in the first canto, (2) the early morning pastimes in the second to fourth cantos, (3) the forenoon pastimes in the fifth to seventh cantos, (4) the midday pastimes in the eighth to eighteenth canto, (5) the afternoon pastimes in the nineteenth canto, (6) the dusk pastimes in the twentieth canto, (7) the evening pastimes in the twenty-first canto, and (8) the night pastimes in the twenty-second and twenty-third cantos.

Experts in devotional service may see that in each of these *aṣṭakālīya* pastimes Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa try to unite with the help of Śrī Rādhā's girlfriends. In the matters of the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā*,

the girlfriends of Śrī Rādhā play a bigger role than the cowherd friends of Kṛṣṇa. They try their best to arrange Śrī Rādhā's union with Kṛṣṇa. They are busy with their service to Śrī Rādhā, and it is their joy to assist Her. "We must meet with Kṛṣṇa ourselves," "We will see Kṛṣṇa separately"—*gopīs* who follow Śrī Rādhikā do not have such mentality. When they awaken Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa at dawn, their main desire is to make Śrī Rādhā happy. If senior devotees get to know about the secret meeting of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, they may object and not let Them meet every night, so the girlfriends of Śrī Rādhā always stay with Them at night and arrange for a place for Their meeting.

In the morning, Lord Kṛṣṇa returns to His pasturing grounds, and the *gopīs* dress and decorate Śrī Rādhā for the meeting with Kṛṣṇa—then, on the request of Mother Yaśodā, Śrī Rādhā is taken by Her girlfriends to the house of Nanda Mahārāj to cook some preparations for Śrī Kṛṣṇa to eat when He comes back from the pasturing grounds. The *gopīs* know that Śrī Rādhā will meet with Śrī Kṛṣṇa at that time, and they act as messengers to assist and arrange Their meeting. On the pretext of Durvāsā's blessing to Śrī Rādhā and using different tricks to deceive the crooked Jaṭilā, Kundalatā takes Śrī Rādhikā to Nanda-grām, etc. Lalitā, Viśākhā and other girlfriends of Śrī Rādhā help Her with the cooking in various ways just to try to arrange the meeting of Śrī Rādhā with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

These confidential pastimes run in this way during the eight divisions of the day—the exclusive goal of all *gopīs* is to assist Śrī Rādhikā, the dearmost maidservant of Kṛṣṇa, in Her service to Kṛṣṇa. Such is the nature of the realm of devotion: the very path of devotion is service in whichever possible way to the One who is the dearmost, highest servitor.

Eternal pastimes of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa are not some poetic imagination or metaphors. Many leading authors often do not understand that being covered by material desires, anger, etc. Do

not think that the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* of Kṛṣṇa is akin to the fiction of novels or the dreamworld of poets. That is why the experts in devotional service explain that the materialists, general people, do not have entrance into these pastimes, and they advise to take up this promise to make sure that these pastimes that are unattainable even for Brahma, Śiva, et al. do not become known to the persons engrossed in mundane thoughts:

“Āpana bhajana-kathā nā kahibe yathā tathā”:

*Do not tell anyone and everyone about your own bhajan
(service, practice).*

Aṣṭakālīya-līlā can only be practised through congregational chanting of the pure Name of the Lord in the shelter of the *madhura-rasa* devotees dwelling in the world of transcendental spiritual taste. If you always hear (*śravaṇ*) and chant (*kīrtan*) the Holy Name without offence, you will automatically and easily be able to remember the Holy Name—when the Name reveals Himself to you in the form of the Name of the Name (*nāma*), the form of the Name (*rūpa*), the qualities of the Name (*guṇa*), the associates of the Name (*parikara*), and the pastimes of the Name (*līlā*), then only can remembrance be possible. Without *śravaṇ* (hearing) it is impossible to chant (*kīrtan*) the Holy Name, and without chanting (*kīrtan*) the Holy Name it is impossible to practise remembrance (*smaraṇ*). Hearing manifests in the form of chanting, and *kīrtan* manifests in the form of remembering—not first remembering, then chanting or hearing. First is *śravaṇ*, then *kīrtan*, and through *kīrtan* comes *smaraṇ*. **One cannot practise *kīrtan* dismissing *śravaṇ*; one cannot practise remembering (*śravaṇ*) dismissing *kīrtan*.** Those who hear about the Lord cannot desist from chanting the Lord’s glories; and those who glorify the Lord easily remember that which they glorify. At the same time, if anyone first hears about the form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord and thinks that this is what ‘hearing’ (*śravaṇ*) is, such people

with their *prākṛta-sahajiyā* minds (propensity to gross imitation) will never be able to gain the right to remember the real (*aprākṛta aṣṭakāliya-līlā*). A real expert *guru* will never teach those who live on the mundane, gross plane to first remember the form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord. To hear or chant about the form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord separately, without hearing about the Holy Name, is not the way to practise remembrance of the *aṣṭakāliya-līlā*. When you surrender to the holy lotus feet of a bona fide *guru* and always, without offences, hear about the Holy Name and chant the Holy Name with sincere taste for the Name, then the remembrance about the object of your *kīrtan* will gradually reveal Himself through the following process: first you will engage in hearing about the Name of the Name, the form of the Name, the qualities of the Name, the associates of the Name, the pastimes of the Name—then, in chanting the glories of the Name of the Name, the form of the Name, the qualities of the Name, the associates of the Name, the pastimes of the Name—and from there, through that *kīrtan*, you will be able to remember the Name of the Name, the form of the Name, the qualities of the Name, the associates of the Name, the pastimes of the Name. Therefore, if we follow this process without pretending and artificially imitating remembrance of the *aṣṭakāla-līlā*, we will not be removed from the path of real spiritual practice. **If we dismiss congregational chanting of the Holy Name and pretend to remember the pastimes of the Lord, then it will be unlikely for us to get the association of the Holy Name.**

Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī Prabhu composed eleven verses about the *aṣṭakāla-līlā*. Based on these verses, a great Śrī Rūpānuga follower Śrīla Kavirāj Goswāmī Prabhu wrote *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, Śrīla Viśvanāth Chakravartī Ṭhākura wrote *Samkalpa-vikalpra-druma* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta, etc. All these scriptures are composed in Sanskrit. There is a collection of verses in Bengali that formed a book called *Ekānnapad* and was circulated in the

name of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśay. Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura also collected various verses authored by great former saints—incorporating the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* into the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, he published, in a very grave mood, a book called *Bhajana-rahasya* that included all those verses, as well as their poetic Bengali rendering. There, he described this *śloka* composed by Śrīla Rupa Goswāmī Prabhu in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

ādaḥ śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt tato nisthā ruchiḥ tataḥ
āthāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyañchati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premnaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramāḥ

(1) Faith (*śraddhā*), (2) good association and gradual purification (*sādhu-saṅga*, *anārtha-nivṛtti*), (3) practice with chastity (*bhajana-kriyā*), (4) taste (*ruchi*), (5) attachment (*āsakti*), (6) affection (*bhāva*), (7) love in separation (*prema-vipralambha*) and (8) loving service in union (*prema-bhajana-sambhoga*). Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura connected the eight stages of development of service life (*bhajan*) with the glorification and remembrance of the service throughout the eight divisions of the day (*aṣṭa-līlā*).

He shows the correlation between the activities of the first division (pre-dawn pastimes) with the first verse ("*cheto-darpaṇa-mārjjanam*") from Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka*; the second division's activities (early morning) with the second verse ("*nām-nām akāri*"); the third division's activities (prenoon) with the third verse ("*trṇād api sunīchena*"); the fourth division's activities (midday) with the fourth verse ("*na dhanam na janam*"); the fifth division's activities (afternoon) with the fifth verse ("*ayi nanda-tanuja kinikaram*"); the sixth division's activities (dusk) with the sixth verse ("*nayanam galad-aśru-dhārayā*"); the seventh division's activities (evening) with the seventh verse ("*yugāyitam nimeṣeṇa*"); and the eighth division's activities (night) with the eighth verse of *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura, a great follower of Śrī Rūpānuga line, has shown the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* within Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka*

and followed the instruction of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu (“*param vijayate Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*”) in a *bona fide* way (conforming with the pure transcendental science)—he thus explained that it is possible to practise remembrance of the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā* through the *saṅkīrtan* of the Holy Name. If faith, good association, sincerity and chastity, natural taste, attachment to Kṛṣṇa do not arise and the person simply imitates with their mundane mind remembrance of the Lord’s pastimes and pretends to be full of loving devotion, then, according to the teachings of Śrī Rūpa, they will be completely cast off. Therefore, if we want true spiritual benefit, we must first hear Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, as well as Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī’s *Upadeśāmṛta* or *Bhaktirasāmṛta-sindhu*’s essential chapter ‘Sādhana-path’ from the lotus mouth of Śrī Guru and practise it. “Do not count the chickens before they are hatched”—we should bear this proverb in mind so that we may not in the name of *bhajan* (service and spiritual practice) engage in insolence and become deceived and forever removed from this devotional path.

There is a famous advice of Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya: “Do not neglect the practice of remembering the pastimes of the Lord.”

There is no other way for the souls who have forgotten Lord Kṛṣṇa to get spiritual benefit except for remembrance of Kṛṣṇa.

avismṛtiḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayoḥ
 kṣiṇoty abhadraṇi cha śaṁ tanoti
 sattvasya śuddhiṁ paramātmā-bhaktiṁ
 jñānāñcha vijñāna-virāga-yuktam
 (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 12.12.55)

Constant remembrance of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa awards the soul unlimited good fortune and removes all inauspiciousness and untowardness. By remembering the Lord’s feet your heart becomes pure and you will attain loving devotion, enriched with proper detachment, spiritual knowledge and its practical application.

When one leaves the instruction to remember Kṛṣṇa and their remembrance of Kṛṣṇa transforms from the natural taste or hankering and attachment into pure and permanent loving devotion and when that loving devotion accepts fully only exclusive attachment to *madhura-rasa*, then such a devotee who remembers Lord Kṛṣṇa is the highest. The devotional practice of remembrance of the Lord through *kīrtan* stops for the devotees who are attached to *madhura-rasa* and practise remembrance of the *aṣṭakālīya-līlā*. This is the highest goal of the soul who are free from material designations and material contamination.

kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janam chāsya preṣṭham nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś chāsau kuryād vāsam vraje sadā
sevā sādhaḥ rūpeṇa siddhirūpeṇa chātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā vraja-lokānusārataḥ

“One must have attachment to constant remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His chosen dearest associates and live in Vṛndāvan; if one is physically too weak to live in Vraja, then they must do so internally, within their hearts. Those who have attained the stage of spontaneous devotion must externally serve following the guidance of a resident of Vraja as a general practitioner and internally as a self-realised soul who has attained spiritual perfection.”

(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, 1.2.293–294)

bāhya, abhyantara—ihāra dui ta sādhaṇa
‘bāhya’ sādhaḥ-dehe kare śravaṇa-kīrtana
‘mane’ nija-siddha-deha kariyā bhāvan
rātri-dine kare braje kṛṣṇera sevana
nijābhīṣṭa kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha pāchhe ta’ lāgiyā
nitrantara sevā kare, antarmanā hañā

“There are two types of practices—external and internal. External practice is to engage in listening and chanting with your body. One must make their mind an abode of the original spiritually self-realised body and serve Vṛndāvan Kṛṣṇa day and

night within that mind. Internal practice (accomplished within one's mind) means to choose a dear associate of Kṛṣṇa according to one's preference and engage in their service at every moment."
(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, 2.22.151–153, 1555)

Being unable to grasp this subject, many confuse internal mental service with *mano-dharma* (concocted ideas) or imagination. True internal (mental) service is neither mental imagination, nor a concocted belief. *Mano-dharma* does not even signify inquisitiveness or hankering—it is simply an attempt to satisfy yourself. "Being free from material designations and contamination by engaging all senses in the service to Hṛṣīkeśa (*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam hṛṣīkeṣa hṛṣīkeśa sevanaṁ*)" is not attained by *mano-dharma* (mental speculation). Those who claim to be a practising devotee often consciously or unconsciously dress themselves as a Hṛṣīk-īṣa (master of the senses) and indulge their imagination trying to enjoy Kṛṣṇa in the name of remembering His pastimes. Enjoying the Lord (*Hari-bhoga*) is not serving the Lord (*Hari-sevā*), as much as mental speculation is not internal service. Unless you are specifically told and warned about this matter, your naughty mind will always try to cheat you by passing off imagination or sensual enjoyment as internal service. So, watch out!!



Is Religion the Cause of National Downfall?

In the modern world, there is a class of people whose strong belief is that “religion is the main cause of the nation’s downfall; especially Vaiṣṇavism that arose in the gentle body of sentimental Bengal and engulfed the nation with mostly feminine and slave mentality.”

Many of us cannot altogether overlook these modern rationalists’ argument and conception as it cannot be denied that what we imagine to be religion does in various ways cause degradation of the nation. Even if we set aside the prevailing national views on the world, these arguments of the rationalists cannot be avoided with all the direct proof of it that we can see in the stories and incidents of the nowadays society. In fact, when a man is possessed by religious fanaticism, there arises so much farce and pretence. Under the cover of religious madness, there is so much decadent frenzy in the society. Once the burden of religious magic falls on one’s shoulders, it throws the immediate duties of the society into a turmoil and turns the person into an imaginary supreme ruler.

There are many evident examples of it. Once, there was a very educated man, an only child in his family, who had fallen into the clutches of one *sādhumā* (a saintly lady of unknown background, engaged in some new-age practice) and lost his mind and all common sense—without a second thought giving up his coveted successful career, taking with him only his clothes and bare necessities, he became a bonds slave to an uneducated

conwoman from a different culture who could cleverly use words and emotions to trick and take advantage of people. Another time, one respectable woman, a virtuous housewife, got swayed by the magic of some so-called *sādhū* of God knows what origin and lost all interest in her service at home. A few days later, having got that only son, the apple of his parents' eye, that '*sādhumā*' vanished; and the respectable housewife tarnished the respect of her family and started following the bogus *sādhū* becoming a religious fanatic. As part of the display of her saintliness, '*sādhumā*' could read one's mind, otherwise she could use magic to turn one into a blind religious fanatic; in other words, she knew that she could just show several movements, gestures or capture people's minds with the jugglery of words in such a way they would easily fall into her trap. As for the *sādhū's* display, he knew some magic by which he could in one second spread the scent of roses and sandalwood in the entire house; or he could capture the minds of virtuous housewives or sensualists by creating a spell that would produce cuckoos' melodious singing and create a forged version of Gokula with all sorts of amorous sports exhibited within it—he was indifferent to women and riches, but he would pretend to have attained the *savikalpa*(?) and *nirvikalpa*(?) perfections [various stages of *samādhi*] by an artificial display of his yogic powers or the gravity of his meditation and ideas.

Hearing and seeing all this, a certain class of people become enraged at a mere hint of the name of religion. When they observe any degradation or problem in the society or in the country, then, as a Bengali proverb goes, "*Yata doṣ Nanda Ghoṣ*—whatever the fault, just blame Nanda Ghoṣ." Just as a cow whose shed has burnt down is terrified when it sees red clouds at sunset, people put the burden of blame on the shoulders of religion—because people cheat and deceive others in the name of religion, everyone thinks that religion is bad. This conception

has become deeply rooted. When people see fanatic imitation in the behaviour and practice of religious followers, they become hostile towards the true and genuine religion as well. These people were so anxious to satisfy their senses that they fell prey to the '*sādhumā'*, they became charmed by the magic of the bogus *sādhū*, and they lost all interest in their mother, father, wife, country and nation—at the same time, Śrī Chaitanyadev or the followers of His devotional line were prosecuted for this. The decision is up to us.

We hear that one widely famous historian wrote, "Chaitanya was the cause of Orissa's downfall." Kapilendra of the Suryavansha dynasty and his son Purushottam were very powerful and mighty kings of Odisha. They expanded the borders of their kingdom—it began from the southern bank of the Ganga and stretched all the way until the north bank of the Kṛṣṇa River. Purushottam extended the border until Kanchi (Kanchipuram) in the north and advanced until Vijayanagara in Rajasthan. Some historians say that Purushottam Dev brought Sākṣī Gopal and Jagannāth's *ratna simhāsana* (altar) from Vijayanagara kingdom. The dining hall (*bhoga-maṇḍapa*) in the Jagannāth Temple that can be seen now also was built by Purushottam. Like his father, he was trying to have his bread buttered on both sides, but Purushottam's son King Pratāparudra, with all his family, ministers, servants, royal opulence, and all his possessions, came under the influence of Śrī Chaitanyadev and became His fanatic follower. In the meantime, a renowned emperor of Vijayanagara named Kṛṣṇadevaraya repeatedly attacked the capital of Pratāparudra's kingdom and eventually conquered all territories south to the Godavari that had been under the rule of Pratāparudra. In the end, Pratāparudra was forced to hand his daughter over to be married to the King of Vijayanagara.

Materialists do not consider that such religious fanaticism(?) causes individual downfall—they consider it the cause of

the downfall or bondage of the entire nation. That is why, perhaps, as soon as Russia hears even a hint of a religion's name, it becomes enraged and takes the stand to attack. They demolish churches and create open squares for playing dice or turn them into club houses, restaurants, etc. instead. The old generation that made the mistake is trying now to reform by establishing a new foundation for the nation that would be devoid of even a slightest hint of religion! They make sure they deport any mention of religion from the educational institutions so that the new generation, the young boys and girls, do not have any contact with religion. After the examples of German Nazi movement leader Chancellor Hitler, Italian Prime Minister Mussolini, et al. now more or less all nations and milieus are becoming united in their views—people find religion guilty of all national degradation and decay. It is considered that the ten commandments of Christ or the Lord's prayer (Gospel, Luke, 23.24), "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" when He was about to be crucified and other teachings are adverse for the prosperity of the society and country.

Therefore, our first and foremost duty is to determine clearly what is considered 'downfall' and 'religion' and what is their real form. In every sphere in this world, there is a limit to how far you can interfere without having the right or qualification to do so, but the thing is that anyone is considered qualified to judge in the matters of religion, even if they are actually not. Many of us take the meaning of religion for granted. Sometimes people to come the door of our house—decorated with *tilak*, forehead marks, long beard, etc. they play tambourine and sing sweetly and melodiously the words 'Kṛṣṇa' (?), 'Viṣṇu'(?); or sometimes public speakers give lecture captivating streams of people making them sit mesmerised with their sweet speeches—we make the verdict that these people are religious and that their activities are called 'religion'. Some time later, when we see that behind the

scene they change their tune, and their sham character turns out blatantly immoral and brutal, we take an angry stand to attack religion saying, “Vaiṣṇavism is the shelter for debauchees!” However, while claiming this, we forget to note and take into consideration one thing—that which we decided a second ago was a ‘religion’ is not religion. Doing whatever suits my senses, becoming a servant of my senses or whichever grips my senses is what we call religion! We place our mind’s whims, various musical tunes, melodies, rhythms and other sense pleasures on the throne of religion, but we do not think that revealing the true nature of the soul, exploring the conscious realm is a religion. Even if we do not oppose the eternal genuine religion, we actually pass it as a religion for unrighteous dead people and, as for us, we fill the place of religion with the pleasures and transformations of the senses.

When we judge our degradation we always weigh material prosperity against how low we have to stoop—material position, material enjoyment, material opulence are the only standards against which we measure our prosperity and deprivation. The all-devouring materialism has sown so many poisonous seeds into the body of human race, the so-called civilised society, the country. We may not understand it now from the various simple examples, but it can be said that destruction of this human race is inevitable. History offers us an x-ray that exposes the transformations within the society, but we should have long ago used it to awaken our dormant selves.

Nowadays we take so much pride in being initiated into the ‘mantra’ of patriotism, but the fact is that our patriotism is based on imitating foreign countries. The truth is that foreigners have not made us a foreign nation through clothes, etc.—foreigners have changed our core. It is very easy to change clothes, to behave like a patriot or a foreigner, to be civilised, well-mannered or religious. Those who have studied history know that, when

ancient Romans' Britain was conquered, they had to leave it and return to their own country—they may have left the country, but the British have not been able to forget their influence.

We may have become polished by wearing good clothes, etc., but if we only dress up like foreigners imitating them, and internally we are converted into the materialism that has engulfed the West, then we simply become fake patriots who are intolerant to the eternal and true religion of our own self.

Materialism is not a property of India—neither of India, nor of any living soul in the entire universe. It is merely a foreign attack on our own pure consciousness. This foreign attack is the very cause of the degradation, or downfall, of our consciousness. When there is a downfall of consciousness, it means the very life is ruined—when you break the spine, the whole carcass disintegrates and becomes ruined. Being under the attack of foreign influence, our understanding is just the opposite: we think that uncovering our consciousness (awakening the awareness of our consciousness), seeking the interest of the soul causes individual and collective degradation. The truth is that whether it is individual, national, social or any other downfall, the only reason why it happens is a lack of spiritual culture. This is the eternal and living historical truth.

At first sight, being covered, many say that if we seek the interest of the soul, we must become indifferent to or detached from the society or nation and sail the boat of our life in the tempest of renunciation—how can social and national prosperity be possible then? If a new wave of religion arises in the heart of a spiritual seeker, this newly arisen enthusiasm first of all turns into rebellion against marriage; and those who are already married think that it is something abominable and their wife, children start to annoy them. Then, the parents and well-wishers of the young boys and girls tell them, "How will reproduction and creation continue without marriage? Creation, or reproduction,

is the desire of the Lord, and if everyone rebels against it instead of assisting it, how will it be possible to practise religion?" That is why if someone becomes aloof to their wife, sons, mother, father, they are advised by religious well-wishers, "The highest religion is to serve one's wife as Nārāyaṇ(?), son as Nārāyaṇ(?) and parents also as Nārāyaṇ(?). It is those who are indifferent to this that are the cause of the national degradation."

Because Śrī Chaitanyadev became apathetic towards His wife, mother, country and nation and became a religious fanatic, He must be blamed for the degradation of the nation.

There is another class of people who argue that when one practises religion, one must be detached from the material things, then how will the means of national prosperity (literature, art, science, philosophy, politics, ethics, etc.) thrive? If people go to a mountain and sit mediating in a cave, how will literature, art, science develop and come up with new inventions? If one gives up all enjoyment and dresses up as a renunciate, will that increase the country's trade, agriculture, money, population, wealth, etc.? Wherever people live every day like its their last day, such religion must make national degradation inevitable.

When we see this picture of 'crematorium' religion [when people become religious only in the face of death] and false religions, the arguments of so-called rationalists become not unreasonable. In fact, if someone thinks that the mankind and other living entities must accept the duty of preservation of the created world, such arguments will entail various adverse bitter experience, opposition and rivalry. When one wants to take up the responsibility of maintenance of the world, they will again be inspired to obstruct the creation. If we accept Thomas Malthus's theory, then we must say that the human population increases in geometrical progression, and the food production increases in arithmetic progression, but the creative process is obstructed through positive checks (such as child death, epidemics, diseases,

famine, earthquakes, floods, wars, etc.) or otherwise preventive checks such as late marriages, etc.

There are some who opposed this theory of Thomas Malthus—they say that this theory worked only for the contemporary times (the times of Th. Malthus, 1766-1834). Their argument was that this growth model could be applied to poor countries such as India, China, etc., but in case of rich countries such as Great Britain, Germany, USA, etc., where education and civilisation developed rapidly, where the Factory Act and other regulatory laws were passed much earlier, where grains are imported from abroad, especially during the time when their agriculture and trade was prospering, then this theory does not work, but Walker (in his *Political Economy*) and other economists say that the Malthusian growth model works always and for all nations and there lies much profound truth in it.

Anyhow, when mankind tries to look after(?) the world created by the Lord, their greed for enjoyment will not allow them to exercise prudence—instead of national prosperity, they will have to embrace national degradation. Those who have no relationship with the service of the Lord are always partial towards either maintenance or destruction, and both of these classes of people walk down the path of destruction of the society and nation. Compared to the human race, the number of lower life forms (beasts, birds, insects, etc.) increases more rapidly, so it does not make any sense to try to retain the prosperity just by expanding the world or through checking its expansion. Even though an educated, refined independent nation may prosper in their creative methods, will their attempts not be baffled by what Malthus called the 'positive check' (warfare, etc.)? When people try to check the birth rate by various ways and laws, does the weapon production need not be restricted? Does it not infest the nation with its germ of phthisis that in the name of national prosperity, civilisation, education, independence, etc.

destroy the innermost core of the nation? The wise should judge for themselves.

Śrī Chaitanyadev, or anyone who is knowledgeable about the teaching of Śrī Chaitanyadev, never advises anyone to get involved in all these activities that destroy the nation. In fact, the destructive human race can never compete with the way devotees would expand the family of Śrī Chaitanyadev—the family of Their Lord (Achyuta-gotra) where they are all His children. Śrī Chaitanyadev instructed to expand this family: “Tell whoever you see about the teachings of Kṛṣṇa, become a *guru* and liberate this land on My order (*yāre dekhe tāre kahe Kṛṣṇa-upadeśa, āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra ei deśa*). May our family increase (*gotraṁ nu vardhatām*). May Kṛṣṇa increase our family (*gotra vādāuna Kṛṣṇa āmā sabākāra*).” In His family, all children are ‘golden children’: they are not creators of a material mortal nation; they are messengers of an immortal nation; their family is the family of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, if people think that the sect of people who have an unrestrained craving for enjoyment or who make a show of restraining themselves but internally crave for enjoyment can support the nation and devotees of the Lord obstruct the growth of the nation, then they are making a mistake, and not just a mistake—they are travelling down the path of destruction.

The devotion school based on service to Viṣṇu shows a unique for the entire world path towards real benefit and gradual social and scientific progress. The eternal religion is based on the worship of Lord Viṣṇu within the transcendental system of four social orders and four spiritual orders (*daiva-varṇāśrama*)—there is no other place in this world except India where the eternal religion would be presented in such a beautiful way. If *daiva-varṇāśrama* is not practised in the entire nation, or if the nation moves towards a social and spiritual system that is averse to the service of the Lord, then the sheer truth is that such people more

or less embark on an adventurous expedition called ‘progress’ while walking down the path of destruction. *Daiva-varṇāśrama* is rightly based on a scientific foundation and focuses on placing the Absolute in the centre—this is a scientific ladder to national prosperity and progress. Those who say that Śrī Chaitanyadev is the cause of obstruction or downfall of any country or nation’s prosperity make such statements because they have more or less fallen into the waterfall of degradation. We can see that firsthand. Enlightened by the mercy of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Dabīr Khās and Sākar Mallik, who were at that time chief ministers under the rule of Muslim King Hussein Saheb; Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī Prabhu gave up opulence like that of Indra and a wife, beautiful as a denizen from heaven; Śrīla Raghunāth Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī abstained from getting married; Mahārāj Pratāparudra became indifferent to warfare—this causes no damage to the nation; on the contrary, it brings real national prosperity, culture, along with the ensuing nourishment, which is and always will be the longing of intelligent persons. To get a big government job, people often give money illegally, and attempting to give so-called benefit to the country and nation, some people all the time become prisoners of dry prestige (*pratiṣṭha*), etc. Sanātān, on the other hand, was imprisoned because he was trying to show the true path to independence of the entire humankind and all the other living entities; moreover, to leave his chief minister’s post, he paid a bribe of seven thousand *mudrās* (coins). Hussein Shah was astonished to see this behaviour of Sanātān.

Nowadays, various Western countries become role models for us when it comes to wealth, national independence, enjoyment, increasing the scope of pleasure, etc., but what is the result of their national thriving and independence? We see hundreds and hundreds of examples—will we never get it? The German nation has long been considered one of the best nations based on the development of their science, trade, wealth,

nationalism, economics, politics, education and civilisation, but what is the result of their thriving? Do the past wars and subsequent historical development not prove it? If you notice that the politicians of this country shed streams of blood in the past, you may ask if the country in their present state can be considered amongst the civilised class? Even though the heroes of this country showed the nation some ray of false hope, history will show how successful the nation will become following that false ray of hope—but the eternal aversion to the Lord will devour the entire human race by its magic that is capable of accomplishing the impossible. For us to climb the highest peak of so-called national prosperity and civilisation would require either harnessing our waist with the ropes of warfare or resort to some artificial means like imposing a law of firearms regulation. The life of one human being is so valuable—for just one human to survive it is necessary to constantly destroy hundreds and hundred of lower forms of life, but when civilisation, science, politics, sociology or economics teach how to destroy thousands and thousands of human beings in one second, then what highest result can it bring other than destruction? When Śrī Pratāparudra came in touch with Mahāprabhu's real, genuine teachings of non-violence, he did not resort to destructive politics—instead, he helped the country, society and kingdom to truly prosper by engaging his political activities in the service to the lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanyadev. In fact, today Odisha owes its true prosperity to the influence of Śrī Chaitanyadev.

If people hear about Odisha now, they can become enlightened by the remembrance of Śrī Chaitanyadev. The true culture, education, literature, art, etc. of Odisha developed most of all with the focus on Śrī Chaitanyadev. Expelling religion strips Odisha, or any country in this world, off any value. Even the proficient Western architects are stunned by the genius artistic architecture of the temples of Liṅgarāj Bhuvaneśvar,

Ananta Vāsudev, Purī's Śrī Jagannāth *mandir*, etc. The Odia poet Govindadev and others increased the beauty of literature by taking the shelter of Śrī Chaitanyadev; even the *atibāḍī* poet Jagannath Dās entertained the Odias with his ingenious poetry—whoever he may be, but he got greatly excited by coming in touch with Śrī Chaitanyadev and His disciples, it is a fact that is accepted even by the historians. Intelligent people can understand how much the influence of Śrī Chaitanyadev and His followers purified the moral development of Odisha. There is no spiritual consideration in narrow-minded patriotism or nationalism. There were two and a half devotees who did private, intimate service of Śrī Chaitanyadev, which means that two and a half devotees of Śrī Rādhikā appeared in Puruṣottam Dhām. These two and a half devotees are Rāya Rāmānanda, Śikhi Māhiti and his sister Mādhavī Devī. The Bangladeshi Śrīla Puruṣottam Bhaṭṭāchārya also came to Nīlachal with Śrīman Mahāprabhu and became known as Mahāprabhu's second self, Dāmodar Svarūp. Actually, by the mercy of Śrī Chaitanyadev the highest discourses of the spiritual realm were preached from Odisha. At present, especially the members of prosperous and advanced nations do not get an opportunity to embark on the quest for the highest truth—Śrī Chaitanyadev, Himself and through His devotees, explored and led the entire world to explore this treasure trove of the supreme benefit.

Was Śrī Chaitanyadev the cause of the national downfall because He created an altar for the teachings that bring the highest benefit for Odisha? Does that mean that the national prosperity implies national destruction? Think about it. If Pratāparudra had not taken shelter at the lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanyadev, if Śrī Chaitanyadev had not come to Odisha, or if He had not made His appearance in this extremely unfortunate world among the human race, then, as the history before and after His appearance bears witness, none of the

former mighty kings' 'Golden Lañkas' (such as Vijayanagar lost by King Pratāparudra, for example) would have remained intact.

Many places were captured and transferred under the rule of Vijayanagar during the time of Kṛṣṇadevaraya's successor Achyuta Deva Ray, Ramaraja and others. After that, the Muslims defeated the Hindu in a battle of Telikot, killing Ramaraja and destroying Vijayanagar. All the marble palaces and mansions of Vijayanagar were demolished, and the Udayagiri¹ Hill of the prosperity(?) of the Hindu empire or nation turned into the Astachala² Hill. How long does the sun of glory shine in the sky?

The worldwide emperors like Ambharish Mahārāj, Pṛthu Mahārāj and others who took to religion; the holy temples of South India that embody the ingenuity of the spiritual art; the holy literature—*Vedas*, *Śruti*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*—that came into prominence; the creation of later literary works that explore the gems of the Gauḍīya literature focused on the holy lotus feet of Śrī Chaitanyadev; the discovery of various music instruments for *rāga-rāgiṇī* musical tradition focused on the spirituality—the conception that all these are the cause of national degradation befits only degraded people. Actually, devotees of the Lord do not renounce hundreds and hundreds of the produced luxury goods, perfumes, etc. exhibiting false renunciation and considering it unworthy of being seen or touched—rather, they use it as appropriate in the worship of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Those who are qualified to read Vaiṣṇava literature (*Govinda-līlāmṛta*, etc.) or those who are knowledgeable about the rules and regulations of service (*Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, etc.) collect and gather so many different luxury goods, ornamentation, valuable things, various flowers, garlands, etc. for the service of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.

¹ Udayagiri—(myth.) the hill behind which the sun rises.

² Astachala—(myth.) the hill behind which the sun sets.

The present day civilisation and education is associated with the so-called progress and prosperity that turn the *jīva* souls, collectively and individually, into enjoyers and soldiers set out on the adventure of destroying the nation, that fuels lust and material desires and that lures the *jīva* souls and throws them as an oblation into the sacrificial fire of the senses. Is this human sacrifice the *mantra* and the way to worship civilisation and progress?

With the conceptions of sincere spiritual traditions jumbled with the conceptions of sham religious traditions, with all these religious imposters filling our heads with their ideas of religion, we have become incapable of ascertaining the real truth. Unlike the fake religious traditions, those who are dedicated to spiritual life are not envious of the world and living souls, neither are they fond of souls' aversion to the Lord. Those who are dedicated to spiritual life do not feel animosity towards the exploits of science—rather, instead of using dynamite to clear the path for the human race to enjoy, Hari-kathā and *kīrtan* can be used to move the mountains and hills that stand like obstacles on the path of service to the Lord; instead of using an aeroplane to help kill living beings in a war for enjoyment, it can be used for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Ultimately, only the religion of the soul is capable of turning the face of despotic progress that destroys the nation and bestowing loving devotion to the Lord, spreading thus auspiciousness amongst all living entities. If we read historical accounts, we can see first-hand that in this world the benefit of materialistic conception of the life automatically entails material prosperity of the nation, but this inextinguishable 'submarine (*vāḍava*) fire' of enjoyment and renunciation leads not only to the downfall of the nation but also to its destruction.

Householders and Renunciates

Those who do not possess single-minded dedication to the service of the Lord always waste time debating who should be called a ‘householder’ (*gṛhī*) and who a ‘renunciate’ (*tyāgī*). “Who is greater, a householder or a renunciate?”—this designation argument possesses the hearts of people who have strayed from the service of the Lord. Whatever group one belongs to, whatever designation, or name, one hides behind, one will think that this group or designation is the ‘best’ and will want to prove that. Such designation fanaticism is fertile soil for mutual apathy, dissension, envy, hatred and, eventually, many other effects.

For the *sampradāyas* that promote pursuit of material desires, fruitive activities, knowledge, *yoga*, vows, penance, etc. this dispute is natural. There are also many various stories on this matter in the history. Once, there was this argument (“Who is greater, a householder or a renunciate?”) among the disciples of an impersonalist preacher, and the argument ended with bloodshed. There are so many other similar infamous incidents about this—if it was to be openly published at the present time in the newspapers, people would try to denounce it as libel, therefore we shall abstain from mentioning any names.

One false renunciates’ *sampradāya* and one pleasure-seeking householders’ *sampradāya* decided to mark on a board the qualities of renunciates and householders. It turned out that the householders devoted to the service of the Lord and the *sannyāsīs* serving the Lord without any attachment to material things are completely different. We hear also that one revered materialist said, “No matter how much you wash a bowl where garlic has

been kept, the smell will not go away—in the same way if a man even once regresses and goes back to live with his lawful wife, no matter how saintly he may become, the stench of his regress will never leave him.” This man also advised, “A *sannyāsi* is the one who has never once regressed and who is infallible and unblemished like a pure-blooded person born into a noble caste. Just as when you pop popcorn, all the seeds spatter and open exposing the unblemished insides; and the seeds that do not pop get stained—in the same way, no matter how chaste or devoted the householders may be, they in one way or another get ‘reddish’ stains, but *sannyāsīs* never get stained.”

While these people swear to be all-accommodating(?) and non-sectarian(?), one can find such statements in their preaching quite narrow-minded. It is among those who do not accept that the soul is eternal and imagine that the mind and the body are the instruments of the service to the Lord that this argument about designations can be found. The truth is that the soul is neither an enjoyer nor a householder—neither is it a denouncer of enjoyment or a renunciate. Souls, practitioners of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, may wear the dress of a householder, a renunciate or belong to any other designation. It is for the authors of the scriptures to decide who has the right to compare the extent to which one’s soul is awakened. One cannot tell whose true identity is big and whose is small just by looking at the clothes. That is why Śrī Chaitanyadev explained that neither a householder, nor a renunciate, nor any other cover is the real self of a practitioner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

nāhaṁ vipro na cha nara-patir nāpi vaiśyo na śūdro
nāhaṁ varṇī na cha gṛha-patir no vanastho yatir vā
kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda-pūrnāmṛtābdher
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāśaḥ

“I am not a brahman, I am not a ksatriya, I am not a vaiśya or a sudra. Nor am I a brahmachari, a householder, a vanaprastha or

a sannyasi. I identify Myself only as the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the gopīs. He is an ocean of nectar, and He is the cause of universal transcendental bliss. He is always existing with brilliance."

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, 2.13.80)

We must be cautious so that the flow of averse mundane thinking does not enter through the door of the temple of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The householders' party and the renunciates' party come from the desire for money, women, and name and fame. We must not allow this party spirit of false *sāmpradāyas* come anywhere near the temple of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So-called householders think, "I have become the master of all my hard-earned wealth, of women, and of name and fame! *Sannyāsīs* come to my door to beg—they depend on me, and I am their maintainer, I supply their lodging, food and clothing! If it was not for me (or us, the householders), there would be no *sannyāsīs* in this world! I/we keep them alive! We will not tolerate that they must get more fame than us, the wealthy people. Instead of extolling us as their benefactors, they call us 'people attached to their house, wife, son, etc.'—there is no way we will tolerate that!"

When, under the influence of material nature, we become infatuated by ego and proudly consider ourselves to be the masters of all we survey, then one party starts pitying the other drawing the demarcation line between the parties; this can affect the householders' party or the renunciates' party, and whichever party is affected, it starts criticising the other.

The so-called renunciates who are overcome with material desires may feel unhappy with householders thinking, "We have renounced our wives, sons, family life, etc., and these householders crave for this hellish life. We are honey bees, and they are worms in stool. We advise them about their benefit,

therefore we deserve more respect than they do.” As long as there is this distinction between the two parties, both parties will try to prove, swearing by the scriptures, that their party is the best. Householders say that because they support the three different orders of life they are the best; renunciates say that the Lord compares the *sannyās* order of life to His own head, therefore their order of life is the highest.

There is also another class of people who make this dispute between the two parties even more complicated—they say, “Nowadays householders and renunciates are two of a kind. Rather, it is better to be a householder. Compared to householders, renunciates are secret sinners. Householders enjoy openly, and renunciates enjoy secretly. At least householders take a legal wife and can get some pious merit, but renunciates secretly behave in a wrong way—full of deceit, they are lower than animals.” That class of people tries to daze the householders’ and the renunciates’ parties by all this verbosity, but this mutual animosity is like a dormant fire that is only increasing within.

The teachers of sincere spiritual teachings do not approve of any of these designation fights and arguments. The great souls who preach the sublime and all-accommodating teachings of Śrī Chaitanyadev say,

**mahāprabhura bhaktagaṇera vairāgya pradhāna
yāhā dekhi tuṣṭa hana gaura bhagavāna**

“Renunciation is the main principle in the lives of the devotees of Mahāprabhu. Śrī Chaitanyadev, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is pleased to see their renunciation.”

If we consider the opinion of the devotees surrendered exclusively to Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, we will get a great benefit. There is no reason for householders to be unhappy about that. If one becomes apathetic towards pursuit of fame or individual benefit, this smoking fire of dissatisfaction scorches their heart. The welfare materialists’ pursue is not something that sincere

devotes would not accept. **Service to Kṛṣṇa and being a master of one's home are two opposite things.** The difference between the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* and those who aspire for spiritual benefit following the footsteps of Śrī Chaitanya is that they do not encourage mundane householders in their attachment to their homes. The people who call themselves renunciates may encourage materialistic householders in their attachment, and nobody will challenge the saintliness of all these impostor renunciates! Actually, if such householders can help renunciates maintain their life by providing them with food and clothes, then they will become even more engrossed in their attachment. Great souls note that calling 'attachment to home' service to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's servitors is cheating.

Many may not be able to grasp the meaning of several teachings of *nityalīlā-praviṣṭa* Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura that we present below, so we will try to expound on the meaning of these transcendental teachings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinod through the little we have had an opportunity to hear at the lotus feet of our spiritual master. It is with the hope that the lotus feet of our Divine Master will overlook our mistakes and correct them that we commence to discuss this matter.

Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura wrote in the seventh chapter of his *Jaiva-dharma*:

1) In Kali-yuga, one should be a *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇava. One must not be afraid to fall down—it is possible to have a complete and flourishing devotion. There are many transcendental *gurus* among *gṛhastha* Vaiṣṇavs.

2) Some of the *gṛhastha* devotees are qualified to become *gṛhastyāgi* Vaiṣṇavs (devotees who give up their home). Their number in this world is very small, and it is very difficult to get their association.

3) Vrajanāth asks old Bābājī Mahāśaya in the seventeenth chapter of *Jaiva-dharma*, "If we call one a Vaiṣṇava, does it mean

that he is a '*gr̥ha-tyāgī*' (renounced) Vaiṣṇav?" Bābājī Mahāśay replied, "A Vaiṣṇav is a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, be it a *gr̥hastha* or a *gr̥ha-tyāgī*, a *brāhmaṇ* or a *chaṇḍal* (meat-eater), a rich man or a poor man. The extent to which one has devotion to Kṛṣṇa is the extent to which one is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa."

4) Old Bābājī Mahāśay said again in the twenty-second chapter of *Jaiva-dharma* that as long as one does not get the qualification, or right, to renounce their home (to become a *gr̥ha-tyāgī*), one must serve Kṛṣṇa as a *gr̥hastha*. The pastimes Mahāprabhu performed during His first twenty-four years are an example for *gr̥hastha* Vaiṣṇavs, and the pastimes He performed during His last twenty-four years are an example for *gr̥ha-tyāgī* Vaiṣṇavs. So, we do not think that one cannot attain the highest love for Kṛṣṇa while being a *gr̥hastha*: most of the recipients of Mahāprabhu's mercy are *gr̥hasthas*, and *gr̥ha-tyāgī* Vaiṣṇavs pray for the feet dust of such *gr̥hasthas*.

Hearing all these instructions of Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura, many materialist householders were ready to get signed up as eternal slaves in the religion's ledger. If one can achieve the acme of perfection while carrying on enjoying, what intelligent person will then want to give up this kind of practice where you can have your bread buttered on both sides?

The followers of concocted religions resulting from national sentimentalism as well as covetous materialists mix together enjoyment, renunciation and spiritual practice; this doctrine of *prākṛta-sahajiyās* presented in the disguise of spiritual search has been going on in this world since time immemorial. In fact, such views are distorted reflections of the teachings of great souls in the mirror of sense gratification. To save us from this danger, our spiritual masters explain the distinction between the two terms, '*gr̥ha-vrata*' and '*gr̥hastha*'. **Real *gr̥hasthas* (householders) are not devoted to their homes—they are devoted to Kṛṣṇa. Real *sannyāsīs* are those who do not renounce Kṛṣṇa and *kāṣṇa***

(servant of Kṛṣṇa)—they live as members of Kṛṣṇa’s family, or they are attached to the house of the Lord and His devotees. There is no difference between the essence of Vaiṣṇava *gr̥hasthas* and Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsīs*.

Those who are attached to their homes are already fallen souls, they are always within the slippery waterfall of spiritual failure, so there is no fear of falling down—this is not what Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur says, and it is confirmed by the following words. *Gr̥hastha* devotees have the qualification to become *gr̥ha-tyāgī* Vaiṣṇavs (i.e. to renounce their home). According to Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s teachings, the goal of spiritual practice is to become internally initiated into the *mādhukarī* vow (living on minimal alms) and accept a *kaupīn* (simple loincloth). Everyone will have to accept such spiritual practice one day or another. The purpose of mendicant life is not what false *māyāvādī* renunciates say (*kaupīnavantaḥ khalu bhāgyavantaḥ*—one must accept the renounced order very seriously, wearing nothing but a loincloth); neither does *mādhukarī* mean begging to satisfy the urge of your stomach. According to the Gauḍīya teachings, accepting a *kaupīn* means **service to Śrī Svarūp and Śrī Rūpa, who are followers of gopīs or self-realised, i.e. have completely given up the ego of an enjoyer or a male, their only ego is that they are maidservants of gopīs**; and *mādhukarī* means that those who are engaged in search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa in separation, or the highest service mood, do not search for things to satisfy their stomachs.

Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur advises both *gr̥hasthas* and *gr̥ha-tyāgīs* to follow Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s example. He explains that even if householders (*gr̥hastha*) maintain their family life following Mahāprabhu’s example (not imitating Mahāprabhu), they should follow the later pastimes of Mahāprabhu in order to become detached and free from any material desires. Mahāprabhu did not tell to always live at home; neither did He show this in His own life. Although Rāya Rāmānanda was

an eternally liberated associate of Mahāprabhu, he also showed the pastime of leaving his material life to continually stay with Mahāprabhu. Such devotees never went back to their previous life, neither did Mahāprabhu encourage them to get married. That is why He prohibited Śrīla Raghunāth Bhaṭṭa Goswāmī to take any gifts also. Moreover, when materialists excitedly take up spiritual life, they become eager to practise false renunciation for the sake of name and fame—to prevent that and set the example, Mahāprabhu showed the example of His own eternally liberated associate Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī. He first advised him, “Do not show your false renunciation to impress people. Serve accepting material things but without attachment”, etc.—but a few days after that, Mahāprabhu revealed the highest example of transcendental renunciation when Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī performed the pastime of completely leaving his home.

Thinking that there is no fear of falling down in the *gṛhastha* life, and letting the fire of married-life sacrifice go ablaze is not an example of spiritual life; or if one lives in his house and on the pretence of being a member of Kṛṣṇa’s family creates(?) servants and maidservants for Kṛṣṇa—such *prākṛta-sahajiyā* hypocrisy will never lead to spiritual benefit. What did Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur show in his own life? Although he is an eternally liberated associate of Gaura, in his later pastimes he manifested the pastime of accepting *kaupīn*—through that one can get some idea about his hidden inner desire and the meaning of his guidance.

Gṛha-vrata prākṛta-sahajiyās (householder imitators attached to their homes) strive to get you to worship them using renunciates. If the *gṛha-vratas* (householders attached to their homes) can get others to serve them, worship them, praise them, wash their feet, etc. using renounced people, then they get a chance to establish their besotted householder religion at an ever higher level. Therefore, among the *gṛha-vratas*, there is a class of people that take the garb of *pramahānīsas* (they call themselves

bābājī and accept all the attributes like *kaupīn*, etc.) and always engage others to do everything—to carry things, make *pān* (betel nut preparation), bring water, prepare oil, etc.; they even engage their wives, children and other family members in all sorts of works. These so-called fake *paramahāṇṣas* (nowadays they are known as *kaupīna-dhārī bābājīs*) pay full obeisances to materialists and seeks their blessings, etc. Sometimes they also become very merciful and greet high-class people. We must watch out that we may not resort to deception to make permanent settlement with this religion of materialist householders; we must watch out so that out of ego of a renouncer we may not become involved into competition with such materialist householders.

Although a Vaiṣṇav may wear the cloth of a renunciate (*gr̥hatyāgī*) or a householder (*gr̥hastha*), Ṭhākur Bhaktivinod did not teach that one should be a *gr̥ha-vrata* (householder attached to the house) or a false renunciate. He explained that the extent to which one has pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa is the extent to which one is a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Here it is worth noting the phrase ‘pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa’. Having no pure devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa but being anxious to obtain the respect of being either a householder or a renunciate, which Vaiṣṇavs consider undesirable, is a certain symptom of a non-devotee (*avaiṣṇav*). Ṭhākur Bhaktivinod says (here and in many other quotes),

āmi ta’ vaiṣṇava e buddhi haile
 amānī’ nā ha’ba āmi
 pratiṣṭhāśā āsi hṛdaya duṣibe
 haiba niraya-gāmī

Just as in the case of *karma-jaḍa-smārtas* who cannot give up discrimination based on the caste of Vaiṣṇavs, if we classify Vaiṣṇavs according to the caste(?) of householders and renunciates, then we will only prove that we are second-rate materialists. That is why Ṭhākur Mahāśay (Śrīla Narottam Dās Ṭhākur), who performed the pastimes of a renunciate and a life-long *brahmachārī*, says:

gṛhe vā vanete thāke, hā gaurāṅga ba'le ḍāke
narottama māge tāra saṅga

Whoever cries out, “O Gaurāṅga!” means whoever chants the Holy Names of the Lord being situated in the consciousness of their pure and uncovered self—there is no difference whether it is a *gṛhastha* or a *vanaprastha*. One may consider that a householder is a person in relation with a woman, but Ṭhākura Mahāśaya had no desire for any association with women. When it comes to practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness, whether one lives in a house and a forest, it is the same. If one tries to be more partial to the house on pretext of this consideration, i.e. if one is partial to the attachment to hearth and home and tries to disguise it on pretext of devotion, then this is sheer hypocrisy.

Some people like to look for faults in *sannyāsīs*, and knowing many examples of people who reap the result of their *karma* and fall down from *sannyās*, they remain basic householders considering that they are safe. This is just a sign of very strong illusion and attachment to the material world—there is a class of atheists who, seeing that spiritual practise involves many kinds of trials and tribulations, consider it best to be an atheist. So-called *brāhmacārīs* (impersonalists) say that even though householders' attachment to their homes and families transgresses the principles of ethics, it is not necessary to abandon the householder order of life. Followers of this doctrine even think that when Mahāprabhu showed the pastime of leaving His family, He strayed from the moral obligation to serve one's lawful wife! This kind of example is given when one is very attached to the material world and does not have sufficient desire to serve the Lord, so people cover their love for an easy life and enjoyment with the screen of ethics. When we pretend to hear the instructions of great souls exclusively dedicated to spiritual life and in the meantime always look for faults in *sannyāsīs*—when we become absolutely free from material attachment and try to diminish the highest

goal of bringing full satisfaction to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru—i.e. when people who are not able to understand the true meaning of renunciation sway from the path of renunciation (we can refer also to the calamitous examples of Chhoṭa Haridās, Kālā Kṛṣṇa Dās; and also that of Bharatchandra Ray Gunakor who accepted mendicant life in his former life but later became inspired by various ideals and fell down, afflicted by mundane thoughts)—and when we can see in various scriptures, books and so many instances from the present day when people stray from *sannyās* or temporary renunciation—with all this vast experience, if someone is situated amidst an inferior (material) family and is not drawn to the ideal of giving up enjoyment out of love for Kṛṣṇa and indifference toward the mundane, they think that the best thing to do is to ‘divorce’. Perhaps, it is for this reason that *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.11.3) said:

na tasya tattva-grahaṇāya sākṣād
 varīyasīr api vāchaḥ samāśan
 svapne niruktyā gṛhamedhi-saukhyam
 na yasya heyānumitaṁ svayaṁ syāt

Purport: We naturally know that a dream shows false and illusory enjoyment, but if we do not feel that the happiness of materialist householders is insignificant, then no amount of Vedas, albeit the best source of transcendental knowledge, is sufficient. It means that if someone is intent on being a materialist householder, then pure (free from material desires) conception of service to the Lord will never enter their ears. Such people make an offence to the lotus feet of the true *sannyās dharma* and become attached to the *dharma* of materialist householders—it is a befitting reward for them.

As for how one can practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness living in one’s own house and following the religion of the *Bhāgatavam*, we hear the following advice:

yaḥ ṣaṭ sapatnān vijigīśasamāṇo gaheṣu nirviśya yateta pūrvam
atyeti durgāśrita ūrjitārīn kṣīṇeṣu kāmān vichared vipaśchat

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 5.1.18)

Purport: If you want to conquer the six enemies (five senses and the mind), first you must try to stay within *gṛhastha-āśram*. Just as when you defeat your enemies you stroll at ease in your fortress or any other place, in the same way an intelligent person who conquers the six enemies will be able to freely ‘stroll’ in his house or any other place—when you first of all take shelter of your fortress, you can defeat very strong enemies.

In fact, the house is like a fortress which you can use to fight against the six enemies, but if you cannot make your house a fortress, if you instead make your house a dwelling place of your enemies, then what to speak of having some place to fight against your external enemies—before advancing in the battle you must first win the place occupied by the enemies within your house. The problem is that we turn almost 100% of the place in the house into a place for enjoyment. How many of us are householders who have a sincere and exclusive attachment to the service of Kṛṣṇa and who, having won the battle against the six enemies, engage them now in the service of the Lord? Suppose someone has this character and intelligence in their heart, but can they retain this purpose once they fall into the wheel of material existence?

After the relief resulting from the aforementioned *śloka* from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the *śloka* that follows it (5.1.19) teaches people showing the example of how Priyavrata stayed in the *gṛhastha-āśram*:

tvaṁ tv abja-nābhāṅghri-saroja-kośa-
durgāśrito nirjita-ṣaṭ-sapatnaḥ
bhuṅkṣveha bhogān puruṣātidiṣṭān
vimukta-saṅgaḥ prakṛtiṁ bhajasva

Purport: O Priyavrata! You have taken shelter within the fortress of the holy lotus feet of Śrī Nārāyaṇ and did your best to defeat the six enemies (the five senses and the mind), so now that you live as a householder, you must serve the Lord with whatever surplus you have from the things given to you by the Lord. Worship the Lord in this way, and after that you can give up the association of your children and wife and go to live in a forest.

Bhāgavatam says that *dharma* (religion) is when one becomes qualified to follow the instruction “*yathā-yogya viṣaya-bhuñja*” (maintain your property for the service; accept material things as required for service) within the *gṛhastha āśram*. Those who can turn their house into abode of the holy lotus feet of Lord Nārāyaṇ can defeat the six enemies—therefore, it is necessary to first have the right to practise proper renunciation before entering the life of a householder. *Bhāgavatam* advises to worship the Supreme Lord having conquered the senses, like Priyavrata did, and only after that to completely leave the association of your wife, sons, et al. and live in a forest.

Śrī Nārād advised Yudhiṣṭhir Mahārāj on the religious duties of a householder in the eighteenth chapter of the seventh canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. A householder devotee must not be taught to become a basic materialist householder (attached to his hearth and home). One lives in a house to be inspired to eventually learn how to leave attachment to the house, body, wife, sons, etc. and become a devotee, free from material attachments. Men enter into a relationship with their lawful wives within marriage in order to reduce and eventually uproot the desire for such relationship—not to increase their attachment to female association. Householder life is not meant to be permanent—its purpose is to give a favourable ground for practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness and for giving up attachment to the house, etc.

śṛṇvan bhagavato 'bhīkṣṇam avatāra-kathāmṛtam
śraddadhāno yathā-kālam upaśānta-jaṇāvṛtaḥ

**sat-saṅgāch chhanakaiḥ saṅgam ātma-jāyātmajādiṣu
vimuñchen muchyamāneṣu svayaṁ svapnavad utthitaḥ**

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 7.14.3-4)

Purport: The householders who spend each day surrounded by the devotees of the Lord and always listen with faith to the nectarean discourses about the incarnations of the Lord in the good association must gradually give up attachment to their bodies, wives, sons, etc. just as when a man gradually wakes up from a dream, the dream is naturally severed.

**yāvad bhriyeta jaṭharam tāvāt svatvaṁ hi dehinām
adhikaṁ yo 'bhimanyeta sa steno daṇḍam arhati**

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 7.14.8)

Purport: A householder is entitled to accept as much money, etc. as it is necessary to just stop hunger. Those who want to take more than that are thieves and deserve to be punished.

apy ekām ātmano dārām nṛśāṁ svatva-graho yataḥ

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 7.14.11)

Purport: Instead of using his beloved one and only wife for his own service, a householder should rather utilise her for the service of guests.

**jahyād yad-arthe svān prāṇān hanyād vā pitaram gurum
tasyāṁ svatvaṁ striyāṁ jahyād yas tena hy ajito jitaḥ**

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 7.14.12)

Purport: If a man gives up possessiveness over his wife for whose sake he kills himself, his father and his *guru*, he can conquer the unconquerable Supreme Lord.

**kṛmi-vid-bhasma-niṣṭhāntaṁ vedaṁ tuchchhaṁ kalevaram
kva tadīya-ratir bhāryā kvāyam ātmā nabhaś-chhadiḥ**

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 7.14.13)

Purport: Where will this trifle body go when all that remains from it is worms, stool and ashes? And where will the wife

go whom one is so besotted with? And where will the soul renowned as all-pervading be?

Did Devarṣi Nārada tell householder devotees to become more attached to their household duties, or did he explain the qualities and qualification a householder must have in order to leave attachment to his householder religion?

We often, arrogant inside and outside, under pretence of humility, call ourselves ‘gr̥ha-medhī’ (a householder engrossed in the affairs of the household), ‘gr̥ha-vrata’ (a householder attached to his home), but in fact and in practice we have gr̥ha-āśakti (attachment to our home) established as a worshippable deity at the innermost bottom of our hearts. Such external humility is just a hidden weapon to realise one’s envy or anger towards the renunciates. One’s attachment to the house only increases through such deceitful humility, and one does not get entrance into the religion of *Bhāgavatam* by getting relief from the grasp of that attachment. At the same time, if we become proud of being a renunciate and think that even a householder devoted to practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness is just a gr̥ha-vrata (materialistic householder), or we imagine that even if a gr̥hastha devotee is engaged in service to the Lord, because we do more service being a ‘renunciate’ we are greater in comparison with them—the moment this mentality arises in us (as soon as we start posing as greater or consider ourselves a *sannyāsī* or a *tyāgī*, we try to establish the practising *sannyāsīs*[]) in the vindictive and competitive chamber of superiority and diminish the value of practising householders[?])—we immediately stray from the true *sannyās-dharma*. As soon as I step into the world of envy thinking, “I am greater,” I am immediately transferred far away from the proximity to the true religion of *Bhāgavatam*. If householders, understanding that renunciates look down upon them, become proud and get involved in the animosity and competition, they will only

increase their attachment to the material world, taking to a slippery road.

Watch out! There is no place for the designation party spirit in the temple of spiritual life. Cheap, non-devotional views are not allowed anywhere in the heart of a devotee of the Lord.

The author of *Śrī Prema-vivarta* says (17.22, 17, 48):

**gr̥hī hauka, tyāgī hauka, bhakte bheda nāi
bhakte bheda haile kumbhīpāka narakete yāi**

“There is no difference between devotees—be they householders or renunciates. If someone makes distinctions between them, they go to the hell of boiling oil.”

**gr̥hastha vaiṣṇava sadā nāmāparādha rākhi’ dūre
ānukūlya laya, prātikūlya tyāga kare**

“Householder devotees always avoid offences to the Name, accept the favourable, and reject the unfavourable.

**samsārera gotra tyaji’ kṛṣṇa-gotra bhaje
sei nitya gotra tāra, sei vaise vraje**

“They give up their worldly families and serve Kṛṣṇa’s family. Those who reside in Vraja are part of that eternal family.

Śrīla Vṛndāvan Ṭhākura also says:

**“śikhā-sūtra ghuchāile-i se kṛṣṇa pāi
gr̥hastha tomāra mate vaiṣṇava ki nāi?”**

[Gadādhara Paṇḍita to Mahāprabhu] “You say one gets Kṛṣṇa by keeping a śikhā and having a sacred brāhmaṇ thread, but is a householder like You not a Vaiṣṇava?”

(Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata, 2.26.172)

gr̥hastha haiyā dhare rahuka nimāni

“Let Nimāni stay at home as a householder.”

(Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata, 1.8.94)

Seeing these and other statements, many of us try to imitate householder devotees desiring to enjoy material things. Both devotion to one’s home and devotion to renunciation is actually

aversion to Kṛṣṇa—such a concocted religion is typical for the souls who have strayed from the path of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. However, when one is inclined to the service of Kṛṣṇa’s house, their nature is like this,

gṛhe āile-o gṛha-vyābhāra nā kare
nirabadhi thāke viṣṇu-gṛhera bhitare

“Even if you stay in a house, do not use the house—always stay there as in the house of the Lord.”

(Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata, 1.7.69)

Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Gaura Kīśor Dās Goswāmī Mahārāj advised married people: ** Babu has got married, it is good. Now he can himself cook an offering for the Lord every day and having offered it to the Lord, serve *prasād* to his pious wife seeing her as a Vaiṣṇav, and after she takes *prasād*, he can take it himself. Instead of thinking of her as an object of enjoyment, he must think that he can serve her in various ways always thinking about his *guru*—in this way he can get spiritual benefit. This entire world—all wealth, jewels, women, men of this world—is meant only for Kṛṣṇa’s enjoyment. He must use Kṛṣṇa’s property for the service of Kṛṣṇa—likewise, he must not see his wife as his maidservant; rather, he must respect her as a maidservant of Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore it is not easy to be a householder devotee; rather, it entails many more duties and difficulties than in the *sannyās* order of life. In essence, there is no difference between ideal householder life and ideal *sannyās* life. Ideal householder practice is *pāramahansa* practice. Great devotees such as Janaka, Pṛthu and Parikṣit are examples of this *pāramahansa dharma*. If a common soul does not become established in the highest designation of the ideal from the beginning, it downplays the ideal and starts the debates. This is unfavourable for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.



Provincialism and Service to the Lord

There are innumerable kinds of thorns and traps in the domain of service to the Lord. One of them is provincialism [putting one's own provincial interests above the interest of the whole]. There are many mundane pious programmes organised with a provincial interest, and many become attacked by this mentality during devotional programmes as well. In fact, when one becomes overcast by this mentality, it creates an obstacle for devotional programmes. If one makes a show of trying to make something that externally looks like a devotional programme, then it is just one of the activities meant for enjoying its result.

When people, bound by provincial or national mentality, display enthusiasm and readiness for devotional(?) activities, they actually have no eagerness for service to, or love for, the Lord and Vaiṣṇavs—they are more or less just beggars for sense gratification or selfish opportunism. Provincialists and nationalists who are engaged in either pious or inauspicious activities call it 'love for one's country' and 'love for one's nation' and are highly esteemed by the society; but such mundane love(?) is considered and censured as 'lust' (*kāma*) and has no place whatsoever in the domain of loving devotion.

When provincialists put on a show of making a devotional programme, they look at the country, society, nation of the people from their former (non-devotional) life and think that they are dependent(?) on their mercy, easily and very firmly enthroning the concern about the benefit(?) of the non-devotee society and country in their hearts. They personally speak Hari-kathā, chant *kīrtans*, or, with even greater enthusiasm, arrange for others to

speak Hari-kathā while they themselves get very busy ardently performing all kinds of other services (welcoming, serving guests, etc.)—but very often sincere *sādhus* (indifferent to the material world), for the fear that others will give them a side-eye, become a little restrained, but, no matter how hard they try, their internal, heart-felt passion cannot cover up for the love of non-devotees towards their country, friends, and family. How long can those who feel a natural surge and inspiration deep in their hearts hide themselves under the cover of such external hesitation?

Sometimes people also see someone from their province or country and, identifying themselves with their group, or introducing themselves as a representative or a leader from that group, they act as if they are very enthusiastic to arrange various devotional(?) programmes supporting service to the Lord, (*Harinām saṅkīrtan*, circumambulation of the holy *dhām*, staying in the holy *dhām*, listening to Hari-kathā, etc.). However, when such people do not identify themselves with that particular group, they have no enthusiasm to do all this, neither do they want to get involved in any way.

Sometimes people also think that if somebody wants to build a house for the Lord or some temple in their area or country, they are ready to give support or show sympathy; but if somebody wants to build a temple, etc. or preach in another district, then their compassion diminishes, often coming to a complete halt, or even turns into envy or animosity. For example, no Indian or Bengali will agree to help you financially if you want to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness or build a temple in London or Germany. The West or North Bengalis will help you financially to build a temple or preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in East Bengal (Bangladesh), but the East Bengalis (Bangladeshi) do not want to help preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West and North Bengal.

Some people are even more narrow-minded—so much so that they say that if you do not build a temple in our area, if

you do not preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in our area, we will not support or help you in any way. There are even people who for the sake of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness(?) first help a lot, and when they hear that there will be another temple in the area half a mile away from them, you will get no help from them for that temple! Such people think rationally, “If we have a temple in our area, our housewives can go there to have the *darśan* of the Deity on foot, but if they propose to make a temple a little far, then our beloved wives will feel deprived of such an opportunity. So, we cannot help or support such temple construction in any way.” Such rational thinking proves that the enthusiasm, the eagerness one feels at first is not out of love for transcendental Lord Kṛṣṇa or His devotees—it is for satisfying one’s own senses, for seeking an opportunity to enjoy or secure commodity for enjoyment. Such pretence of service to the Lord is nothing more than an external screen. Internally, they are trying to fulfil their own purpose (religion, wealth, material aspirations, liberation) or find mundane happiness with the help of the Lord and His transcendental devotees.

Many people put on such a show to come in the proximity of the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*. When it comes to using the money from their locality for the service at the temple of another locality, they take the opposite side and stand still showing their ethical and impartial (detached) side. They show no support for the preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in other areas. Moreover, if another locality is more attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or there is much more preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in another locality, people pull back! The reason why it is important to analyse this mentality is because in this mentality, the eagerness to enjoy is stronger than the enthusiasm for service. Spiritual benefactors always pray for the mercy of the *guru*, Vaiṣṇavs and the Lord so that they may leave this mentality; they constantly and sincerely cry to the *guru* and Vaiṣṇavs so

that pure consciousness may awaken within them, filled with the causeless, unconditional desire to satisfy the desires of Lord Kṛṣṇa—they do not pray for any service performed out of provincial self-interest. Even though love for one's country or one's nation may be the highest moralist teaching in the world of selfish undertaking, no matter how highly it is esteemed by the mundane non-devotees, this mentality is contrary to the love of Godhead. The acute deficiency of love of Godhead and love (attachment) for one's body, house, etc.—these obstacles possess the hearts of both materialists and practitioners.

Provincialism is not kindness to the *jīva* souls. 'Mercy to the *jīva* soul' has nothing to do with the country, time, nation, or the person. There is no pursuit of self-interest in mercy to the *jīva* souls. There must be no attachment to mundane objects (one's own body, house, country, society, etc.). Only those who are initiated into the propensity of the consciousness focused on pleasing the Lord can be inspired to extend kindness to the souls. Attachment to one's house in disguise of nobility stands on the stage of the world in the form of a Mohinī-mūrti of provincialism—sometimes it also wears a long piece of cloth (worn on one's neck, similar to a scarf) with the name of religion printed all over it and flashes it in front of all common people; but spiritual experts have caught up with this deceit and cheating. Practitioners must be careful about this.

There are two dangers in the practising life—fostering anger towards provincialism or, on the contrary, attachment to it. It is not a duty of the intelligent people who practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness to become vindictive towards any particular province, be it your own or others'. We must leave all designative ideas and become eager to engage in the service of the Lord without hypocrisy and tendency to cheat ourselves or others but with a clean consciousness, free from offences; we must worship the instruction coming from the holy lotus feet of our Divine Master in each and every province; preach the name of Śrī Guru

and Gaurāṅga everywhere; we must dedicate everything—our life, wealth, knowledge, intelligence, speech, all ‘place, time and person’—in selfless assistance to the service of the Lord. If devotees can preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness or build a temple of the Lord in America using the money of Bengalis(?), it will be service to the Lord; and if devotees can build a place for the devotees of the Lord to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness in some area in Bengal using American money, or if devotees preach the translation of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in Bengali, then more people can know about the Supreme Lord—in this way, the Lord will be satisfied. We must engage in the service of the Lord, inspired and encouraged by this ideal. East Bengalis (Bangladeshi) are not the owners of wealth, neither are Americans, nor are Indians—the king of this world is not the owner of wealth, neither are his subjects. People are only entrusted with some particular amount of money. The exclusive owner of all wealth, all knowledge, all living entities is the Supreme Lord, and He can be found in this material world only in the form of the transcendental sound. He appears in this world in the form of a Deity and the transcendental Name. Wherever there is service to this Holy Name, wherever there is love for Śrī Harinām Prabhu, wherever, be it abroad or in this country, the Name of Śrī Chaitanya is remembered—every country’s, every province’s, every nation’s wealth, knowledge, intelligence, living entities must be utilised. We must not prevent the world from having the consciousness that ‘everything belongs to Him’ (*īśāvāsya*) by drawing the curtain of provincialism over service consciousness. Beware!

Many provincialists will not hear anything about the eternal spiritual religion save and except if it is the religion of one’s country, nation, bodily heritage. If one possesses this mentality, then, even if they pretend to listen about the exclusive and genuine religion of the soul, they will neither allow it to enter their ears, nor will they be able to judge about it with an unbiased mind within their

hearts. This mentality, as well as fanaticism in the name of faith in the common and ancestral religion, love for the nationalist or patriotic religion is actually defined as apathy towards the benefit of the soul. “Our family line are *śāktas*,” “Our society or nation are Śivaite,” “Our province’s religion is Buddhism” or we accept whatever other concocted religion, worshipping our ancestors, five deities (*pañcōpāsana*, *māyāvādī* conception), etc. so-called Vaiṣṇavism, or *prākṛta-sahajiyā*. Therefore, just as people stick to drinking hard water from a well just because their father had dug it (*tātasya kūpaḥ*), we also follow various concocted religions lending our faith to family, nation, society or country. Sincere seekers and spiritual benefactors never follow such ideas. If just because Christianity is preached in Europe; Buddhism is preached in various places on the Asian continent; *māyāvād*, *karma-jāda-smārtism*, worship of ghosts, *sahajiyāism*, *ātibāḍī*, etc. are preached in India—if people from all those places, inspired by the love for their own nation, try to excommunicate the non-deceitful non-dual eternal religion of the soul, who will they be cheating then?

“I was born in Odisha, so I must support the *atibāḍī* doctrine. I was born in Bengal, so I must flatter the *sahajiyās*. The society of Raja Ram Mohan Roy has increased, so it is necessary to establish it in any possible way. Or because I was born in Europe, if there is anything other, higher and more nourishing, than Christianity, I will not care to listen to it,”—this resolute promise has nothing to do with the search for the truth or the love for the truth. If one, under pretence of searching for the truth or love for the truth, tries to measure the religion of the soul through their sense perception to see whether some other type of provincialism arises or not—this is also not search for the truth.

Trying to measure the eternal benedictine religion of the soul under the cover of searching for the truth, Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s expedition to Tibet and his discussions about Indian and foreign religions are nothing but a form of provincialism. Mundane

thinking, or worldly thinking, is the mother of provincialism. There is one preacher of a concocted religion who saw once a mouse stealing ghee wicks from the room where Śiva-linga was. Seeing it, he reasoned, "Will the Lord who is not able to protect the paraphernalia that is to be offered to Him be able to protect anyone else?" It was, perhaps, under the influence of such thoughts that he actually left his own provincial religion and pretended to search for the truth, but in fact he did not reject provincialism because what he accepted later on, with even more faith and determination, proved to be the same provincialism but in another form. Because he had provincial eyes he could not understand that what he saw was mundane and provincial. His sharp intellect, genius, erudition, judiciousness were covered by the screen of self-deceptive search for the truth, throwing him eventually into a tight grip of provincialism. In this way, his sham search for the truth proved to be a manifestation of mundane mentality and was even more condemnable.

There is a fake doctrine of so-called synthesis (*samanvayavād*) preached in this world to cater for such sham search for the truth through mundane vision, which is but an even greater deception of oneself and others. This so-called teaching of synthesis appeared as a cooked up form of amusement for people on pretence of supporting all forms of provincialisms. If we say, "The highest religion is only the religion of the soul, or *bhagavat-dharma*," then we cannot place any provincial doctrine on our heads considering it to be equal. So, "it does not matter where and what kind of provincialism it is, all are the same"—forgetting this basic principle, people resort to various devious means to promote their own provincialism, which is but 'synthesis' for the sake of one's own pleasure.

We must be cautious and not fall prey to any despicable version of doctrines that offer provincialism in disguise of real search for the truth. "A bona fide religion is enacted by the

Supreme Lord Himself” (*dharmantu sākṣād-bhagavat-praṇītaṁ*); devotional service, beginning with the chanting of the Holy Name of the Lord, is the ultimate religious principle for the living entity in human society (*etāvān eva loke 'smin puṁsām dharmah / bhakti-yogo bhagavati tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ*), “the supreme occupation for all humanity is service to the transcendental Lord” (*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir-adhokṣaje*), “*Bhāgavatam* is a religion for the pure devotees who completely reject all religious activities motivated by material gain and who are free from envy” (*dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām*), etc.—if we consider these scriptural statements, we can see that pure devotees reject all kinds of provincialism, they are devoid of envy and live by the eternal religion of the soul that is supremely worshippable and devoid of even a trace of deceit—such a religion must be accepted independent of the place, time or person.

Practitioners who seek truth aspiring for eternal spiritual benefit and entrance into the spiritual domain must always be careful about this. All teachings that have sprung, are springing and will spring from provincialism are an obstruction of the religion of the soul and are a fleeting friend of material religions. As soon as we see any of these symptoms in any doctrine, we must always keep away from it. The followers of all these doctrines will try to tarnish the eternal religion of the soul in the name of provincialism or some other dull religion, but it is necessary to judge such teachings with a neutral and sane mind, and when you come to judge it, you must internally, with a pure heart and intense desire, pray to the Supreme Lord so that the soul may remain always engaged in the loving service and that it may be wise enough to become free from provincialism. If there is even a slightest attachment to the mundane or worldly mentality, one's sincere search for the truth cannot not prove successful. Beware!

Offenders

There have been some side-long glances from the club of modern amalgamating theories (that claim that matter and spirit is one) towards Vaiṣṇavism alluding to its certain stupidity and illegitimate practices. Ascribing fault to Vaiṣṇavism, they say, “As much as Christians are fanatic about being free from sin, so much are Vaiṣṇavs terrified of making an offence at every step. There is fear of offences in every word of Vaiṣṇavism. When you try to serve the Deity, even if you do not put slacked lime in the *pān*, it is an offence—there are offences to service, offences to the holy *dhām*, so many offences!”

These amalgamists cite such examples and affectionately call their fancy (do-what-you-like) a religion. Unless you blow up the offences and sins with a dynamite and make sure no trace of them remains, you cannot practise religion randomly without obstruction. When somebody’s belief is that puffed rice and rock candy, the virtuous and the unvirtuous, the truth and a lie, stool and sandalwood are one and the same, then there can be nothing unreasonable in their ideas. Some religious sects claim that killing cows for food is religion. When amalgamists try to promote the idea that all religions are the same, they place both on the same seat: according to them, both those who eat cow’s meat and those who abstain from it follow different paths of religion, therefore there is no reason why it should be called a sin. Along this line of thought, in this modern feminist day people say, ‘If women are not bound to some particular man, it is

unreligious—we refuse to accept this bigotry! This is nothing but a superstition and bigotry! Religion must be good for everyone and liberal (it must cater for each person), therefore one should be free to act as one pleases.”

An example of such feminist ‘liberalism’ can be often seen in the Western countries in parks and squares for evening walks—Eastern eyes see this open mixing of women with men, other than their husbands, and call it obscene, but those who are initiated into the ‘*mantra*’ of liberalism call it ‘platonic love.’

Anyhow, it is because such liberalists are unable to differentiate between sin and offence, heaven and Vaiṣṇa, that the hidden treasure of pure religion is kept safe within the store room of pure devotees. In Vaiṣṇavism, nobody wants to invoke sin. Unless sin (*pāpa*) and piety (*punya*) become a thing of the past, one will not get any proper result from taking initiation within Vaiṣṇavism (devotional school). Devotion to the Lord is naturally free from sin and supremely pure. Sin and piety have to do with the material world, but a bona fide devotee is transcendental. Material heaven is a transitory place of enjoyment, and transcendental Vaiṣṇa is an imperishable abode. The concept of ‘sin’ in inferior religions is completely different from the concept of ‘*aparādha*’ (offence) or *anartha* (unwanted element) in pure Vaiṣṇavism, i.e. an impediment that keeps one away from the service of the Lord.

Offences are independent of sin. An offence is something unwanted, or an obstacle, for the practice of pure religion, so, normally, for those who want to quickly remove offences, these ‘do-what-you-want’ practices are nothing but enticing maidservants of impersonalists. Actually, material enjoyers and impersonalist offenders to Kṛṣṇa, who are themselves guilty of unforgivable offences, do not see themselves as ‘offenders.’ However, experts of service in separation, who are eternally liberated and free from offences, consider themselves ‘offenders.’

Śrīla Kavirāj Goswāmī Prabhu's words prove that: "I am more sinful than Jagāi and Mādhāi (*jagāi mādhai haite muñi se pāpiṣṭha*)", etc.

Our eternal wealth, or necessity, is the divine love for Godhead manifest as intent joy of service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the hindrance on the path of this love is that I myself have brought about the end or hindrance by misusing the independence that my spiritual soul is endowed with—this is my offence. I am an offender—I have been making offences pretending to enjoy and renounce. If you can become a sincere (free from deceit) servitor, then there will no longer be this offence, or obstacle.

People who follow the path of fruitive activities (motivated by a material result), always commit five types of sins, but if I act as though I have embarked on the path of devotion, then I will be committing five kinds of offences, too. I do not use Kṛṣṇa's cows, wind, water, fruit or the *pañcha-bhūta* (earth, water, fire, air and ether)—that are meant for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment—in the service of Kṛṣṇa, I detain them on the way to use them for my own enjoyment. If I drink the milk that Kṛṣṇa's cows give—if I enjoy the sky, wind, light that are meant for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment—then I am merely roughing it and carrying on my non-devotional life; therefore, I am an offender to the *śānta-rasa* devotees of Kṛṣṇa (cows, bamboo stick, etc.)

Everyone in their intrinsic form is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa; gods and demigoddesses are also eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa; but I am engaging the devotees of Kṛṣṇa as my material slaves. The servant of the Lord's house supplies me water to wash my feet, and I collect service from them in many ways. I turn gods and goddesses into menial servants of the happiness and comfort for my mundane life; therefore, I am an offender to the feet of Raktaka, Patraka, Chatraka, and other servants of Kṛṣṇa's house.

How many people I take as my friends and equals! Instead of following Prahlād Mahārāj's example and giving my peers

an opportunity to hear about Kṛṣṇa consciousness (engage them in the *śravan-kīrtan-sevā*), I spend days with them enjoying the common material life. They collect the fuel for my pleasure-sacrifice; so, forgetting Kṛṣṇa's pleasure-sacrifice, I am an offender to the feet of Śrīdām, Sudām, and other friends of Kṛṣṇa.

How many mothers and fathers I have been constantly milking for breast-milk and wealth to suit my material lifestyle when I come to this world in the form of their child? Because I have not been able to become completely dedicated to the service of Kṛṣṇa, I am missing out on engaging them in the service of Kṛṣṇa. To nurture my own material satisfaction, I am nurturing their material desires as well; therefore, I am an offender to the feet of Śrī Yaśodā and Śrī Nanda.

Desiring to create a home, I have taken a wife thinking that, since I have no attraction towards the illegitimate urges of the senses, then it means I have no problem, I am pious; but I forgot what *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* says—when a man does his service absent-mindedly, *Māyā* (illusion) comes to him as his lawful wife and, nursing him, gradually climbs on his shoulder and forces him to fall down being overcome by the male ego of a dominator. Just as, suppose, a traveller does not know that there is a well covered by grass on the way—he enjoys walking barefoot on the beautiful soft and green grass when suddenly, before he knows it, he falls into the well. Because we, too, are absent-minded in our service, we have got into the same position.

I want to live with a lawful pious wife, taking her service, therefore I am an offender to the feet of Lord Rāmachandra, who vowed to take only one wife. When I also see married or single ladies and my heart gets overwhelmed by a surge of the desire for union with her, then I am making an offence to the feet of one and only Consort of milkmaids, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I forget my own true self, I forget my eternal religion, and I forget that I am an eternal servant. The only maidservant who all satisfaction is

meant for is a transcendental embodiment of union, one without a second—I am only fuel for Her enjoyment, I am not the enjoyer.

Unless we remember this sobering instruction of Śrī Gurupādpadma within our serving hearts, we will lose the power of Baladev (we will become spiritually weak)—we will become offenders in many ways: instead of serving in the stance of a servitor, we will become unconsciously possessed by the ego of a service-taker. When every thing and every *jīva* soul tempts me to take service from them and I do not see them as mercy coming from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the dearmost and beloved of Śrī Govinda, and do not fold my palms to show my respect—i.e. I do not accept everything that comes to me as assistance to the preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (hearing and chanting) that is to be utilised for the service of the Lord, the embodiment of Hari-kīrtan—then my spiritual ruin and falldown will be inevitable. Whatever and whoever tempts me to accept service from them actually strikes me like an animal with a whip—they point their finger right before me showing me my unwanted habits and traits. They teach me: “Do not become this five-fold offender to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. By your intrinsic nature you are an eternal servant of Hari, Guru, Vaiṣṇavs. Take up the vow to serve in your true identity.”

When will I be able to sincerely pray to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru?

**mattulyo nāsti pāpātmā, nāparādhī cha kaśchana
parihāre 'pi lajjā me, kiṁ bruve puruṣottama**

“There is no parallel to my sinful, criminal life. Everything that can be conceived of as bad is found in me. O Supreme Lord, I am even ashamed to come before You to petition, ‘Please forgive my offenses.’ What more can I say than this?”

**bhūmau skhalitapādānām, bhūmir evavāmbanam
tvayi jātāparādhānām, tvam eva śaraṇam prabho**

“For those who have stumbled and fallen upon the ground, that very ground is the only support by which they can arise once again. Likewise, for those who have offended You, O Lord, You alone are their only refuge.”

There are some peculiarities and distinctions between this (practitioner’s) stance and the stance of a *guru*, or a servant of the *guru*. The practitioner’s stance is “I pray for mercy,” and the stance of a *guru* means, “I will show kindness to the souls by extending love of God to them.” The goal of both ideals is to make Kṛṣṇa happy, but one is an agent of *mādhurya* (sweetness) and the other is an agent of *audārya* (magnanimity). Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rūpa-Sanātan are *viṣaya-vigraha* (worshippable), but taking the stance of *āśraya-vigraha* (shelter-givers), they never climb atop the Govardhan Hill. Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpād, in his stance of a *guru*, climbed on top of Govardhan on the order Gopāldev, for His service. The seat of *gurus* is in Chatak Parvat, but **the *guru* and the servants of the *guru*, taking the stance of servants, do not climb there.**



Hell

Many ask: is there any physical place called 'hell' or 'heaven'? Is it present in India or abroad? Are the suffering and enjoyment (happiness, opulence) that we see in this world hell and heaven?

In the present day and age of advanced material science, many interpret hell and heaven as something like a 'bogeyman' that 'old-fashioned' authors of scriptures use to scare the God-fearing people. Some also think that in the twenty-first century hell or heaven is just an outdated coin that has gone out of use. It is not that this is characteristic of only the present day and age—philosophers of previous age, such as Charvaka and others, also declared their strong revolt against existence of 'hell' and 'heaven'. If existence of hell is not hushed up, then the restrictions for free and unrestrained enjoyment and various debauchery will never be lifted.

A thief or a wicked person tries to go underground and escape the king's court of justice or the punishment inflicted on him by the king—there is nothing irrational in that. When conditioned people's listless conscience shows some feeble desire to fight against sin and it is necessary to persecute and completely immobilise this little bit of conscience, then there is no other alternative except for denying existence of hell. Scriptures tell about hell, etc. to scare the hard-core non-devotees and enjoyers given to sinful activities, but if they are to disregard the scriptural dictation, the only weapon of such enjoyers and rebels fighting against the scriptures is to take advantage of empirical knowledge and deny existence of hell. The stronger one hankers to enjoy and

the more one relies on empirical knowledge and atheism, the more rebellious one becomes towards this basic dictation of the scriptures (i.e. the more they deny existence of hell, etc.).

Devotees of the Lord, however, do not need to carry out any particular research when it comes to ‘hell’ or ‘heaven’. Whether hell or heaven exists or does not exist does not matter for them much because selfless devotees of the Lord do not run to make religious sacrifices or offerings for fear of hell or for greed for heaven. If people desire to perform some religious rites for fear of hell or coveting the happiness of heaven, this cannot be called pure devotional religion—this is just a populist religion (*‘laukik dharma’*, or a religion that caters for the general public). Devotees of the Lord do not want any sin or piety, they do not feel inclined towards that.

One goes to hell as a result of committing sins, and one gets to heaven as a result of piety. If a person is a sinner but is frightened to some extent by the consequences of sinning, he or she becomes motivated to do some piety-producing works. Very often those who have material desires become frightened to go to hell and start performing some religious duties out of selfish motives. If such people come in touch with the association of selfless pure devotees—if they persistently and sincerely aspire and try to hear and follow the instruction of exclusive devotees of the Lord more and more—then this original desire to take up devotion for fear of God can leave their hearts, and, by the natural attraction felt within their hearts, they can understand that devotional activities are the pure religion of the soul.

If such people, who were at first scared of hell and left their sinful life for this fear of hell, aspire and strive to enter simple devotional life, this can be called auspicious; but if the fear of hell makes somebody give up the path of sin only to take up the path of common worldly piety, then this desire for piety is just the lesser of two evils—there is nothing outstanding or eternally

auspicious about it. Both hell and heaven are just the top and bottom positions in the ferris wheel of *karma*. Sometimes the hand of hell drowns the punishable people in the fathomless water of distress; and sometimes the gentle hand of heaven gives these people a break from such suffering and lets them breathe freely for some time—but when this happiness in heaven passes, the cruel hand of the dispenser of hellish punishment is again on standby. Heavenly happiness is an advance messenger of hellish suffering.

Although Charvaka denied existence of hellish planets taking support of his empirical knowledge, he could not deny existence of hell in the form of suffering experienced in this world. He had to admit, “*Kaṇṭakādi-janyaṁ duḥkham eva narakam*: hell is the suffering arising from obstacles.”

As for the question whether there is a particular physical place of hell, Parīkṣit Mahārāj asks Śrī Śukadev in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (5.26.4), “*Śrī-rājovācha—narakā nāma bhagavan kiṁ deśa-viśeṣā athavā bahis tri-lokkyā āhosvid antarāla ita*. O Lord, are there any particular hellish places on this earth or within or without this universe?”

Śrīṣir uvācha: antarāla eva tri-jagatyās tu diśi dakṣiṇasyām adhaśtād bhūmer upariṣṭāch cha jalād yasyām agniṣvāttādayaḥ pitṛ-gaṇā diśi svānām gotrāṇām paramēṇa samādhinā satyā evāśiṣa āśāsānā nivasanti. Yatra ha vāva bhagavān pitṛ-rājo vaivasvataḥ sva-viśayaṁ prāpīteṣu sva-puruṣair jantuṣu sampareteṣu yathā-karmāvadyaṁ doṣam evānullaṅghita-bhagavach-chhāsanam sargaṇo damaṁ dhārayati.

In reply to that, Śrī Rṣi (Śrī Śukadev) said (SB, 5.26.5–6), “All hellish planets are situated within this universe. They are located to the south of the ghost planet and slightly above the Garbhodaka Ocean. There, Agnisvattā and other residents of Pitṛloka (planet where ancestors reside) meditate upon the Lord in deep *samādhi* and bestow their blessings on their families. The opulent king of ancestors, Yamarāj, the son of the sun-god, resides there with

his associates abiding by the order of the Supreme Lord—when living beings die, they are brought (by his messengers) here under his jurisdiction and he metes out the punishment for them depending on the faults and merits of their actions.”

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (5.26.7) provides a detailed description of different divisions of different hellish planets, their names, as well as what suffering is inflicted upon the sinners in each of them:

“Tatra haikē narakān eka-vimśatiṁ gaṇayanti. Atha tāṁs te rājan nāma-rūpa-lakṣaṇato ‘nukramiṣyāmaḥ. Tāmisro ‘ndhatāmisro rauravo mahārauravaḥ kumbhīpākāḥ kālasūtram asipatravanam sūkaramukham andhakūpaḥ kṛmibhojanaḥ sandaṁśas taptasūrmir vajrakaṇṭaka-śālmālī vaitaraṇī pūyodaḥ prāṇarodho viśasanam lālābhakṣaḥ sārameyādanam avīchir ayaḥ pānam iti. Kiñcha kṣārakardamo rakṣogaṇa-bhojanaḥ śūlaproto dandaśūko ‘vaṭa-nirodhanāḥ paryāvartanaḥ sūchīmukham ity aṣṭā-vimśatir narakā vīvidha-yātanā-bhūmayāḥ.”

“Some say that there are twenty-one hellish planets existing in that place. O Mahārāj, please listen as I outline to you the name, description and symptoms of each of them. Tāmisra, Andhatāmisra, Raurav, Mahāraurav, Kumbhīpāk, Kālasūtra, Asi-patravan, Sūkaramukha, Andhakūpa, Kṛmibhojana, Sandaṁśa, Taptasūrmī, Vajrakaṣṭaka-śālmālī, Vaitaraṇī, Pūyoda, Prāṇarodha, Viśasana, Lālābhakṣa, Sārameyādan, Avīchi, Ayaḥpāna are the twenty-one hellish planets. Besides that, there are seven more hellish planets called Kṣārakardama, Rakṣogaṇa-bhojana, Śūlaprota, Dandaśūka, Avaṭa-nirodhana, Paryāvartana and Sūchīmukha. In total, there are these twenty-eight hellish planets—places of various sufferings.

Śrī Kapiladev told Devahūti in the third canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.30.29):

*atra iva narakāḥ svarga iti mātāḥ prachakṣyate
yā yātanā vai nārakyas tā ihāpy upalakṣitāḥ*

“O mother, those who know the truth say that there is hell and there is heaven, too. The suffering that is experienced in hell can be seen in this world, too.”

Here, Kapiladev says that just as there are physical hellish and heavenly planets or places, in the same way we find all these hellish and heavenly planets’ miseries, etc. present within the different kinds of suffering and enjoyment, happiness on this planet also. Some are stricken with so much pain and misery in the womb of their mother that they die; some experience so much intolerable pain during the delivery; some become afflicted with syphilis, leprosy or other different painful diseases since their birth; some accumulate much knowledge and suffer from mental heat; some take birth in a very poor house and suffer from a lack of food, etc. since their childhood; some suffer in various ways from Pyu or Quetta earthquake, some from wild ferocious animals, some from floods, famine, drought or train, car accidents, etc.

Bound by the result of their previous activities, *jīva* souls suffer since birth. Lord Kapiladev told His mother Devahūti, Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu also told Mother Śachī about the hellish suffering that the soul experiences in the womb of its mother. These descriptions can be found in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.31.5–10, below) and *Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta* (2.1.203–240).

mātur jagdhāṇṇa-pānādyair edhad-dhātur asammate
 śete viṇ-mūtrayor garte sa jantur jantu-sambhave
 kṛmibhiḥ kṣata-sarvāṅgaḥ saukumāryāt pratikṣaṇam
 mūrchchhām āpnoty uru-kleśas tatratyaiḥ kṣudhitair muhuḥ
 kaṭu-tikṣṇoṣṇa-lavaṇa-kṣārāmlādibhir ulbanaiḥ
 mātṛ-bhuktair upasprṣṭaḥ sarvāṅgotthita-vedanaḥ
 ulbena samvṛtas tasminn antraiś cha bahir āvṛtaḥ
 āste kṛtvā śiraḥ kukṣau bhugna-prṣṭha-śirodharāḥ
 akalyaḥ svāṅga-cheṣṭāyām śakunta iva pañjare
 tatra labdha-smṛtir daivāt karma janma-śatodbhavam
 smaran dīrgham anuchchhvāsam śarma kiṁ nāma vindate

ārabhya saptamān māsāl labdha-bodho 'pi vepitaḥ
naikatrāste sūti-vātaiḥ viṣṭhā-bhūr iva sodaraḥ

“The *jīva* soul’s body develops through the food and drink taken by the mother and is forced to lie in the hole filled with stool and urine, a breeding place of various organisms. Bitten again and again all over the body by the hungry worms in this hole, the child suffers terrible agony because of his tenderness. He thus becomes unconscious all the time because of the terrible condition. Whatever unbearable food the mother takes—bitter, pungent, hot, salty, dry, sour, etc.— becomes absorbed into the body of the *jīva* soul dwelling within the womb, causing pain in all its body. Surrounded by the uterus and confined carefully outside by the intestines, the child lies with its neck and back bent, head pressed against its chest. The child thus remains just like a bird in a cage, unable to move within the womb. At that time, if the child is fortunate, it can remember all the troubles of its past births. Remember the sinful activities of its past hundreds of lifetimes, it keeps sighing. Thus, when the seventh month starts, the *jīva* soul gains consciousness, but then it is tossed by the airs that occur to stimulate child birth and cannot remain still in one place, just as the worms that are born in the same womb.

During the time when the averse to the service of the Lord and attached to the material world conditioned *jīva* soul leaves this world, it is afflicted by the same hellish suffering that it experiences in the womb before its birth—suffering continuously from such pain, the soul ends up in hell. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.30.18–28) shows how the soul bound by material attachments is sent there:

evaṁ kuṭumba-bharaṇe vyāpṛtātmājitendriyaḥ
mriyate rudatām svānām uru-vedanayāsta-dhīḥ
yama-dūtau tadā prāptau bhīmau sarabhasekṣaṇau
sa dṛṣṭvā trasta-hṛdayaḥ śakṛn-mūtram vimuñchatī
yātanā-deha āvṛtya pāsair baddhvā gale balāt
nayato dīrgham adhvānam daṇḍyam rāja-bhaṭā yathā

taylor nirbhinna-hṛdayas tarjanair jāta-vepathuḥ
 pathi śvabhir bhakṣyamāṇa āрто 'gham svam anusmaran
 kṣut-trṭ-parīto 'rka-davānalānilaiḥ
 santapyamānaḥ pathi tapta-vāluke
 kṛchchhreṇa pṛṣṭhe kaṣayā cha tāḍitaś
 chalaty aśakto 'pi nirāśramodake
 tatra tatra patan chhrānto mūrchchhitaḥ punar utthitaḥ
 pathā pāpīyasā nītas tamasā yama-sādanam
 yojanānām sahasrāṇi navatiṁ nava chādhvanaḥ
 tribhir muhūrtair dvābhyāṁ vā nītaḥ prāpnoti yātanāḥ
 ādīpanam sva-gātrāṇām veṣṭayitvolmukādibhiḥ
 ātma-māmsādanam kvāpi sva-kṛtaṁ parato 'pi vā
 jīvataś chāntrābhyuddhārah śva-grḍhraiḥ yama-sādane
 sarpa-vṛṣchika-damśādyair daśadbhiś chātma-vaiśasam
 kṛntanam chāvayavaśo gajādibhyo bhidāpanam
 pātanam giri-śṛṅgebhyo rodhanam chāmbu-gartayoh
 yās tāmisrāndha-tāmisra-rauravādyāś cha yātanāḥ
 bhuṅkte naro vā nārī vā mithaḥ saṅgena nirmītāḥ

Engrossed in maintaining his family, unable to control his senses, a materialist householder becomes anxious seeing his family weeping in deep sorrow—in this state he finally loses consciousness and leaves his body.

At death, he sees two fearsome messengers (*yamadūtas*) of Yamarāj, the Lord of Death, come before him, their eyes full of wrath. Grief-stricken at the sight of them, he keeps passing stool and urine.

At first, these *yamadūtas* seize the agonising (subtle) body of the man and detach it from the gross body—they throw a rope on his neck and bind him tight. Then, like constables accompanying a criminal, the servants of Yamarāj take the man far away to their own place.

Hearing the swearing of the *yamadūtas*, the man's heart is torn apart, and he begins to tremble with all his body. On the way, dogs keep gnawing at him—feeling extreme pain, the man keeps walking remembering all his sins. The road that the *yamadūtas* take him is full of scorching sand—with no shelter for rest and no water. He is dying from hunger, scorching heat and forest fires, extremely weak, unable to walk any further, but the *yamadūtas* keep striking his back with a whip trying to impede his agonising walk.

Fatigued, he collapses on the ground and faints, and then, having come round, he again carries on walking. In this way he is brought to the abode of Lord Yama down this dark, swelling with sins path.

The path to the house of Yamarāj that one has to cover is ninety-nine thousand *yojanas*¹ long, and some people are forced to pass all this long road within two *muhūrtas*². When the sinner appears in the court of Lord Yamarāj, he sees: in some places, bodies are surrounded by blazing coal burning the limbs of the sinner; in some places, the sinners tear off their own or others' flesh and eat it; even if the person is still alive, dogs, vultures and other animals living in Lord Yamarāj's house pull out his intestines; some are bitten and stung by snakes, scorpions, gadflies and other creatures and suffer excruciating pain; others have all their limbs and projecting parts severed piece by piece; some are hurled down from the top of a mountain; some are enclosed in a hole or dunked into water. The sinner has to undergo all these kinds of suffering.

Be it a man or a woman, materialist householders have to suffer after death in a corresponding hell for all the sins they have contracted.



¹ One *yojana* equals 8 miles.

² One *muhūrta* equals 48 minutes.

Devotional Mood (Bhakta-Bhāv)

There are many examples of temporary mood in this material world, but the eternal *nitya-siddha* mood is manifest within the servitors in the transcendental domain. The mood that comes from the side of servitors is *bhakta-bhāv*, and the *nitya-siddha* mood of the service-accepting object of service is called *bhagavad-bhāv*.

Accepting the mood of a devotee in His *audārya-līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa-chandra taught about service to the Lord: He manifested Himself as Gaura, magnanimity incarnate, and through the Pañcha-tattva, as well as personally, explained to different devotees how to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the emporium of all *rasas*, in four types of mood (*dāsyā*, *sakhyā*, *vātsalyā* and *madhura*). His *prakāśa-tattva* Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu helped Him by teaching His followers about the brilliance of the eternal state of perfection (*nitya-siddha-bhāv*) in the *vātsalya*-, *dāsyā*- and *sakhyā-rasas*. Śrī Gaurasundar is the source of all incarnations, and Śrī Advaita Prabhu is His devotee incarnation (*bhaktāvatār*)—he taught his followers the moods of *dāsyā* and *sakhyā*. Śrīvās and other pure devotees, as well as Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit and other intimate devotees, served Lord Kṛṣṇa in their own singular peculiar mood. Thus, manifesting the pastimes of a devotee, Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself taught four types of devotion, namely *dāsyā*, *sakhyā*, *vātsalyā*, and *madhura*; His very own manifestation (*prakāśa-tattva*) Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu taught devotion in the moods of *dāsyā*, *sakhyā* and *vātsalyā*; and His devotee incarnation (*bhaktāvatār*) Śrī Advaita Āchārya Prabhu taught devotion in the mood of *dāsyā* and *sakhyā*. These three are *bhagavad-vastu* (parts and parcels

of the Lord), but they accepted the mood of devotees. Among them, Śrī Gaurasundar (Mahāprabhu) is the Lord's original form (*svayaṁ-rūpa*), Nityānanda Prabhu is His immediate personal expansion (*svayaṁ-prakāśa*), and Śrī Advaita Prabhu is His direct expansion (*svāmīśa*) Mahāviṣṇu.

Some of the Pañcha-tattva represent an energy or a devotee of the Lord (*śakti-tattva* or *bhakta-tattva*), they do not come from the Lord or the Lord's potency directly—they are *āśraya-tattva* (they give shelter). Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodar, Śrī Rāmānanda, Śrī Rūpa and others are *śakti-tattva*, and they serve Kṛṣṇa in *madhura-rasa*. Each of them has their own mood (*rasa*); they do not manifest several moods like Mahāprabhu or His *tattva*. Pure devotees such as Śrīvās Paṇḍit represent only *dāsyā-rasa*, they also do not manifest several moods.

When we say pure devotees and intimate devotees, we must not think that devotees like Śrīvās Paṇḍit are external devotees. Internal original energy (*antaraṅgā svarūpa-śakti*) of the Lord is the embodiment of *madhura-rasa*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Gadādhara, Svarūpa, Rāmānanda, Śrī Rūpa and others are followers of Śrī Rādhikā, and they are situated within eternal perfection (*nitya-siddha-bhāva*) in *madhura-rasa*, that is why they are considered intimate devotees (*antaraṅga-bhakta*), whereas devotees such as Śrīvās Paṇḍit are situated within pure *dāsyā-rasa*, therefore they are considered examples of pure devotees (*śuddha-bhakta*).

Although Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu are *viśaya-tattva* (They are the Lord or the Lord's direct potency), They show four, three and two devotional moods. In *audārya-līlā*, devotees of the Lord do not manifest the mood of the Lord in which He relishes devotional mellows (sweet amorous pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa)—such enjoyment and turning Mahāprabhu into a *gaura-nāgarī* enjoyer is refrained from. The writer of *Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata* described the pastimes of Śrī Chaitanyadev in the mood of a devotee and mentioned in some places that

Mahāprabhu reclined like Viṣṇu, that He manifested the forms of Lord Rāma, Nṛsimha, Varāha. Therefore, *rāsa-līla*, *pārakīya-rasa*, etc. (intimate loving pastimes, pastimes of paramour love) relished by the source of all *avatārs*, the original form of the Lord, is not manifest in His *audārya* pastimes in Gaura-līlā because they are peculiar onlto Kṛṣṇa-līlā. In this regard, Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dās Kavirāj Goswāmī Prabhu wrote:

yaśodā-nandana hailā śachīra nandana
chatur-vidha bhakta-bhāva kare āsvādana

“The same Supreme Personality of Godhead who appeared as the son of mother Yaśodā has now appeared as the son of mother Śachī, relishing four kinds of devotional moods.”

vātsalya, dāsyā, sakhya—tina bhāva-maya
sei nityānanda—kṛṣṇa-chaitanya-sahāya

“Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu always assists Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu in vātsalya, dāsyā, and sakhya moods.”

advaita-āchārya-gosāñi bhakta-avatāra
kṛṣṇa avatāriyā kailā bhaktira prachāra
sakhya, dāsyā,—dui bhāva sahaja tāhāra
kabhu prabhu karena tāre guru-vyavahāra

“Śrīla Advaita Āchārya Prabhu is an incarnation of a devotee. He is in the category of Kṛṣṇa, but He descended to preach about devotional service. His mood is sakhya and dāsyā, but the Lord sometimes treated Him as His spiritual master.”

śrīvāsādi yata mahāprabhura bhakta-gaṇa
nija nija bhāve karena chaitanya-sevana

“All the devotees of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, headed by Śrīvās Ṭhākura, have their own devotional moods in which they serve Him.”

paṇḍita-gosāñi ādi yāra yei rasa
sei sei rase prabhu hana tāra vaṣa

“Personal associates such as Gadādhara are all situated in their respective transcendental moods. Thus the Lord submits to various mellows according to the transcendental mellow of His devotee.”

tīha śyāma,—vaṁśī-mukha, gopa-vilāsi
īha gaura—kabhu dvija, kabhu ta’ sannyaśī

“In Kṛṣṇa-līlā, the Lord’s complexion is blackish. Holding a flute to His mouth, He enjoys as a cowherd boy. Now the selfsame person has appeared with a fair complexion, sometimes acting as a brāhmaṇ and sometimes accepting the renounced order of life.”

ataeva āpane prabhu gopī-bhāva dhari’
vrajendra-nandane kahe ‘prāṇa-nātha’ kari’

“Therefore, the Lord Himself, accepting the mood of the gopīs, now addresses the son of Nanda Mahārāj, ‘O master of My life! O My dear husband!’”

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, 1.17.275, 296, 298–303)

Śrī Gaurasundar is not Śyamasundar, the maintainer of cowherd boys and inciter of amorous pastimes, He is not the Flute-Holder, nor the Chief Enjoyer. Moreover, He is a non-different form of Śrī Rādhikā, the main *āśraya-vigraha* in transcendental loving pastimes—renouncing all kinds of enjoyment, He takes on the form of a *brāhmaṇ* and a *sannyāsi*. Attempting to destroy the characteristic peculiarity of Mahāprabhu’s eternal form and eternal mood, people have come up with an unsanctioned by the scriptures idea of “Gaura-nāgarī” (considering Gaura-Kṛṣṇa enjoyers).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanyadev, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Prabhu are Supreme Lords and *viṣaya-tattva* (worshippable Deities, Lords); therefore, more than one devotional mood can be discerned within Them. However, it is impossible for the *śakti-tattva* (energies of the Lord) or *āśraya-tattva* (the worshipper, shelter) to be simultaneously within

several moods. Because *āśraya-tattva* devotees' mood is complete and exclusive, they always serve Kṛṣṇa in the shelter of their particular mood. Because Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanyadev shows four devotional mellows, His devotees have four types of eternal devotional mood of service. Śrīvās Paṇḍit, et al. show *dāsyā-bhāv*; Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu et al. *sakhyā-bhāv*; Purī Goswāmī et al. *vātsalyā-bhāv*; Gadādhara Paṇḍit, Svarūp, Rāmānanda et al. *madhura-bhāv*. Because Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu shows three moods, His followers show service in these three moods as well (*dāsyā, sakhyā, vātsalyā*).

Śrī Advaita Āchārya's followers are *dāsyā-* and *sakhyā-rasa* devotees. If one enters the branches of Śrī Achyutānanda, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍit Goswāmī Prabhu, one will see that the service to Kṛṣṇa is manifest there in eternal *madhura-rasa* mood.

Śrī Gauḍī Dās Paṇḍit is one of the twelve cowherd friends (*dvādaśa-gopālas*) in Vṛndāvan, and his disciple Śyāmānanda Prabhu followed his *guru* in the *sakhyā-bhāv* and simultaneously exhibited *madhura-bhāv* entering the association of Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī Prabhu, a follower of Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī. Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu is considered to be an *avatār* (*īśvarakoṭi*). Therefore, it is not impossible for him to exhibit more than one devotional mood.

The detachment from the material world that is seen within the *sānta-bhāv* (neutral, detached mood) of the *nirviśeṣvādīs*, or the stone-like unconscious state of the offenders of the Lord, demons, etc., is not the *sānta-bhāv* of devotees. The former are antagonistic to the pastimes of the Lord, but the latter (devotees filled with neutral devotion for the Lord) assist the pastimes. If one thinks that the neutral mood of devotees is the same as the state attained in Buddhism and other impersonalist doctrines (*chinmātravād, māyāvād, achinmātravād*), then they will have to fall down due to this grave offence—they neither know proper conception nor think rationally. The waters of the Yamunā, the sand of Yamunā,

the bamboo stick in the hands of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the bugle of Lord Baladev, etc. are not material things or unconscious matter—they are conscious and contribute to service for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa's senses. The affection that is present in *dāsyā-rasa* is not fully bloomed in *śānta-rasa*, it is present there partially. However, even though affection is not fully manifest, they always, at every moment, contribute to Kṛṣṇa's service, and their identity is so exalted that many devotees, including Brahmā and Uddhav Mahārāj, aspire to be born in that Vraja Dhām as blades of grass, bushes, creepers.

āsām aho charaṇa-renu-juṣām ahaṁ śyām
 vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latau-śadhīnām
 yā dustyajāṁ svajanam ārya pathaṁ cha hitvā
 bhejur mukundapadavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām
 (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 10.47.61)

The *gopīs* have completely left behind their beloved husbands, sons, and other family members, as well as social rules, and have sought out the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa whom all the *Vedas* are looking for—O, will I ever be born in any form as some creeper in Vṛndāvan so that the dust from the holy feet of these *gopīs* may fall on my head? Śrīla Raghunāth Dās Goswāmī Prabhu said in his *Vraja-vilāsa-stava* (102):

yat kiñchit tṛṇa-gulma-kīkaṭa-mukhaṁ goṣṭhe samastaṁ hi tat
 sarvānanda-mayaṁ mukunda-dayitaṁ līlānukūlaṁ param
 śāstrair eva muhur muhuḥ sphuṭam idaṁ niṣṭaṅkitaṁ yāchñya
 brahmāder api sa-sprheṇa tad idaṁ sarvaṁ mayā vandyate

The grass, shrubs, insects, and other creatures in Vraja—everything there—are all-joyful, dear to Mukunda, and make a special contribution to His Pastimes. *Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures, even Brahma, Uddhav, and other great souls constantly and openly worship them. I bow down and pray to all this paraphernalia.

There are five devotional mellows, or moods, in Goloka: *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *madhura*; and in Vaikuṇṭha there are three and a half: *śānta*, *dāsyā* and formal *sakhya*. There are two types of *sakya-bhāv*—one is formal *sakhya*, and the other one is informal. In formal *sakhya-rasa*, devotees cannot climb on the Lord's shoulder or offer Him their food remnants; they maintain a sober composure. That is why the higher part of *sakhya-rasa* is present in Goloka or Vraja but not in Vaikuṇṭha. When Arjuna saw the universal form of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he thought that he had committed an offence because he had called Kṛṣṇa his friend, engaged Him as his chariot-driver, etc., but in Vraja, the friends of Kṛṣṇa do not treat Him so formally. Even the *śānta*- and *dāsyā*-*rasas* in Vraja are different from those in Vaikuṇṭha. In Vraja, *śānta*- and *dāsyā*-*rasas* are stunningly beautiful and devoid of grandeur and opulence. Seeing the great opulence of Nārāyaṇ, Vaikuṇṭha servants are attracted to the servitude to Nārāyaṇ; but the servants of Kṛṣṇa who live in Vraja (Raktaka, Patraka, Chitraka, and others) are naturally drawn to being Kṛṣṇa's servants and assisting Him in His various duties, whether it is Gopendra-nandan Śrī Kṛṣṇa's service at Govardhan or any other non-opulent service. They are attracted by the sweet and simple personality of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, nothing else.

The diversity and individually that is found in Vaikuṇṭha and Goloka or in various devotional mellows of Vraja are fully present within the corresponding relishers of these mellows (devotees). Only if we judge from an impartial point of view (if we assume the position of a third party, so to say), can we see that there are higher and lower moods. In Vaikuṇṭha, devotees use only the middle part of their transcendental bodies to serve Nārāyaṇ (from navel up to the upper limbs), and in Vraja devotees serve with the lower parts of their transcendental bodies as well. However, if devotees serve Kṛṣṇa with all their transcendental body, from head to toes, it does not mean that servitors in Vaikuṇṭha use

their lower part of body (from navel to lower limbs) for their own service and activities. There is no question of enjoyment in the place where all hesitation or limitations (*kuṇṭha*) are left behind, however servitors in Vaikuṇṭha do not show the use of their lower body in service out of respect. Vaikuṇṭha servitors consider using the lower part of the body or the whole body to be an example of a limited world—applicable to the souls that are bound by material illusion and subject to the results of their *karma*. Those who do not know their true identity and have no idea about the world of Goloka always use their entire body for the illusory mundane works.



Home-interest vs Maṭh-interest

Om Viṣṇupād Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura wrote in his book *Tattva-Viveka*, “Selflessness is like a flower in the sky, it is a meaningless word. It is required inasmuch as through it one attains one’s own happiness without going to great pains. When selfish people hear the word ‘selfless’ they will believe me and I easily get what I want. Mother’s love, brotherhood, friendship, love between a man and a woman—are these selfless? Unless there is pleasure in it, nobody will get involved into these relationships. Some people even sacrifice their own lives for the sake of their own pleasure. All religions are based on selfishness. Love for God is also selfish. Being selfish is a natural trait because even the very word ‘natural’ (*svabhāva*) implies ‘my nature’ (*‘śva’-bhava*). Selfishness is natural, and selflessness is quite unnatural.”

Pursuing this idea, we can understand that if being selfish is our intrinsic quality, then we will either seek various objects of enjoyment—wife, sons, wealth, house, etc.—for some fleeting selfish interest; or we will always try to utilise everything in the interest of or pertaining to the supreme and eternal reality, such as the transcendental Supreme Personality of Godhead and His devoted followers.

If one does not get good association of saintly persons who are exclusively surrendered to Kṛṣṇa and are knowledgeable in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or does not get initiation from such saintly persons taking the vow of pursuing Kṛṣṇa’s interest, then it means that such a person is very concerned about his own selfish interest (body, house, etc.). We can see that devotees, who

are connected with the highest fortune, try, in a genuine and unobstructed way, to fulfil various interests of the Lord's house or Maṭh—that is to say, the places where the Lord lives, where service of the Lord is practised (where devotees of the Lord always serve Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavs and give others various opportunities to engage in service), where there is a monastery of devotees engaged in the *kīrtan* of the Supreme Lord.

If we make a show of taking initiation at the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*, but our primary concern is with the interests of our own house, and the interest of the Maṭh is secondary, or we are concerned with impressing others, then it means we have not stepped on the path of spiritual benefit yet. Some may think that *sannyāsīs*, *brahmachārīs* and *vānaprasthas* look after the Maṭh, and we are *grhasthas*, so our duty is to look after our house and from time to time it is sufficient for us to do some minor service(?) for the temple, or pretend to do service for the sake of some material desire or prestige—if we try to do something more than that, sincerely, with heart and soul, then it will be bad for us and the family we live with. This idea is deep-rooted within our hearts. Those who merely make a show of coming to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru in fact have not come close to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru; rather, on the contrary, they are thrown far off from the path of following the Guru's line.

If we become householders, *sannyāsīs*, *brahmachārīs*, but our *dhyān* (thinking), *dhāraṇā* (engaging the mind), *dhruvānusmṛti* (constant remembrance) and everything we have are not dedicated to the interest of the Maṭh, then we will never be able to leave material life (*māyāra saṁsār*), and we will never get love for the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. As much as one is genuinely concerned with the interest of the Maṭh, that much love for the Lord, Guru and Vaiṣṇavs one has. If one is not concerned about the Maṭh but has devotion to the Guru or devotion to Kṛṣṇa, then it is nothing but deceiving oneself and others.

We may call ourselves a ‘*sannyāsī*’, ‘*brahmachārī*’, ‘*vānaprastha*’ or even a ‘Maṭh-resident’ or we may try make a huge pompous display of performing various temple activities, but internally we may be putting the interest of our body, house, etc. above the interests of the Maṭh, or we may pretend to have Maṭh’s interest at heart to impress people but internally be full of wrong interests. Therefore, if there is such hypocrisy within me, the path to spiritual benefit will always be shut for me.

Caring for the Maṭh implies that I become free, or try to internally become free, from any other material desires and surrendering myself completely, striving to follow the path of love for the Lord, Guru and Vaiṣṇavs. If I get a break from my material job and quickly come to the temple—if I think, “I have increased the number of the disciples of the Maṭh by one, that is sufficient,” or, “I live in my own house and follow Kṛṣṇa consciousness properly, so the Maṭh’s purpose is fulfilled. Moreover, I make a monthly donation to the Maṭh, or do some works for the Maṭh. The Maṭh’s interest is taken care of in this way,” etc.—such behaviour and ideas are not what the real concern for the Maṭh’s interest means. Materialist householders recklessly give their life away and becomes slaves of their material life—driven by attachment and love for material life, they always search how to fulfil various interests of their homes. If one, however, has more attachment and natural love for pursuing the interests of the Maṭh, then it is real service. If one does not become enthusiastic (*āṭhā*) about the Maṭh (*maṭha*), if natural affection for the Maṭh does not arise, and as a consequence one does not give one’s entire life and internal being, then their external show of doing some service for the Maṭh is the same as trying to cheat the *guru* and Vaiṣṇavs or trying to cheat a blacksmith by giving him steel—it is just self-deception.

We call those who are sincerely and exclusively dedicated to the interest of the temple ‘liberated’, and those who are dedicated

to the interest of their house ‘conditioned’. Unless it has a lot of good fortune, a *jīva* soul cannot dedicate its life for the interest of the Maṭh. When a servant of a temple or a *kīrtan* hall comes to some bogus Vaiṣṇavs who want to earn the name of ‘a servant of the Lord’ by cheating and tricking the Lord, and asks them to contribute for the service of the Maṭh, they always say, “Why must I donate anything to you when we too have Gaurāṅga’s or Nārāyaṇ’s service established at home!” Even if they sometimes give something to the servants of the Maṭh and bid them farewell, this donation(?) of theirs does not enter any of the four boundaries of the Maṭh—they give something to the servitors of the Maṭh just because they feel shy to refuse or try to avoid a squabble and bid them farewell, and after that they can again become engrossed in the household chores and breathe freely. Residents of hell are attracted to the interest of their houses and the residents of Vaikuṇṭha have a sincere and natural taste for the interest of the Maṭh.

We pretend to be *grhasthas* worshipping deities at home, but if, in the name of worshipping a deity, we downplay the service of fulfilling the desire of Maṭh’s Śrī Gurupādpama, then in the name of worshipping the Deity we actually serve our own house or pursue the interest of our own house—this is very far from the interest of the Maṭh, i.e. the interest of the service to the *guru* and Vaiṣṇavs—this leaves us in the bondage of the house, unable to become liberated travellers of the path of Vaikuṇṭha. Home worship is no doubt necessary, but if we increase the pomp of home worship with a hidden desire to enjoy the householder’s life or become deeper involved in the interests of the house, then the path of liberation from unwanted habits and concern for the Maṭh’s interest (which embodies the path of attaining that liberation) become lax. You should not leave home worship, neither should the children of the family forget the proper etiquette if they lose interest in home worship,

but what all members must actually practise in everything they do is that the purpose of their home worship, as well as whatever other activities, should be directed to support the Maṭh's interest. If downplaying deity worship, spiritual practice, chanting the Holy Name and any other immediate activity performed for the interest of the home does not encourage us to dedicate ourselves more to the interest of the Maṭh, then the external show of such worship, practice, chanting the Holy Name, etc. definitely becomes an offence.

Whether we are *gṛhasthas*, *sannyāsīs* or *brahmachārīs*, sincerely seeing the place where the glories of the holy lotus feet of Śrī Guru are sung, the place of Hari, Guru, Vaiṣṇavs where Vaiṣṇavs live in the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, Śrī Maṭh as our own is a bridge to our spiritual benefit. If we do not have the natural feeling that the Maṭh is my home, nobody can be forcefully taught to love it because love comes naturally and interest or concern for something also comes naturally. Interest in something does not come through persuasion, it appears and manifests on its own account.

Many do not know about the service of late Śrīpād Santoṣ Kṛṣṇa Prabhu, and he himself also during his life often said that he had not been able to become even an insignificant servant of the Maṭh; but seeing how strong his attachment to the interest of the Maṭh was in the many small services he did, it puts us to shame now. He never once even saw the accounts of his material property; neither did he ever try to increase his wealth even by one cent; but it is inconceivable how much this person tried, with heart and soul, to collect and beg for the Maṭh. Nobody ordered him, nobody encouraged him—he took care of the Maṭh's various paraphernalia like an expert householder of his own accord, he would always be seen very busy with all kinds of works of the Maṭh; at the same time, he never once gave anyone even a slightest hint of the service and works he was

doing. Some of us help the Maṭh's preaching with some money, etc., give physical labour, but if I do not see any mention about me in a newspaper column, at the preachers' assembly at a holy *dhām*, or in an eulogy written by Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavs, then I decide, "There is no use serving the Maṭh. They are prejudiced. They do not praise me, do not give me 'jay', so I better rough it at home than waste time, money and life for the interest of the Maṭh." However, the aforementioned great soul gave so much money for the service of 'Jayaśrī', continuously toiling as a low menial worker—it is impossible to mention everything. But he never once said anything that would give a slightest hint that he wanted to see his praise in a newspaper column or even more so to see his name included in the Maṭh's Calendar; but we have seen that his effort to look after the interests of the Maṭh was gradually making him great.

At the Maṭh, we often face heavy duties, difficult tasks or hear different kinds of reproach and rumours coming from various people and decide that it would be wiser to break all connection with the Maṭh; but if we have the Maṭh's best interest at heart (if we sincerely care for the Maṭh), then we will feel pain to even imagine that we could, dead or alive, leave the Maṭh's service and come to any other place or position. If I think that I have another place besides the Maṭh—I have a home, I have some shelter, I have a second place to run to—even a faint presence of such mentality leads to non-devotion. Such bad thoughts never arise in the hearts of those for whom the Maṭh is all-in-all.

Common outside people (those who have not entered the domain of devotion) can think that, according to the moral standards, caring for the Maṭh and not caring for one's own house is wrong; or perhaps such non-devotees can say, "If we give up pursuing independent thinking, self-reliance, altruism and for the sake of increasing or decreasing the bile of Vaiṣṇavs, become attached to social places like a temple, what good result

will that bring?" If people do not understand what is service to the Lord, if they enjoy like village dogs and reject things and their only achievement is to get whacked by Māyā Devī, then there is no way such people's mentality and conceptions can be appreciated, even if such people take initiation from a bona fide *guru* and behave like devotees. If we realise that the 'real truth' lies in service to the holy feet of Śrī Guru, which are a holy place of pilgrimage, and in the service to the Guru's Maṭh, a fortress for good association and the place where his *kīrtan* (glorification) is going on, then we must take an eternal vow not to spare our entire life for his purpose. Service to the *guru* (*guru-sevā*) is for everyone—*gr̥hasthas*, *vānaprasthas*, *brahmachārīs* and *sannyāsīs*.

We can easily understand that those who do not care for the Maṭh did not have or do not have connection with the Maṭh—neither do they have connection with Śrī Gurupādpadma. What is the *guru* like? What is his conception? What does he practise and preach? What is his heartfelt desire? What example does he show? Those who do not care about the Maṭh cannot understand anything about these things. Such people are like non-devotees and thieves—from time to time they drop into the temple on the way or sometimes come to the temple because they need something for the house; from time to time they come to the temple just to quickly put in an appearance—not understanding the actions of the *guru* and Vaiṣṇavs who live for the interest of the temple, they become offenders and quickly lose the little previous *sukṛti* they have. Because the temple people (who have the Maṭh's interest at heart) may often not pretend to be welcoming and affectionate to such materialist householders (who have their houses' interest at heart), the materialist householders became upset and lose faith. In short, unless we become intent on the Maṭh's interests, we will never be able to please Śrī Gurupādpadma; unless we please Śrī Gurupādpadma, we can never get spiritual benefit.

The less you care for the Maṭh, the more wildly Māyā Devī will create a chaos in the holes of your unwanted habits. Sometimes she will, perhaps, make your heart weak and force you to behave bad or become materially attached under the influence of bad association; sometimes, she may, perhaps, use even more deceit and teach you bad things just to throw dust in the *guru* and Vaiṣṇavs' eyes; sometimes she may, perhaps, entice you with the opportunism of self-governed devotion and a mix of religions and gradually turn you into either a hell-dwelling materialist householder or an atheist.

If someone pretends to take initiation, pretends to renounce something or to do service more for the sake of their own independent interest rather than the interest of the Maṭh, they quickly fall down, and for the sake of their own worship and *pratiṣṭhā*, they begin their mad dance of offences on their own.

If I get some opportunity at the Maṭh, it will bring benefit for my body, house, etc.—people who think like this are materialist householders who put interests of their homes above all else. Such people have other desires—they do not hanker for the service to Vaiṣṇavs. The practitioners should be careful and make sure that such mood does not enter their hearts—their duty is to submit themselves to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavs at every moment, sincerely and with a great desire, and to hanker for their spiritual benefit. Our true spiritual life lies in caring for the Maṭh, in realising that the Maṭh is our all-in-all. Those who think that their house is their all-in-all and dedicate themselves to the interests of their home are venturing towards death.



Samsāra and Bhakti

Many advise us to live our material life with detachment. Some also think that their material life is a place for following the order of the Lord—they console their minds appealing to God and encourage to enjoy life in all kinds of circumstances—despite the misery and suffering of the past life. We are always encouraged by the common people to become more and more engrossed in the material life. *Māyāvādīs* preach that since all things of the material world are temporary, the family of Kṛṣṇa is also temporary. Those who fall into the whirlpool of both kinds of thinking can never get out of the material life, neither can they attain devotion. Some become so pained by the suffering and misery of the material world that they resort to austerities showing temporary material renunciation or ‘crematorium’ renunciation [fickle renunciation in the face of death]. Great sages like Saubhari Ṛṣi renounced their material life, but later again became attached to material enjoyment. Without attachment to Kṛṣṇa (without establishing eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa), pretence of detachment is just another kind of material life or atheism. Atheists who do not believe in God’s existence or followers of the so-called theistic philosophy of doing your duty are miserable *jīva* souls fallen into the whirlpool of material life.

Attachment to family is a natural religion for the soul: every *jīva* soul is naturally inclined towards family life. It is impossible to eradicate this natural propensity, or religion, but if one turns back from the perverted or wrong path that one falls prey to following their natural propensity, it brings one natural

and genuine eternal peace and spiritual benefit. According to the propensity of our pure consciousness, we are members of Kṛṣṇa's family and must be attached to the family of Kṛṣṇa, but at present this propensity is perverted and applied to temporary objects, which results in our conditioned state. Liberated souls are attached to the family of Kṛṣṇa, and this attachment to the family of Kṛṣṇa is what real liberation is.

ihā yasya harer dāsyē karmṇa manasā girā
nikhilāsv apy avasthāṣu jīvan-muktaḥ sa uchyate

"A person acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness with his body, mind, intelligence and words is a liberated person even within the material world, although he may be engaged in many so-called material activities."

(Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, 1.2.187)

Transcendental eternal elder *gopīs* of Kṛṣṇa are attached to Kṛṣṇa's family. Such great *yogīs* as Śiva, Brahmā, even Uddhav Mahārāj aspire to become servants of a servant in their families. What did these *gopīs* say at Syamanta-pañchaka?

āhuś cha te nalina-nābha padāravindaṁ
yogeśvarair hṛdi vichintyaṁ agādha-bodhaiḥ
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam
geham juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ

"O lotus-navelled one, Your lotus feet, eternally held as the object of meditation within the hearts of the greatest yogīs of profound intellect, are the only resort for delivering those souls fallen into the well of material life. May those holy lotus feet graciously appear within the hearts of us, the ordinary household ladies."

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 10.82.48)

Gopīs do not practise artificial meditation like great *yogīs*. As Kṛṣṇa is not someone unknown or distant for them, they say to Him:

chitta kaḍhi' tomā haite, viṣaye chāhi lāgaite,
yatna kari, nāri kaḍhibāre

"I would like to withdraw My consciousness from You and engage it in material activities, but even though I try, I cannot do so. I am naturally inclined to You only."

Gopīs have no consciousness of their body, they forget it—how will they stay in family life then? Body is the main thing in a family life. They have given their very life to make Kṛṣṇa happy. Therefore, when they met Kṛṣṇa many days later at Syamanta-pāñchaka, they said:

deha-smṛti nāhi yā'ra, samsāra-kūpa kāhā tā'ra,
tāhā haite nā chāhe uddhāra
viraha-samudra-jale, kāma-timiṅgile gile,
gopī-gaṇe neha' tāra pāra

"Gopīs have no consciousness of their bodies, they do not care to be delivered from the well of material family life, but they have fallen into the ocean of separation, swallowed by the gigantic whale of transcendental lust. Please rescue them from there."

Deep desire and steadfastness in service to Kṛṣṇa's family is called devotion (*bhakti*), and apathy to it, indifference or renunciation is non-devotion (*abhakti*), or Māyā's family (illusory material life). Usually people have a perverted understanding of the word '*bhakti*'. When asked to define devotion (*bhakti*), some old big scholar *paṇḍit* will say that devotion is a feeling similar to lust or anger. Just as we feel temporary emotional outburst in the form of lust, anger, etc. within our hearts, in the same way devotion also comes as an emotion or emotional propensity—those who have fallen into the world of non-devotion have this kind of conception. Common people say that devotion is an emotional propensity that implies some formal ritualistic activities or mental ideas, but Bhakti Devī (Goddess of Devotion) is pure and constant (without deviation). The highest devotion does not accept anything except for the holy lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the emporium of all *rasas*.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu defined the root of *bhakti* in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.12) as:

**sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-patvena nirmalam
hr̥ṣīkeṇa hr̥ṣīkeśa-sevanam bhaktir uchyate**

“Pure devotion is service to the Supreme Lord which is free from all relative conceptions of self-interest.”

When one is completely free from all material designations, purified by exclusive care for Kṛṣṇa’s interest and utilises all senses for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, that is called devotion. Many become proud considering themselves ‘servants of Kṛṣṇa’, but if someone refuses to give up this ego, it means they are obsessed with a material designation—in fact, such knowledge is a sign of belonging to Māyā’s family and being a non-devotee. Those who pretend to be pure but do not have attachment to the interest of Kṛṣṇa, have no value. A servant of Kṛṣṇa is pure intrinsically.

Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu told about the symptoms of the highest devotion:

**anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇanuśīlanam bhaktir uttamū**

“The highest devotion is that which satisfies Lord Kṛṣṇa, free from the coverings of any pursuits such as action, knowledge.”

The highest devotion is the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness utilising everything that is favourable to it and without any material desires except the desire to satisfy Kṛṣṇa, being indifferent to knowledge, giving up expertise in scriptures, performance of material duties, as well as all practices including renunciation, *yoga*, and *sāṅkhya*.

If one is partial to mixing fruitive work, knowledge, *yoga*, etc. with devotion or manipulating devotion, such a show of liberalism is nothing but advocacy of weakness that comes from unwanted habits (*anarthas*). The truth is that devotion is unbiased, powerful, causeless, unchecked and eternal. It is

a spontaneous property of the eternal, liberated, pure soul and the highest religion of the living entity.

sa vai puṁsaṁ paro dharmo yato bhaktir-adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihatā yayātmā suprasīdati

“The supreme religion for all living beings is that by which they can attain loving devotional service to the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted in order to feel complete satisfaction.”

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 1.2.6)

Suppose you prefer to mix a drop of limewater (calcium hydroxide) or some adulterant with milk—even if you see such milk adulteration as liberalism, you will not get the result of drinking genuine milk by that.

The poet Jayadev Goswāmī wrote in his *Gīta-Govinda*:

kaṁsārīr api saṁsāra-vāsanā-baddha-śṛīkhalām
rādhām ādhāya hṛdaye tatyāja vraja-sundarīḥ

“Lord Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Kāṁsa, left aside the other gopīs during the rāsa dance and took Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to His heart, for She is the helper of the Lord in realising the essence of His desires.”

Kāmadev (Cupid) enacts the *rāsa-līlā* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa for the pleasure (*sambhoga*) and satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, and the chief shelter of *rasa* is Śrī Rādhā. ‘*Sanī*’ means complete and essential, but the binding link in the Lord’s desire to enjoy the *rāsa-līlā* is Śrī Rādhikā. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa obtains Her in His heart, He leaves all the other beautiful Vraja *gopīs* for Her.

Śrīmatī Vṛṣabhānu Nandinī, the worshipping embodiment of service to Kṛṣṇa, is completely, head to toe, absorbed in the service of Kṛṣṇa; She is Kṛṣṇa-mayī—inside and outside, Her entire being is in the desire to satisfy Kṛṣṇa; that is why Her Name is Rādhā (‘worship’). Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dās Kavirāj Goswāmī says (Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, 1.4.87):

**kṛṣṇa-vāñchhā-pūrti-rūpa kare ārādhane
ataeva rādhikā nāma pūrāṇe vākhāne**

“Her worship [ārādhana] consists of fulfilling the desires of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the Purāṇas call Her Rādhikā.”

When one takes an exclusive vow to fulfil Kṛṣṇa’s desire and enters Kṛṣṇa’s family becoming a follower of Her followers, this is called *rūpānuga* devotion.

In material family life, ‘*samī*’ means pretence, there is no reality in it. Such material life brings bitter experience, and many often compare it to an ‘apple of Sodom’ [a fruit described by ancient writers as externally of fair appearance but dissolving into smoke and ashes when plucked]. There are many folk poems written about the bitter experience of such a life.

Life in Kṛṣṇa’s family is inundated with complete and substantial effort to satisfy Kṛṣṇa, this is the highest reality. It is only by the mercy of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, an exalted *rūpānuga* follower, that a supremely fortunate soul may enter the *sevā-kuñja* family of Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.

Materialists besotted with material desires who do not aspire to enter Kṛṣṇa’s service-family become either atheist or theist moralists—to enjoy their material family life, they become stuck in the stinginess of their minds. Some say, “Religion is fostering high moral and fulfilling one’s duties; this is the service to the Lord. Therefore when one wants to live happily in family life (or, in other words, enjoy with the family life), then if they do not follow the socially accepted moral standards, there will be a clash that will prevent family happiness and joy. So, people do their duties and follow moral standards pursuing material happiness, but as they keep on struggling with so many hundreds and hundreds of obstacles that come naturally in the course of such an atheistic material life, their life simply finishes.

There is another class of theistic people who say that this material life is given to them by God. Wife, sons, extended

and immediate family, country, society—everything is God’s creation. If one does not serve them—does not protect them—then it would mean disobeying the order and desire of the Lord. Those who are under control of their household religion say, “If you attain the cessation of existence or become indifferent to material family life, you will be preventing the maintenance of the world, which is a cherished desire of God.” So, when people, swearing by God, enjoy material life in the name of following householders’ religion (*samsāra-dharma*) and swear that they follow Brahmā and Dakṣa’s duties of preserving the world created by the Lord or continuing the flow of material life, then they only become soiled by the association with women, etc. Fallen into the whirlpool of material life and facing various miseries and fears, to avoid these miseries, people resort to various moral standards and schemes to describe the phantom sky-flower of material happiness. Some swear to be like King Janaka, some smear oil on their hands to clean a jackfruit [so that no dirt sticks or is visible afterwards]. However if one breaks into the interior living quarters of such a lifestyle, they will see that the hunger for enjoyment and family life has turned into a queen, kept beautifully at the house. Such people’s highest goal and attachment is in the enjoyment of material life and maintaining their material life intact every day—this is the *mantra* of the materialist householders’ mentality. That is why they say, “How can one practise devotion living with family?”—but these false words are merely self-deception and deception of others, and you can often hear people give many kinds of advice on following material religion, such as to be a ‘home *brahmachārī*’, ‘a family practitioner’, etc. If you suffer from such insincerity and greed for material enjoyment, you can never get spiritual benefit. Such duplicitous people can never become detached. If a person has no attachment to the family of Kṛṣṇa but pretends to be like King Janaka or ‘smears oil on their hand to clean a jackfruit,’ they

only externally preach detachment, but internally they are just a *jīva* soul that is extremely deceitful, attacked material desires and afflicted by a turbulent hunger for material enjoyment.

Besides these two types of material enjoyers (theistic and atheistic), there are also several types of souls who pretend to give up material life. Some become irritated by the bitter experience of material life and decide to follow the principle of ‘since the bed is broken, I will lie on the ground’ and leave the lawful family life; but such renunciation is actually only anger produced by an unfulfilled desire to enjoy material life, i.e. it is another type of attachment to material life. Such people, even if they go to live in a forest, only let their desire sprawl into a ‘*Gīta-saṁsār*’, or an unlawful family life. They become *vāntāśī*, or vomit-eaters [they renounce, or vomit, something and then again eat it]—some again enter material life. We can see the example of Ray Gunokar: he pretended to become a mendicant Vaiṣṇav but then, due to his immaturity, started making a show of giving lectures on *Ujvala-nīlamaṇi* and again returned to *viddha-śākta-dharma* (i.e. again felt taste and hunger for material life and enjoyment). After that, transcendental Kāmadev (Cupid) displays a perverted reflection of transcendental love and the pastimes of the Lord that destroy the heart disease, and the soul becomes intoxicated by material enjoyment. If one imitates the transcendental pastimes of Rāi and Kāna, described by Chanḍi Dās and Vidyāpati, in one’s material family life like *prākṛta-sahajiyās* do, then it is an offence at the feet of that *līlā*, and, as the result, they fall into the pain of unlawful enjoyment of material life. *Viddha-śākta*, or non-devotees’ *śākta-dharma* [worship of Durgā Devī for material gain] is created by the illusory potency of the Lord to inspire and excite people to follow this mode of material life; and when people, engrossed into body consciousness, fall into the well of material life and commit the offence of desiring to enjoy the pastimes enacted by transcendental Kāmadev, there arises the lifestyle of *prākṛta-sahajiyās*.

Many praise and speak about the devotion of housewives and, accepting them as *gurus* of devotion, call them Kṛṣṇa's housewives, promoting themselves in this way. This gratifies the clan of enjoyers, this gratifies one's own desire, but this does not gratify devotion, devotees and the Lord.

If one does not spend their life constantly conversing about the Lord, taking shelter at the lotus feet of materially detached great souls, does not practise devotion to the Lord, one can never be successful in crossing the material world, no matter how great one may be.

One more important thing is that refraining from material life is not the highest goal. After refraining from material life, the soul must embrace the life in the family of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Various religions tell about the necessity to refrain from material life, but the religion of *Śrīmad Bhavatam* and Śrī Gaurasundar explain in many amazing ways that after leaving material life one must enter the life in the family of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīvās Paṇḍit, citizens of Kulīngrām headed by Rāmānanda Vasu, Raghunanda and his group, citizens of Śrīkhaṇḍ, Śivānanda Sen and his group, Śrī Damayantī Devī or the Vaiṣṇava ladies—they are all examples to this world of how one can leave material life and enter the family of Kṛṣṇa. The example that Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself showed during His *gṛhastha-līlā* is the greatest example of living a life in the family of Kṛṣṇa. There is one particular thing in His *gṛhastha-līlā*, or *samsāra-līlā*, that is worth learning from. One does not have the right, or qualification, to stay in the householder order of life his entire life. In their renounced life, *jīva* souls should show the example of practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Family life brings about attachment, and living amidst attachment to family life is not a life of a person who seeks spiritual benefit. Therefore, after Mahāprabhu showed the example of householder life in order to teach the people, He revealed His *sannyās-līlā*.

Some people may say, “But Śrī Jagannāth Miśra, Śrī Śāchī Mātā or Vasudev-Devakī, or Nanda-Yaśomatī actually lived in family life to their old age, to the end of their lives?” “*Pañchaśordhvaṁ vanaṁ vrajet*”—it is not necessary for them to follow this scriptural injunction because they are not accused of any crime that would require the kind of punishment that is administered for the non-devotee practitioners. Their family life is an eternally liberated transcendental family life. Every *jīva* soul, even grass, creepers, etc. aspire for this kind of family life. Will they leave Kṛṣṇa and go to live in a forest? Will they leave their service to Kṛṣṇa and show the life of a renunciate averse to Kṛṣṇa? In this world, the *jīva* souls attached to enjoyment are simply an illegal imitation and perverted reflection of the mood of these eternally liberated souls. Very materialistic householders remain attached to material enjoyment until a very old age. Fascinated by the futile love of their sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, et al., they stay in their material houses and engage in material affairs until their very last breath. We must not think that the mood of these liberated souls is one and the same as the mood of the souls attached to enjoyment. All these eternally liberated servants of Kṛṣṇa manifest themselves in the form of Śrī Jagannāth Miśra or Śrī Nanda Mahārāj in the transcendental mood of *vātsalya-rasa* (parental love).



Questions and Answers

1) Question: What does service to the Lord give?

Answer: We consider that taking shelter in the service of the Lord is the only duty. Fortunate are those who serve the Lord. You must hear, practise and remember Kṛṣṇa consciousness despite all difficulties. I have nothing else to offer you except this.

2) Question: How can one escape from the material world?

Answer: This earth, i.e. this material world, is an examination place. Those who want to pass this examination must practise *śravaṇ* and *kīrtan* (hearing and chanting) in the company of devotees.

3) Question: How does Māyā work?

Answer: If you heat a piece of iron in fire, it gets burning power from the fire and can burn other things—Māyā also takes her materials from the Lord and removes souls from His service.

4) Question: How can one show kindness to *jīva* souls?

Answer: The only kindness, or mercy, to *jīva* souls is speaking to them about Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*Hari-kathā kīrtan*). There can be no other way to show kindness to a *jīva* soul that could compare to Kṛṣṇa-*kīrtan*. Mercy to *jīva* souls means to engage a soul averse to the Lord in the service of the Supreme Lord through the medium of *Hari-kīrtan*.

5) Question: What does a show of service mean?

Answer: It is what those who serve the Deity must not become like. If a temple priest worships the Deity for a ten-rupee salary, this cannot be ‘serving’ the Lord. If someone does ‘*kīrtan*’ for

twenty rupees, this cannot be ‘chanting the Holy Name’; if you settle with somebody to give a lecture or read ‘*Bhāgavatam*’ for fifty rupees, this cannot be ‘Hari-kathā’—this is amusement for the sake of people’s joy or an eloquence display. This is not devotion, this is not Vaiṣṇavism—it is enjoying the Name, it is pursuing one’s own interest (*karma-mārga*).

6) Question: Who is a *sādhū*?

Answer: If one grows dreadlocks and pretends to be a renunciate or becomes a big *grhastha*, this is not what is called a *sādhū*. A *sādhū* is a person who is constantly absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (Hari-kathā); a person who is constantly busy with the service of the Lord; a person whose every effort is for Kṛṣṇa, whose every effort is for the service of the Lord.

7) Question: What is the path of real spiritual benefit?

Answer: As long as the *jīva* soul does not become inclined to serve the Lord, it will not have consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, which means the pastimes and teachings of Śrī Gaurasundar will not enter its heart. Our only duty is to serve Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s devotees. We will be cheated for as long as we are not able to realise this. When will we be released from our foolishness? When we sincerely, leaving all deceit, embark on the path of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Although the sun is very far, sun rays come near us and give us light; in the same way, the Lord always appears near us within the material world. If we follow and hold the hand of those who worship the Lord, they will open our eyes and we will be able to have the *darśan* of the Lord. Those who constantly try to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness serve the Lord at every step—without service to the Lord they do not use anything, do not do anything. Service to such pure devotees can give us pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness for Kṛṣṇa is the ultimate goal of all goals. Kṛṣṇa, in His form of *saṅkīrtan*, destroys Agha, Baka, Putanā, et al. within the hearts of extremely unqualified people. We have no other

engagement except for service to Kṛṣṇa. Gaurasundar, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the garb of a devotee, taught in so many ways that one must only practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

8) Question: *Will I get any real benefit if I follow a manodharma (a concocted religion, not established in the scriptures)?*

Answer: As long as the *rasa* (essence) remains concealed by such religions, those who practise it to satisfy their own senses cannot attain Kṛṣṇa, the reality—even if such devotees glorify His name, form, beauty, and pastimes, they will not realise these things.

9) Question: *What is wrong with being a non-devotee?*

Answer: We may think that someone may be a devotee, and someone may be a non-devotee according to their liking, what is wrong with that? If we are non-devotees, then there appear several problems—various miseries (caused by one's body, the nature, other souls, etc.). The only cause of suffering is aversion to the Lord—no matter what we do, if it is not devotion we will suffer. When, instead of worshipping the Lord, *jīva* souls exercise their independent free will, Māyā Devī turns them into her slaves. Thus we pose as masters, but as soon as we get some good association, we can understand that we are not masters—our only duty is service to the Lord.

10) Question: *What happens if I listen to non-devotional talks?*

Answer: If we listen to non-devotional talks or take advice from non-devotees, then we will spend millions of lifetimes in illusory bondage serving every single atom of this material world.

11) Question: *What happens if I take advice from devotees?*

Answer: We can hear from devotees that if one serves Viṣṇu, then all services to every conscious and unconscious atom are fulfilled. Mahāprabhu said, “*Śraddhā* is a firm, determined faith that by service to Kṛṣṇa all actions are accomplished.”

12) Question: Who can give the Lord?

Answer: Following those who serve the one undivided Absolute brings spiritual benefit to the soul. If someone dresses as a benefactor, he can give others something from the little wealth that he has, but devotees' eternal wealth is the Lord Himself. If the Lord personally gives Himself, there will be something more left, but a devotee of the Lord can give the Lord without withholding anything. It does not harm the Lord:

om pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇam udachyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate

"The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the Complete Whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the Complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He retains the complete balance."

(Bṛhadāraṇyak Upaniṣad, 5.1)

Service to Vaiṣṇavs (devotees) is higher than service to Viṣṇu, and it is everyone's duty to serve Vaiṣṇavs. The glories of service to Vaiṣṇavs are greater than those of service to Viṣṇu. When one serves Vaiṣṇavs, service to Viṣṇu is automatically accomplished.

13) Question: What is mano-dharma?

Answer: There are many spiritual practices in this world. We do not like to hear that only by chanting the Holy Name can one get spiritual benefit. The Name, form, beauty, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord are non-different from each other, and that which draws a distinction between them is called *mano-dharma* (religion that springs from one's mind). Śrīman Mahāprabhu said,

*"dvaite bhadrābhara jñana, saba manodharma
'ei bhala', 'ei manda'—ei saba bhrama"*

“In the material world, conceptions of good and bad are all mental speculations. Therefore, saying ‘This is good’ and ‘This is bad’ is all a mistake.”

14) Question: How can one become a devotee?

Answer: Many people want to become devotees without becoming servants of devotees, without serving devotees. However, it is impossible to become a devotee without becoming a servant of devotees. Many of us are non-devotees, but we think we are devotees. What is my position? I am not a devotee—I cannot constantly serve the Lord. Sometimes we have the ego of a man and we are drawn to the beauty of women, sometimes we have the ego of a woman and we are drawn to men—can such an atheist, sinner and the lowliest of men as myself ever become a devotee?

15) Question: Why is it said that the path of *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, *yogīs*, etc. is wrong?

Answer: *Bhāgavatam* says that those who have accepted the path of *karma*, *jñāna* or *yoga* have taken to a wrong path. If there is devotion, one can get the Lord. You may get something you like (*preya*), but it does not mean you get what is good for you (*śreya*); it is necessary to turn *śreya* into *preya*. Devotees say that I must serve my Lord. ‘He may accept it or may not’—that is devotion.

16) Question: What is the difference between *karmīs* and devotion?

Answer: *Karmīs* (materialists) want to enjoy in this life and in next life. Devotion is the propensity of a pure soul. If we can re-establish ourselves in our real healthy state, we will be able to easily separate ourselves from the material world.

17) Question: Who has the right, the qualification to chant the Holy Name?

Answer: Devotees engaged in Śrī Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtan* attain the qualification to chant the Holy Name through service to devotees.

Devotees keep in the temple, or pure sincere householder devotees keep at their homes, whatever can be used in service of the Lord—pure devotees serve the Lord always, in every way, through all their senses. Even householder devotees can dwell in Goloka if they become free from attachment to their house by engaging themselves in the service to the Supreme Lord—they see other residents of their house not as objects for their own enjoyment but as objects for the service of Kṛṣṇa. In this way they can get spiritual benefit. If we involve our senses in the external world, we will never be able to become servants of the Holy Name.

18) Question: Is Kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtan the only practice?

Answer: People who practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness have no other duty. Be it a child, an old man, a young man, a woman, a man, a scholar, a fool, a rich man, a poor man, a handsome man, a pious man, a sinner—whatever position one may be in, they have no other method of spiritual practice: the only spiritual practice is ‘Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtan’.

19) Question: What is so bad and selfish about being a karma-kāṇḍī or a jñāna-kāṇḍī?

Answer: Dharma, artha, kāma or philosophy of working being motivated by the result and liberation are the covetable goals of 100% followers of so-called religious movements in this world. Śrīman Mahāprabhu said that they are all deceit and cheating. The Holy Name does not come from the mouths of those who pursue these things. Those who make a show in different ways for the sake of religion, wealth, material desires and liberation are offenders to the holy feet of the Holy Name. We must never make the Lord our servant for the sake of some benefit, neither must we ever put the Lord to work for our own interest. Karma-kāṇḍī are those who desire religion, wealth, material things; and those who decide to renounce the fruits of their actions are called

jñāna-kāṇḍī. Both are selfish—both try to turn the Lord into their servant. Pure devotees say:

“nāhaṁ vande tava charaṇayor dvandvam advandva-hetoḥ
kumbhī-pākaṁ gurum api hare nāraṇaṁ nāpanetum
ramyā-rāmā-mṛdu-tanu-latā-nandane nābhirantūṁ
bhāve bhāve hṛdaya-bhavane bhāvayeyaṁ bhavantam

“O Lord! I do not pray to Your lotus feet for material happiness or to be saved from the worst *kumbhīpāka* hell; neither do I pray to Your lotus feet to enjoy the company of beautiful heavenly women who reside in Indra’s garden. All I pray for is to remember your holy lotus feet in the temple of my heart and to receive shelter in the domain of Your exclusive devotion.”

20) Question: What happens if one commits an offence to a Vaiṣṇav or the Holy Name?

Answer: *Nāma-aparādh* and *Vaiṣṇav-aparādh* are two sides of the same coin. As a result of an offence to the Holy Name, one will try to enjoy or feel enthusiastic to follow selfish pursuits and accumulate knowledge. Śrīman Mahāprabhu said that the Holy Name never comes to the mouths of offenders to the Holy Name—the letters of the Name may come, but not the pure Holy Name. When one makes an offence to the Lord, Vaiṣṇavs can remove that offence, but if one makes an offence to the feet of these Vaiṣṇavs, then who is there in this world to remove their offence? So, both offences to the Holy Name and to Vaiṣṇavs must be given up.

21) Question: Into whose ears does Hari-kathā enter?

Answer: If, by our great fortune, we are anxious to serve the Lord, then it will enter our ears. We will be able to hear and keep it within our hearts. Those who are unfortunate may think they heard Hari-kathā, but actually they did not—they were cheated. The moment we lose our guardian, the enemies surrounding us will attack us. The moment we stop listening about Kṛṣṇa

consciousness from a bona fide *sādhū*, stop serving the *sādhū* sincerely, Māyā will immediately take advantage and seize us.

22) Question: How should we spend this human life?

Answer: We have been nourished and brought up with much care and love in a particular society since our childhood, and we have got entangled in this life so much that we do not have even a moment to spare for the discussions of our eternal life. We spend twenty-four hours a day busy with our work, so much so that we do not even try to know what our real position is. If we think in terms of eternity, one hundred years of a lifetime is very little. Therefore, the duty of intelligent people is not to spend the hundred years of their lifespan on sense-gratification, but to seek their own spiritual benefit.

23) Question: How must we see 'disappearance' days?

Answer: Common people call it '*akapaṭer din*' ('deceitless day') instead of '*aprakaṭer din*' (disappearance day), but we know that sometimes they call the disappearance day an appearance day. On the disappearance day, we get an opportunity to serve our Guru, but we are not told by our Śrī Gurupādpadma to see the Deity as being separate from Kṛṣṇa and the devotee of Kṛṣṇa, so the Deity is always worshippingable.

24) Question: What is the reason of our suffering?

Answer: If we do not discuss the answer to the question 'Who am I?', then we experience difficulties in life. Various temptations of material life try to drown us. The moment we drop our guard, Witch Māyā grabs us by the throat. Unless we do perpetually listen to discussions about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is no way for us to escape the bondage of Māyā.

25) Question: What is devotion?

Answer: When will industrious materialists get their promised reward? Who will get it? Where will they get it? We debate about

this among ourselves, but almost everyone is going down the wrong path without realising this. Those who have even a little realisation of the spiritual world exclusively worship Chaitanya's feet dust—Brahmā, Bṛhaspati, Indra and other demigod in charge of various duties—reject such trifle knowledge like stool and urine. Devotion is objection against enjoyment and liberation.

26) Question: *What is the difference between the renunciation of pure devotees and the renunciation of other people?*

Answer: The renunciation of Mahāprabhu's devotees is renunciation of pure devotees. This is not the false renunciation that we see everywhere in this world. Some say that they are 4.6-meter-cloth renunciates; some say they are 2.3-meter-cloth-renunciates; some say that they have renounced wearing shoes and walk barefoot; some say they have given up eating and drinking—such an outward appearance of renunciates may pass as a heroic feat among enjoyers, but devotees of Mahāprabhu think such people are victim of deceit.

27) Question: *What is enjoyment and what is renunciation?*

Answer: Enjoyment is what does not let people see that everything actually belongs to the Lord, inasmuch as renunciation is what does not let people understand that everything is actually ingredients for the service of the Lord. The enjoyment or renunciation that brings neglect of things related to the Lord is alien to the soul. The soul's nature is service.

28) Question: *What is the unparalleled gift of Śrī Gaurasundar?*

Answer: The unparalleled gift that Śrī Gaurasundar has given to the human race is the very love of Godhead. The greatest deficiency in this world is a lack of love. That is why envy, anger, material desires, etc. always cause so much misery to all *jīva* souls. One more gift of Mahāprabhu is that, to rescue the conditioned souls of Kali-yuga, He went door to door distributing the Hare

Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* (the *mantra* of the Holy Name prescribed for this Age of Kali), to every *jīva* soul and, inspiring His associates to take up the post of a *guru* in this world, He made tireless efforts to save such fallen souls as ourselves.

29) Question: What happens if one does not serve the guru?

Answer: Before one goes to serve Śrī Gaurasundar, one must serve the *guru*. Service to the *guru* means service to the *guru* who is a close associate of the Lord—without such service one will not be able to get any eternal spiritual benefit. Because we lack sincere service to the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, we just repeat words in the same manner that a parrot learns some words and keeps on repeating them. We say many big-big words, long-long words, but we completely forget about *Gītā*'s '*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni śloka* and its highest *śloka* '*mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja.*' Unless we get transcendental feelings, we will not get any benefit, but if we say we have got transcendental feeling being situated in the material world, then such thinking is non-devotional. The realisation of one's non-devotion is called humility, and absence of such realisation of one's non-devotion is called vanity, or conceit.

30) Question: Does the word 'Śrī-Kṛṣṇa' imply guru?

Answer: In the word 'Śrī-Kṛṣṇa', 'Śrī' means She who is attracted to Kṛṣṇa. So, Kṛṣṇa is He who attracts, and the attracted Śrī means She who is extremely beautiful. He who can attract by His beauty the One who is the most beautiful is known as Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

31) Question: What is the difference between spiritual life at a temple and at home?

Answer: There is no difference between a spiritual temple and a spiritual house. The practitioners of spiritual life will always be careful that whatever they do would be for the worship of the Supreme Lord, and not for the worship of the devil or their own enjoyment.

32) Question: Is the mind the same as the soul?

Answer: The mind and the soul are not one and the same. The mind always judges about the external world. The mind can accept gross matter from the outer world, but the soul, being an eternal part and parcel of the Supreme Controller, can bring a message about the Lord. Only a pure soul knows what the Lord wants, what He likes; therefore, the religion of the soul is service to the eternal Paramātmā (Supreme Soul).

33) Question: How can we protect the seed of devotional creeper?

Answer: We can see in *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta* that if you do not water it, the seed of the devotional creeper (*bhakti-latā bij*) will dry and be destroyed. In general, if you plant some seeds and do not water them after that, they will dry up, and if you water them too much, the seeds will rot. It is the same here, too—*śravaṇ* and *kīrtan* (hearing and chanting) is the way to protect the seed of the devotional creeper, but if unqualified people listen to or discuss the highest topics found in the works by Chaṇḍī Dās, Vidyāpati, chapters about *rāsa-līlā*, etc. on pretext of *śravaṇ*, then the tiny seed of their devotional creeper will not sprout, it will die very quickly.

34) Question: What is the difference between a Vaiṣṇav and a brāhmaṇ?

Answer: A Vaiṣṇav is a devotee of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and a *brāhmaṇ* is a devotee of *nirguṇa* Brahman (impersonal aspect of the Lord situated beyond the influence of the material modes of nature). The knower of the impersonal aspect of the Supreme Lord is called a *brāhmaṇ*, and the knower of the personal aspect of the Lord is called a Vaiṣṇav. If a *brāhmaṇ* practises Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the realisation of *sambandha-jñāna*, he can become a Vaiṣṇav—by the mercy of Viṣṇu, he can be saved from the hands of impersonalists and become an ‘unadulterated *brāhmaṇ*’, or a Vaiṣṇav. Śrī Jīva Goswāmī writes

in his book *Bhakti-sandarbha* (177), referring to Śrī Vyāsadev's *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, that one priest performing sacrifices is higher than a thousand ordinary *brāhmaṇs*, one person learned in the Vedas and all the other scriptures is higher than a thousand such priests, a Vaiṣṇav is higher than millions of such learned experts, and just one devotee is higher than thousands of Vaiṣṇavs. All Vaiṣṇavs are *brāhmaṇs*, but *brāhmaṇism* stands on the lowest steps of the ladder of Vaiṣṇavism. Vaiṣṇavs' qualities are much greater than the qualities of *brāhmaṇs*. A *brāhmaṇ* is a servant of Vaiṣṇavs: just as when a man has a *lakh* of rupees, he also has a thousand rupees, the same is true here too—if someone is a Vaiṣṇav, they are automatically a *brāhmaṇ* as well. The qualities of a *brāhmaṇ* are included within the qualities of a Vaiṣṇav.

35) Question: What is so special about Vaiṣṇavs' philosophy?

Answer: Vaiṣṇavs' philosophy is connection with reality. True knowledge is not a competitor or an aggressor like *yoga* knowledge that aims at changing empirical knowledge. This is the distinctive characteristic of Vaiṣṇav philosophy. All main *śruti* scriptures, all main *Vedānta* scriptures, *Bhāgavatam* tell about the truth. These scriptures elaborate on human culture, various rules and regulations of the past, as well as the transmigration of the soul. The gist of Vaiṣṇavs' philosophy is that until we fully surrender to an *āchārya* whose character embodies the character of a Vaiṣṇav, no matter how learned or scholarly we may be, we will not be able to easily realise the philosophy of Vaiṣṇavism in our hearts. There is a *śloka* in the *Gītā*:

tad viddhi praṇipātena, paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ, jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ

Unconditional surrender, honest inquiry and service mood—if one has these three qualities, they will easily understand the philosophy of Vaiṣṇavs.

36) Question: Why do pure Vaiṣṇavs do collection?

Answer: The reasons why Vaiṣṇavs do collection are these:

a) to deliver the souls that are charmed by *māyā* and consider that everything that exists for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa is meant for their own enjoyment, and who are thus attached to eating sin;

b) to tell them about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, to bring them to the bona fide path and the path of eternal spiritual benefit;

c) materialists work very hard to earn their own food and clothes, and they think that they achieve material happiness in their life due to their own effort—due to their ignorance, they steal what is not theirs and enjoy sin. Therefore, pure Vaiṣṇavs accept something from them to be merciful to these ignorant soul and help them unconsciously earn some *sukṛti*. Pure Vaiṣṇavs do collection to give mercy to the *jīva* souls, not to extort tax from them.

37) Question: What is the teachings and example of devotees?

Answer: Bhagavān Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sāraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda said: “You must take a loan to preach Mahāprabhu’s teachings, then, to pay back that loan, you will have to engage yourself in service even more. When you have a pending payment for this loan, you will have to engage yourself in even more collection. At the same time, if your practice is not proper and character is not pure, pious *gṛhasthas* will not donate anything to you—then you will have to try hard to lead a pure life of a practitioner. I will not leave you even one cent so that in the future you do not become lax and leave *saṅkīrtan*, service to the Lord, and your proper practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

38) Question: What is the meaning of a Maṭh?

Answer: A Maṭh is a centre for practising glorification of the Lord (*Hari-kīrtan*). *Hari-kīrtan* is its life and soul. A Maṭh is where laziness, unrighteous behaviour, ‘village’ thoughts, ‘village’ talks or base material desires have no place whatsoever. That is why when you go door to door for collection, you will generally go

through examination. Common people will criticise you saying that they are donors and you are beggars, i.e. they hold a higher position than you, that you are the recipients of their mercy; some will be ready to chastise you—as the result, your tolerance can grow, you will have an opportunity to be humble and give honour to others. Just by seeing your qualities of being humbler than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree and respectful to others, common *jīva* souls will be benefited.

39) Question: *Is there anything else a practitioner of Hari-kīrtan should strive to do?*

Answer: Śrīla Prabhupād Bhaktisiddhānta Sāraswatī Ṭhākura said: if someone tells something to you personally, you must not get angry. There is no fault in your *guru-varga*, scriptures, great souls who are supremely liberated, eternal associates of the Lord. Somebody can say something about them out of ignorance, but when you practise real *kīrtan*, you must rectify the mistake of those who criticise—in this way you can give great benefit to these ignorant people. If you indulge your laziness and want to practise in seclusion to get a break from the criticism, then you will not have to rectify your character, but neither will you have a proper practising life. Because you want to get *pratiṣṭhā*, you cannot tolerate it when others abuse you; you try to please others and to please yourself by pleasing others—as the result, you will be harmed spiritually, and I know you will leave the path of true spiritual benefit and take up an inauspicious path. Because you are my closest friends, I cannot do this to you.

40) Question: *Who is a bona fide guru (sad-guru)?*

Answer: It is a person who is, first of all, devoid of any cheating, who gives genuine advice on religion of the soul, or *bhagavata-dharma* (religion based on the precepts of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*). Besides, a genuine *guru* is a person who do not have material defects (selfishness, etc.) because only *bhagavat-dharma* accepts

the eternal and transcendental nature of the *guru*. There are many *vitta-haraṅkāri gurus* in this world (who steal your wealth, money, etc.), but there are very few *santāp-haraṅkāri gurus* (who 'steal' material misery). A person who cannot save a conditioned soul from the cycle of birth and death and cannot sincerely engage them in the service of the Lord can never be called a *guru*.

41) Question: What does it mean to 'give up bad association'?

Answer: 'Association with women' means associating with those who live in this world with a view to enjoy, or who have an 'enjoyment' vision. Giving up this material vision is called giving up bad association. Giving up such low habits and trying exclusively, with one's mind, body and speech, to serve Kṛṣṇa is called *sannyās*. Just being a Vaiṣṇav is the topmost *sannyās*. Another name of Vaiṣṇavs is *paramahansa*. Our only duty is engage ourselves in the service of the Lord accepting whichever appropriate clothes within the *varṇāśrama-dharma* to show the dignity of the *paramahansa-veśa* of our *guru-varga*.

42) Question: What is the cause of the famine of pure kīrtan?

Answer: Because of the insult and dishonour people show to the *guru-varga*, there has appeared a famine of *kīrtan* in the world today. The *kīrtan* of today is *kīrtan* (glorification) of material world, *kīrtan* for the sake of business, *kīrtan* for the sake of amassing money, women and prestige, *kīrtan* for the sake of mundane sense-gratification. Such *kīrtan* is done not out of love for Kṛṣṇa or for satisfying the Lord. However, when pure devotees do *kīrtan* out of love for the Lord and for the spiritual benefit of the *jīva* souls, such *kīrtan* is pure.

43) Question: Who is my and everyone's benefactor?

Answer: Only a pious man surrendered to the Lord can be his own and others' benefactor. Pure devotees always try to leave bad association of people who have other desires, who pursue material goals or seek knowledge.

44) Question: *What does it mean to truly take shelter at the lotus feet of a guru?*

Answer: Following the advice that Śrī Chaitanyadev and His associates and Kṛṣṇa's devotees always give to us is called real shelter at the feet of the *guru*. Service to Śrī Hari, *guru* and Vaiṣṇavs is service to the associates of Śrī Gaura Hari.

45) Question: *How can we receive a message from the Holy Lord?*

Answer: You cannot get a letter from the Lord directly, but you can get a message from the Lord through His devotees—and our message also can be sent to the Lord through them.

46) Question: *How can we be rescued from inauspiciousness, or spiritual damage?*

Answer: The One who can steal (*haraṇ*) our desire to enjoy is named 'Hari'. This desire to enjoy that we suffer from is called *anartha*. If remembrance of Kṛṣṇa comes to us in the association of the Lord's devotees, then we can be delivered from inauspiciousness, otherwise not.

47) Question: *What does 'poor Nārāyaṇ'* mean?*

Answer: Nārāyaṇ can never be poor. A poor person can never be Nārāyaṇ. Every *jīvātmā* is part and parcel of Lord Kṛṣṇa, a *jīva* can never become God, so to call a poor man Nārāyaṇ or to associate Nārāyaṇ with something poor is atheistic.

48) Question: *Who is called a Vaiṣṇav?*

Answer: It is said in the scriptures, "*Sarva viṣṇujāḥ vaiṣṇavāścha*," which means that everyone is born from the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu and everyone is therefore born as a Vaiṣṇav. Although by our intrinsic nature everyone is a Vaiṣṇav, when the soul comes under control of *mahāmāyā*, it is then called *avaiṣṇav* (non-devotee, materialist). Devotees of Viṣṇu, the Supreme Controller, are Vaiṣṇavs.

* 'Poor Nārāyaṇ' refers to the poor (beggar class) conceived as God personified.

49) Question: *What is the right, or qualification, for the service to Kṛṣṇa?*

Answer: Unless one is liberated, one cannot have the right to serve Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa belongs wholly to Rādhārāṇī. Without service to Rādhārāṇī, no one can get the right, or qualification, to serve Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇadev is the intrinsic form of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and only Śrī Gurudev can give one the right to serve Kṛṣṇa.

50) Question: *What is the sole duty of the man?*

Answer: There is no other practice or method on this earth except for chanting the Holy Name and glories of the Lord.

51) Question: *If Śrīman Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself, then if we worship Śrīman Mahāprabhu, everything is achieved—what is the necessity to worship Kṛṣṇa separately?*

Answer: Those who think like this discriminate between Kṛṣṇa and Gaura. There are many people who pretend to be followers of Gaura and say things like this in delirium—this is not worship of Gaura, it is nothing but deceit and pretence. Imagining something is bigger than Kṛṣṇa is a concoction or illusion. Actually, a servant worships Gaura before worshipping Kṛṣṇa, and when the eternally liberated souls worship Gaura, it is the same as worship of Kṛṣṇa.

52) Question: *How can one get rid of anarthas (unwanted habits)?*

Answer: Unless a *jīva* soul practises Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it starts looking for material prosperity, knowledge or fulfilment of various desires, therefore it is necessary to call out to the Lord by loudly chanting the *mahā-mantra*. When one loudly chants the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, *anarthas* go away.

53) Question: *What does association give?*

Answer: *Sādhū-saṅga* is the main feature of the human beings practising Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and under the influence of *sādhū-saṅga* the soul becomes gradually intensely drawn to the

service of the Lord. This is the most important engagement of a human being, but we are unfortunate because, deprived of such association, we are spending our life in vain. As a result, all kinds of other works occupy the place of service to the Lord.

54) Question: What does the word ‘dharma’ mean?

Answer: The word ‘*dhāma*’ means ‘light’—we must search for the light that will engage us in the Lord’s service. How many lifetimes have we spent foolishly trying to enter darkness? Seeing our plight, sun-like *Purāna Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* says (7.5.31–32): those who become engrossed in nationalism, wealth, knowledge, intelligence, erudition, etc., become covered and their search for the truth becomes obstructed. If it is difficult for someone to understand the truth, if someone is extremely sinful and indulges their weakness, then they have very little idea about devotion to the Lord. If you want to search for the real truth, you must read *Bhāgavatam* (a scripture that teaches mellows of devotion) in the association of a Bhāgavata-Vaiṣṇav (receptient of the mellows of devotion). If someone reads *Bhāgavatam* seeking knowledge, etc., such lectures bring disaster to this world: both the speaker and the listener get into trouble. Obtaining mercy of the Lord is not a business transaction—but any other motive is.

55) Question: What happens if one hates a Vaiṣṇav?

Answer: If one hates, or is hostile, towards a Vaiṣṇav, they will fall down to hell.

nindāṁ kurvanti ye mūḍhā vaiṣṇavānāṁ mahātmanāṁ
patanti piṭṛbhiḥ sārdhaṁ mahā-raurava-samjñite

“One who derides a great devotee loses the results of his pious activities, his opulence, his reputation and his sons. Vaiṣṇavs are all great souls. Whoever blasphemes them falls down to the hell known as mahā-raurava, accompanied by his forefathers.”

There are many people in Bangladesh who dislike devotees. Although many people there are naturally disposed to devotional

qualities, non-devotion is very strong there. Besides their animosity towards devotees, non-devotees are very enthusiastic to even prevent *bhoga* donations to devotees. Such ideas, such hatred to Vaiṣṇavs must be stopped in this world. It is necessary to speak about this tyranny aimed at the religious world.

56) Question: Who are the *viṣayī* (materialists)?

Answer: Those who waste their time on service to their mundane wife, sons, etc. instead of seeking eternal spiritual benefit.

57) Question: What does one get by becoming a Vaiṣṇav?

Answer: Becoming a Vaiṣṇav is the greatest achievement. It is the only duty in the life of a *brāhmaṇ*, and it is fulfilled only after millions of births of being a Vedantic scholar. In Bengal, the scholars in the line of exclusive monotheism (*kevaladvaitavād*) say, “We are also great,” but no one other than the greatest sage Vyāsadev wrote:

“One priest (a *brāhmaṇ* who does fire sacrifices) is greater than thousands of general *brāhmaṇs*; one expert in Vedic knowledge is greater than thousands of such priests; one devotee of Viṣṇu is greater than millions of such Vedic scholars; and one Vaiṣṇav is greater than thousands of devotees of Viṣṇu.”

58) Question: What is the result of sincere service?

Answer: When someone preaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness without deceit or worships the Lord of all four directions, Śrī Gaurasundar in the form of His Deity and His instructions (*vāṇī*), the devotees of Gaura become affectionate to such person and the environment, percolated with their affection and mercy, makes others’ service successful too.

59) Question: Is there any so-called inauspiciousness for devotees?

Answer: Śrīla Prabhupād says there is nothing inauspicious for devotees, but for non-devotees, for those who have

other desires, who are interested in *karma*, *jñāna*, etc., their so-called auspiciousness and benefit are a hidden repository of inauspiciousness. He also said that exclusive devotees of the Lord accept any dispensation of the Lord with meek humility. If one shows some fickleness towards the arrangement of the Lord, it only proves a lack of faith and presence of selfish desires. In this regard, Śrīla Prabhupād spoke elaborately on the *śloka* from *Bhāgavatam* ‘*tat te ‘nukapāṁ*’ and Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī’s ‘*virachaya mayi daṇḍam*’. The meaning of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī’s *śloka* is this: it may rain, there may be a thunderstorm, there may be a torrential rain, by the *chātak* bird never glorifies anything except rain water. The Lord’s mercy may at present seem to be punishment or cruelty, or benediction, but the devotees of the Lord never look at it—they are always single-mindedly surrendered to the Lord. Exclusive devotees of the Lord are not bound by the result of their actions, but they themselves know, out of their humility, that they are suffering the result of their own actions.

60) Question: What happens if one pretends to do service and criticises the guru and Vaiṣṇavs?

Answer: All the people who cheated Mahāprabhu in one or another way at their homes and all the people who criticised and harassed the *guru* and Vaiṣṇavs have fallen down—they are punished by the Lord Yamarāj.

61) Question: Can anyone be called a disciple?

Answer: If one does not accept punishment with a lowered head (with humility), they cannot be a disciple. Servants of the Lord live in a temple. If the residents of the temple (*maṭh*) give up proper practice and do not follow the proper conception, they will become ‘enjoyers of *kamaṭh*’. If one gives up the interest of the Maṭh and the service to the Maṭh, such averse soul becomes a *kamaṭh* resident. [*Kamaṭh* is possibly a play of words: it means a ‘turtle’, and in Indian pronunciation, it can sound similar to ‘commode’, a toilet.]

62) Question: What opposes Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Answer: If you do not practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you become a materialist. The house where Kṛṣṇa consciousness is practised constantly is compared to Vaikuṇṭha. One must serve the temple—not accept service from the temple. One must make his house a temple—not transform a temple into one's house.

63) Question: Who looks for faults in Vaiṣṇav?

Answer: Those who practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness never look for faults in Vaiṣṇavs. When you become averse to devotees, you inevitably fall down.

64) Question: What is our duty?

Answer: We have no other duty except to always want to make Kṛṣṇa happy. The form, qualities, associates and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa gradually reveal themselves through chanting the Holy Name. Chanting the Holy Name contains all perfections. You cannot worship the One who bears the Name without worshipping His Name. In this way, so many names clatter our ears—we must remove everything and hear about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

65) Question: Who is considered an enjoyer and who, a renunciate?

Answer: Enjoyers and renunciates are the people of this world; enjoyment and renunciation are conceptions of this world. Devotees of the Lord do not belong to this world—they are neither enjoyers nor renunciates. Enjoyers always want to enjoy, when people see the plight of enjoyers (*‘kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokanī’*—when piety is finished, one returns to the mortal plane, *Gītā*, 9.21), they decide to become renunciates considering that the real vision is when there is no distinction (no *svagata*, no *svajātiya*, no *vijātiya*—no paths, no fellowship, no foreignness), when the seers, seeable and seeing are one and the same. There is no austerity in devotion. Devotees' austerity, etc. is not for their

own sense-gratification—they do not do anything for themselves; everything they do, everything they have is for the service of the Lord. When you serve the Lord and His devotee, the austerity of ascetics or any other practice has no value.

66) Question: What is the only duty of the man?

Answer: Mahāprabhu teaches:

**tṛṇānad api sunīchena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amānīnā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ**

“One who is humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than a tree, who gives honour to others without desiring it for himself, is qualified to always chant the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa.”

(Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, Antya-līla, 6.239)

Hari-kīrtan is the only duty. If you always, constantly chant the Holy Name, then all other works (enjoyment, etc.) will stop. If you do not stay always on the path of remembrance of the Lord, then you will be enjoying your material life. If you do not know how every single thing is related to the Lord, then there will be no need for divine love. Foolish people pray to get some material religion, things, money, lust, liberation. In the words of Śrī Gaurasundar, these are basic things taught to children—He taught higher and the highest things. *Upaniṣads*, *Gītā* are taught in the infant class; those who want to enter a higher study must discuss *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

67) Question: What is the difference between reading Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam?

Answer: Śrīla Prabhupād said that those distinguish between Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam are followers of *prākṛta-bāul*s and *prākṛta-sāhajiyās* (imitators). If one distinguishes between Gaura and Kṛṣṇa, then one must be foolish. To remove such foolishness, it would be more beneficial to study Śrī Chaitanya-bhāgavata, the king of scriptures (*grantha-rāj*) filled with magnanimous teachings, rather than to study Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.

68) Question: Why is Maṭhurā greater than Vaikuṇṭha?

Answer: Vaikuṇṭha does not appear in this world. Vaikuṇṭha always protects its own independent religion, or system, and is always present in the transcendental world. However, there is also Vaikuṇṭha that is magnanimous and distributes the highest mercy—it manifests now by extending its own independent potency within the material world to reveal the appearance pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa to the conditioned souls. This is called Maṭhurā Vaikuṇṭha, and this is the distinction.

69) Question: What is called sādhu-saṅga (good association)?

Answer: If you associate with non-devotees (*asādhū*) or with false devotees, or if you make a show of coming to a bona fide devotee (*sādhū*) but protect your own independence, then this is not *sādhū-saṅga*.

70) Question: How can one live in Maṭhurā?

Answer: If you want to enjoy and imitate living in Maṭhurā, this is not living in Maṭhurā.

71) Question: Who is Śrī Jagannāthdev?

Answer: Śrī Jagannāthdev is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, embodiment of *sambandha-jñāna* (knowledge about 'what is what'), Madan-Mohan Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This form is manifest before devotees' eyes anointed with divine love. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, the Lord Himself, overwhelmed by the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the highest shelter, showed that He saw Śrī Jagadīs (Jagannāthdev) as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself—entering the temple, Mahāprabhu would run to embrace Him.

72) Question: Who is a guru?

Answer: A *guru* is the one who serves the Supreme Being who is worshipped exclusively by all *gurus*. We are not talking about sitar teachers or performance teachers—they cannot save

one from death. As the *śloka* from *Bhāgavatam* (5.5.19) says, “If somebody cannot save you from death—cannot give you eternal life, cannot save you from material misidentification (birth) and ignorance (death)—then they are not your *guru*, they are not your father, they are not your mother, they are not your worshipable God, they are not your friend. The ignorant fall into the jaws of death—those who have complete, perfect knowledge do not.”

73) Question: *Some say that Kālī, Kṛṣṇa, Gaṇeś, et al. are one and the same—is this true?*

Answer: Kālī, Kṛṣṇa, et al. are not the same. One is *jagat* (world), and the other is Jagannāth (master of the world). People cannot conceive of transcendental Jagannāth through their material senses. If people consider the Supreme Controller Bhagavān Viṣṇu and His expansions to be one or equal, it means that they are atheists. *Padma Purāṇa* says, “If somebody considers a worshipable Deity to be stone; the *guru* and Vaiṣṇavs, mortal humans; Vaiṣṇavs, a social class; the water that washed the feet of Viṣṇu and Vaiṣṇavs, ordinary water; all-powerful *mantra* of Lord Viṣṇu’s Name, words; and Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, on equal footing with demigods—such persons are residents of hell. There is an expression in *Vaiṣṇava Tantra* that says, “One who thinks that Brahmā, Rudra, and demigods are the same as Viṣṇu are atheists.” Many refer to mortal conditioned souls obsessed with money, women and fame as Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇ, Hari, Viṣṇu, Lord, God, *guru*, etc.—all such people are atheists.

74) Question: *What does Śrīla Prabhupād say about kīrtan, the prerequisite in the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in good association?*

Answer: We are very poor, but we are not ‘poor Nārāyaṇs’. We must try to decrease our poverty. Acquiring wealth is necessary—but that great wealth is *Kṛṣṇa-prema*.

prema-dhana binā vyartha daridra jīvana
dāsa kari vetana more deha prema-dhana

*“Without love for God, this penniless life is nothing. Make me
Your servant and give me the wealth of divine love as my salary!”*

This is our only prayer. If we want to have love for Kṛṣṇa, we will automatically feel no love for the things that oppose Kṛṣṇa. Mahāprabhu ordered:

pr̥thivīte āchhe yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra prachāra haibe mora nāma

“My Name will spread to every village and town on this earth.”

The mundane name is now all over the world, but it is necessary to preach Vaikuṇṭha-Nāma—this is the innermost desire of Mahāprabhu. The method of our preaching should be like this: we must make many pamphlets—if there is no temple, let it be, but they will at least hear what philosophy or scriptures there are in their country, and how many great things we tell.

75) Question: What is the duty of the human life form?

Answer: It is necessary to have a strong and sincere faith in the lotus feet of the Lord, and it is necessary to serve those who have such a strong and sincere faith in the lotus feet of the Lord. We will die any day, there is no certainty, therefore we do not have time to serve petty temporary perishable things. When we are born as humans, we must not serve small temporary things—we must not become obsessed with our house, we must not clean after dogs, we must not carry burden like an ass or a cow. We must become relishers of essence (*sāragrāhī*). Leaving all desire for liberation, we must become *madhukara* bees that collect nectar from flower to flower. This world’s ideas about good, bad, sin and piety are all *mano-dharma*, a concoction.

“dvaite bhadrābhara jñana, saba manodharma
‘ei bhala’, ‘ei manda’—ei saba bhrama”

“In the material world, conceptions of good and bad are all mental speculations. Therefore, saying ‘This is good’ and ‘This is bad’ is all a mistake.”

76) Question: *Why do the teachings of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunāth not enter our ears?*

Answer: When our material desires stop completely, then the teachings and pastimes of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunāth will enter our ears—not before that. Śrīman Mahāprabhu told about service to Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu told about service to Śrī Gaurasundar and Śrī Dāmodar Svarūp (known as Puruṣottam Bhaṭṭācārya) told to the world about service to Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. Śrī Rūpa-Raghunāth told about this Dāmodar Svarūp. We can know this from the holy books of the *goswāmīs*.

77) Question: *What example did Śrīla Bhaktivinod Thākura show regarding giving up bad association?*

Answer: He said, “In the end I understand my family is averse to Chaitanya. You must give up the association and company of them all if they are averse to Chaitanya, no matter how near and dear they are to you. You can understand whether they are averse or not in this way. Those who are favourable to Chaitanya assist in fulfilling the cherished desires of the true devotees of Chaitanya. Enemies of Chaitanya’s devotees belong to the species of worms. Instead of nourishing your soul’s body, whatever nourishing food you take to nurture your soul will instead nurture the worms in your body.

78) Question: *Why do I see others’ faults?*

Answer: Being unable to rectify my own mind, I look for faults in others.

79) Question: *Where is a holy place?*

Answer: Śrīla Prabhupād told in this regard, “A holy place is where there is Hari-kathā.”

80) Question: Who is the only protector?

Answer: Śrīla Prahupād said, “The moment we lose our guardian, the enemies surrounding us will attack us. **Our protector is Hari-kathā from the mouths of real devotees.**”

81) Question: What is the purpose of this body?

Answer: Śrīla Prabhupād said, “We will not stay in this world for long. If you use your body for chanting the glories of the Lord until its demise, this is the purpose of this body.”

82) Question: What do intimate devotees hanker for?

Answer: Śrīla Prabhupād said, “Intimate, or the highest, devotees have no other hankering except for servitude to *rūpanugas* (followers of Śrī Rūpa).”

83) Question: What is the highest religion of the jīva soul?

Answer: Śrīla Prabhupād said, “Our highest religion is to serve the *Vraja-vāsīs* afflicted by the pain of separation from Kṛṣṇa when He left for Maṭhurā.”

84) Question: “As many faiths, so many paths”—all arguments of both karmī schools and Bhāgavatam school finish at this. Is this right?

Answer: “As many faiths, so many paths” is a saying of implicitly atheistic, extremist, non-devotional, uninquisitive, impersonalist concocted religious sects meant to gratify common people and their minds.

85) Question: Can serving people or serving the mind and body of the jīva soul be considered service to the Lord?

Answer: Calling service to the body of a conditioned soul service to the Lord is extremely atheistic. Service to the transcendental Lord is completely different from this. Exclusive service to a devotee of the transcendental Lord or a great Vaiṣṇav inspires one to serve the Supreme Lord, but if you serve the mind or the body if a conditioned soul, it will only make you forget the Lord.

86) Question: *First gaining political independence, then criticism of religion—does it mean that religion and politics are weapons of opportunism?*

Answer: Mundane politics can change within a second. Nationalism is a blood brother of the soul's bondage within the body. Mundane politics, individually and collectively, is the mother of enjoyment. Only the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His servants are independent from false identification and other material faults; the rest of the doctrines are all prison-house enjoyment in various forms.

87) Question: *'Jīva souls is a servant of a servant of the Lord'—does such ego lead to downfall of the jīva soul?*

Answer: A *jīva* is a servant of a servant of the Lord, this is the identity and ego of every pure soul, or eternally liberated person. "I am mater," "I am the creator of the world"—this is the banner of the downfall of the souls fallen into mundane bondage and steered by enemies. "I am Brahman"—this ego is also the ego of travellers of the suicidal path.

88) Question: *Enjoyers need money, but devotees call money 'stool' and consider that it is must be given up. Is this correct?*

Answer: Money works as stool for those who seek enjoyment; it is fuel for enjoyment and destroys both society and individuals. Because devotees of the Lord are neither enjoyers nor renunciates; they risk destroying themselves while trying to 'hijack' mundane enjoyers—by hook or by crook, they accept Nārāyaṇ's wealth (money) and engage enjoyers in the service to the master of all wealth (Nārāyaṇ). Servants of the Lord do not renounce things that are related to Kṛṣṇa—they use them in service to Kṛṣṇa.

89) Question: *People say Vaiṣṇavism is sectarian and liberal and Hinduism is non-sectarian and universal?*

Answer: Vaiṣṇavism always rejects bad association (i.e. desires of selfish religiosity, wealth, material desires and liberation) and

is always favourable to accepting good association (i.e. making transcendental Lord Kṛṣṇa happy). Good association (*sat-saṅga*) means aural reception. Religion of the soul is a fully developed path of aural reception of knowledge from the authorities. Vaiṣṇavism is a religion of the soul (*ātma-dharma*, or *jaīva-dharma*), and it is not only the uncovered pure religion of Bengal, India, Europe, America or the souls of this world—it is an eternal intrinsic religion of every *jīva* soul from millions and millions of universes, as well as Vaikuṇṭha and Goloka. Therefore, Vaiṣṇavism is a universal religion because this religion is meant for the soul. However, so-called Hinduism is not a religion of every country or all *jīva* souls—Hinduism will not work for every *jīva* soul because it creates a process of worship and an object of worship to suit the desires of one's mind and body.

90) Question: *Is it devotion to imagine some idol of a God, offering Him flowers, Tulasī, ring the bell, recite verses in His praise and sit in front of Him and do japa, meditate?*

Answer: The Lord is transcendental, i.e. He defies all perceived knowledge of the *jīva* soul and freely dispenses eternal regulations and His own dominion of religion. This transcendental form of the Supreme Lord is perceived through transcendental senses. Therefore, making a show of imagining some deity according to one's liking to worship it with flowers, Tulasī, etc. or to ring a bell in front of it is not devotion—it is enjoyment. There are so many kinds of implicit enjoyment in the market that are promoted as devotion.

91) Question: *The guru is the Lord Himself, i.e. viṣaya-vigraha (worshippable)? Does it mean that anyone can be passed as a guru imagining that he is a personification of God?*

Answer: *Gurudev* is the Lord Himself, i.e. *viṣaya vigraha*—this is not true. The *guru* is *āśraya-vigraha* (his purpose is to give shelter, not to take worship). By taking shelter in him, one can get service

to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa performs *rāsa-līlā*—He enjoys with the *gopīs*, but the *āśraya-vigraha gurudev* does not show enjoying pastimes. *Gurudev* knows how to do the highest service to Kṛṣṇa. Tulasī is offered at the lotus feet of *viṣaya-vigraha* Kṛṣṇa, but Tulasī is not offered at the lotus feet of *āśraya-vigraha*, Śrī Guru. Nobody can turn a human into ‘God’. God and the *guru* are not created by any human or disciple.

92) Question: How can anarthas be removed?

Answer: If you loudly chant the prescribed number of rounds of the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, unwanted habits and qualities will go away, and all materialism, etc. will run away—even those who are averse to the Lord, the outside people will not be able to avert it then.

93) Question: How can one follow this advice if one is completely covered by anarthas?

Answer: Śrīman Mahāprabhu bestowed all power to Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu, and you must earnestly beg at the feet of this Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu and his followers for this mercy of Mahāprabhu. Especially, we must pray to Śrī Nāma Prabhu with all our heart for His service. Nāma Prabhu is Nāmī Prabhu (the Holy Name and He whose Name it is are non-different)—He will reveal Himself in your heart.

94) Question: What is the difference between service to Kṛṣṇa, service to the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, and Nāma-saṅkīrtan?

Answer: “Service to Kṛṣṇa, service to the devotees of Kṛṣṇa and chanting the Holy Name have the same purpose. By chanting the Holy Name, one automatically serves Kṛṣṇa and the devotees of Kṛṣṇa. By serving Vaiṣṇavs, one automatically serves Kṛṣṇa and chants the Holy Name. By serving Kṛṣṇa, one automatically chants the Holy Name and serves Vaiṣṇavs. If one gives a class on Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta, one automatically serves Kṛṣṇa

and chants the Holy Name. Reading *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* in good association gives the same result. By worshipping a Deity, the same three services are fulfilled. If one serves and chants the Holy Name, the three are automatically fulfilled."

95) Question: *To do service, we have to do material work—is this unfavourable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness?*

Answer: "Our main necessity is to serve the Lord and His devotees. To do this service, we have to work like a common *viṣayī* (materialist); this is not unfavourable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness—rather, it is favourable. If one wants to retire from material enjoyment, then Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the sure means for both *grhasthas* and *sannyāsīs*. Devotees of Kṛṣṇa practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness through material (social, or practical) and spiritual activities—this is not only service to the generally accepted social rules, but also complete service to the Lord."

96) Question: *Conditioned materialists wonder why, although they practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they are still unhappy?*

Answer: There was a dear devotee Mahāprabhu, Kholāvechā Śrīdhara, who lived in Śrī Māyāpur. He was an exclusive devotee of the Lord and did not make any effort to earn money. He would sell some banana, roots, *thor* (banana stems) and maintain his life in a very poor way. Being pleased with the pure devotion of Śrīdhara, Mahāprabhu would often fight with him in the mood of *sakhya-rasa* (friendship)—Mahāprabhu often played tug of war with him, trying to snatch his banana stems. Śrīdhara thought that "everything belongs to the Lord," and he served Him with everything because He is the all-loving Absolute.

97) Question: *What is the role of food in religion?*

Answer: Devotees are always surrendered—their every step, every practice and conception, every breath is a favourable practice for the satisfaction of the transcendental Lord. They

never think like impersonalist non-devotees, ‘I like some food and will eat it,’ ‘I will enjoy and imagine that I am making a sacrificial offering to God.’ *Māyāvādis’* Deities are armless. Because the transcendental Lord cannot(?) accept anything in His Deity-form, people fall down and become despicable enjoyers; but the Lord shows in the scriptures what foods are His favourite and what can be offered to Him. Devotees maintain their lives by honouring all the food remnants of Kṛṣṇa as appropriate. ‘The Lord is offered betel nut, etc. but we are not qualified to take it’—many think in this way and, having offered it their respect with folded palms, keep it to the side. Like dogs, surrendered servants take the food remnants of the highest devotees of Kṛṣṇa and live their lives in a way that is favourable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

98) Question: *If one sees stool and sandalwood as the same, earth and money as the same, a meat-eater and a brāhmaṇ as the same, a prostitute and a chaste wife as the same, a jīva and Brahman as the same, the conscious and the unconscious as the same—does it mean they are paramahansa?*

Answer: A *paramahansa* sees an extension of the Lord, Paramātmā, in all conscious and unconscious *jīva* souls, who are a transformation of external and internal potency of the Lord. *Mahābhāgavata paramahansas* see Paramātmā situated within all living beings, conscious and unconscious. The symptom of a *paramahansa* can be found in various *ślokas* such as *Vraja gopīs’ ślokas ‘Vana-latās tarava ātmani...’* (S.B., 10.15.9), ‘*Nadyas tadā tad upadhārya...*’ (S.B., 10.21.15) and ‘*Kurari vilapasi...*’—they are always bound to the lotus feet of the Lord through their loving heart-felt devotion, the Lord Himself can never leave their hearts. This is what *mahābhāgavata paramahansas* are like. Sanaka, Sananda, Śuka and many other great *paramahansas* gave up all their impersonal realisations and knowledge and resorted to Hari-kīrtan. *Paramahansas* see everything as an object to be used in

service, they see everyone as their *guru's* property. They do not see that impersonalism or *yogīs*, *jñānīs*, stool and sandalwood, a prostitute and a chaste wife are one and the same.

99) Question: Where is the full-fledged land of the Lord's pastimes?

Answer: Mundane people's minds are repositories of doubts (always accepting, always rejection), and the mind that is always engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa, where all desires for enjoyment and renunciation are abandoned, is the full-fledged land of the Lord's pastimes.

100) Question: Do Kāśī scholars not accept Śrīmad Bhāgavatam?

Answer: They consider *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* to be one of the ordinary books. They think that it is just one particular *Purāṇa* among many different *Purāṇas*. They do not consider it to be a great scripture at all. We think that there is actually no need for any other scripture besides *Bhāgavatam*. When some other scripture says something, only when it follows *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* can it be accepted. The books that say something that goes against *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* cannot be spiritual.

101) Question: What does the word 'anartha' mean?

Answer: *Anartha* (inauspiciousness, unwanted element) is that which prevents one from getting '*artha*' (wealth, goal; our main necessity). A party comes to us and transforms such *anarthas* into service.

102) Question: When will such anartha come to an end?

Answer: When we measure something with our senses, we say, based on our sense perception, that it is, perhaps, 'good', our intellect says that it is 'pleasant' or desirable—and we consider it our duty to obtain it. When we look like this at trees, animals, people, country, etc., when we want to be considered wise or want to get the prestige of being called a saint—this is all service

to the objects of senses. The efforts of *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, *yogīs* and other materialists are all service to the senses, and this is all unfavourable to devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

103) Question: Do we have to leave all our jobs and daily duties?

Answer: Following the example of Vaiṣṇavs, we do everything, but we do not take to the path of *karma* (fruitive work). One of our predecessor *gurus*, Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī Prabhu said (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.2.85): “No matter what the life circumstances are, those who do everything to serve the Lord with their body, mind, and speech are called ‘favourable souls’, or ‘souls liberated during their life’. True renunciation is when people detach themselves from mundane enjoyment and ardently become attached to the affairs of the Lord by accepting what is favourable to the service of Kṛṣṇa.”

104) Question: What is the duty of a Vaiṣṇav?

Answer: It is said in *Pañcha-rātra*, that if you want to get devotion, you must engage in the secular and Vedic activities that are favourable to the service of the Lord. It is also said there that *sādhus* refer to all activities that are specified in the scriptures for the service of the Lord as ‘devotion’—the highest devotion gradually awakens through such activities. This is the philosophy of *niṣkarma* (desisting from fruitive actions). Whatever we do, it must be favourable to the service of the Lord. If one wants to become liberated and become free from all kinds of *karma*, they will become free from the service to the Lord as well.

105) Question: How can one serve with one’s body, mind and speech?

Answer: What nice teachings the father of Śrī Prahlād Mahārāj got when he asked his son about it (S.B., 7.5.23-24): “There are nine kinds of devotion through which one can serve Lord Viṣṇu: *śravaṇ* (hearing), *kīrtan* (chanting), *smaraṇ* (remembrance),

pāda-sevana (service to the lotus feet), *archana* (worshipping the Deity), *vandana* (offering prayers), *dasya* (service in the mood of a servitor), *sakhya* (service as a friend), *ātma-nivedana* (offering oneself to the Lord).” These teachings are eligible to be called the best. When Hiranyakaśipu heard this conception of service from his son, he said, ‘We always rely on our empirical experience and knowledge, but you have just told me a new conception that we do not know about.’”

106) Question: *Do those who serve the Lord serve the jīva souls?*

Answer: The Supreme Lord is complete in Himself. Devotees of the Lord actually serve *jīva* souls. There are people who, attracted by the outer appearance of a *jīva* soul, think that service to the Lord or service to the *jīva* soul is just service to the external body of the Lord—they support the idea that the whole created world is illusory (evolutionism, or *vivartavād*). Such people do not serve *jīva* souls—they merely serve Māyā (illusory environment) as the external body of the Lord, which is nothing but Māyā (external covering of the Lord, material nature). If we serve Māyā in this way, it will bring benefit neither to us nor to others. If you ascribe the divine (Nārāyaṇ) to a beggar, you will be only serving Māyā—this is service to neither Nārāyaṇ nor His (Nārāyaṇ’s) servants, *jīva* souls. Service to transformed matter (*māyā*) is service to an illusory mirage, not to a real thing. Only Kṛṣṇa is real. *Jīva* souls are His expansions created in His image and likeness. We must serve the Lord—we must serve the associates of the Lord (His devotees) and even those who do not understand what is proper Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that they could have a proper idea about devotees and associates of the Lord. Our duty is to help them physically and mentally. We must serve those who are opposed to the Lord also, but in a detached mood. Our dearest friends are devotees of the Lord. We will tell others about our friendship with the universe, about the service

to the Lord—if they do not have much intelligence, they can accept the duties of *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras*. And if they become hostile, we will not associate with them anymore—with those who have lost their eternal caste, agnostics, sensualists, followers of Charvaka, who think that bodily enjoyment is the highest goal of life.

107) Question: What does showing mercy to *jīva* souls mean? Is supplying food, clothes, etc. to them not help?

Answer: We will help those who after many lifetimes could establish faith in the Lord and have started serving the Lord. We will help the needy with food, clothes and other facilities so that they can serve the Lord, but other than that why do we need to tame a snake with milk and bananas? [Feeding milk to a snake only increases its venomous poison.] This is not mercy, rather, on the contrary, after that the person can be caught by *māyā* or be tempted to become a terrorist. The mercy that Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu distributed to the *jīva* souls liberated everyone eternally from the three-fold miseries. There is nothing inauspicious in this mercy and no inauspiciousness of this world can come to the souls who are fortunate to receive it—on the contrary, they will swim in the ocean of divine love and eternally relish nectar.

108) Question: What is the difference between Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy and others' mercy?

Answer: In Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy, there is no evil or inauspiciousness that can be seen in others' mercy. His closest associate Śrī Svarūp Dāmodar Goswāmī said describing His mercy, "He expels all kinds of inauspiciousness, He is crystal-clear and pure like a fully bloomed flower, He emanates joy, He puts an end to all debates about scriptures, He is a distributor of the highest sweetest taste, He intoxicates the world with divine love for God and bestows eternal happiness to the devotees, He

distributed His gift among the high and the low equally, and He is the revealer of the topmost limit of sweetness (Śrī Rādhā).” Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī, who called Śrī Chaitanyadev Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, deliberated, “He whose Name is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya and whose colour is golden, is the distributor of the highest gift—He is the distributor of divine love for Kṛṣṇa.” Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dās Kavirāj Goswāmī also said (in *Śrī Chaitanya-charitāmṛta*), “If you consider the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya, you will be wonder-struck to realise it.”



Appendix

Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh Book List

Books by Śrīla Bhakti Nirmal Āchārya Mahārāj:

- *Guidance 1, 2, 3, 4*
- *Sri Upadesh 1, 2, 3, 4 (Bengali)*
- *Sri Puri Dham Mahatmya-mukta-mala (Bengali)*
- *Sri Nabadwip Dham Mahatmya-mukta-mala*

Books by Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

- *Affectionate Guidance*
- *Bhagavat Darshan*
- *Dignity of the Divine Servitor*
- *Divine Guidance*
- *Divine Message for the Devotees*
- *Golden Reflections*
- *In Search of the Original Source*
- *Religion of the Heart*
- *Revealed Truth*
- *The Benedictine Tree of Divine Aspiration*
- *The Divine Servitor*
- *The Nectarean Glories of Śrī Nityananda Prabhu*

Books by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

- *Absolute Harmony*
- *Awakening to the Absolute*
- *Centenary Anthology*
- *Divine Aspiration*
- *Golden Staircase*
- *Heart and Halo*
- *Home Comfort*
- *Holy Engagement*
- *Inner Fulfilment*

- *Loving Search for the Lost Servant*
- *Ocean of Nectar*
- *Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion (Vol. I-IV)*
- *Śrī Guru and His Grace*
- *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gita: The Hidden Treasure of the Sweet Absolute*
- *Śrī Śrī Prapanna-jīvanamṛitam*
- *Subjective Evolution of Consciousness*
- *The Guardian of Devotion*
- *The Golden Volcano of Divine Love*
- *The Search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Reality the Beautiful*

Other books

- *Śaraṇāgati*
- *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*
- *Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu: His Life and Precepts*
- *Śrī Nabadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya, Śrī Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga*
- *Śrī Śrī Prema-vivarta*
- *The Bhāgavat: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics, and Its Theology*



Temples and Preaching Centres of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh

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When we take the Holy Name from Srila Gurudev, many of us pretend to be taking initiation, but we cannot become real servants of our Guru in this way. As a result, some of us become *guru-bhogī* (we enjoy the Guru) and some *guru-tyāgī* (we reject the Guru). A hundred out of a hundred per cent of people yearn for *kanak* (money), *kāminī* (women), *pratiṣṭhā* (name and fame). We see the temple established by Srila Gurudev as a place for our own enjoyment, and we are not afraid to resort to even bloodshed for that. Instead of serving the Lord, we turn the Lord into our servant, and the worshipping Deity into a bribe-taker. Unless we stay under the guidance of Sri Gurudev, the embodiment of eternal shelter, and his followers, it is impossible to practise Kṛṣṇa consciousness—it will be only committing an offence.