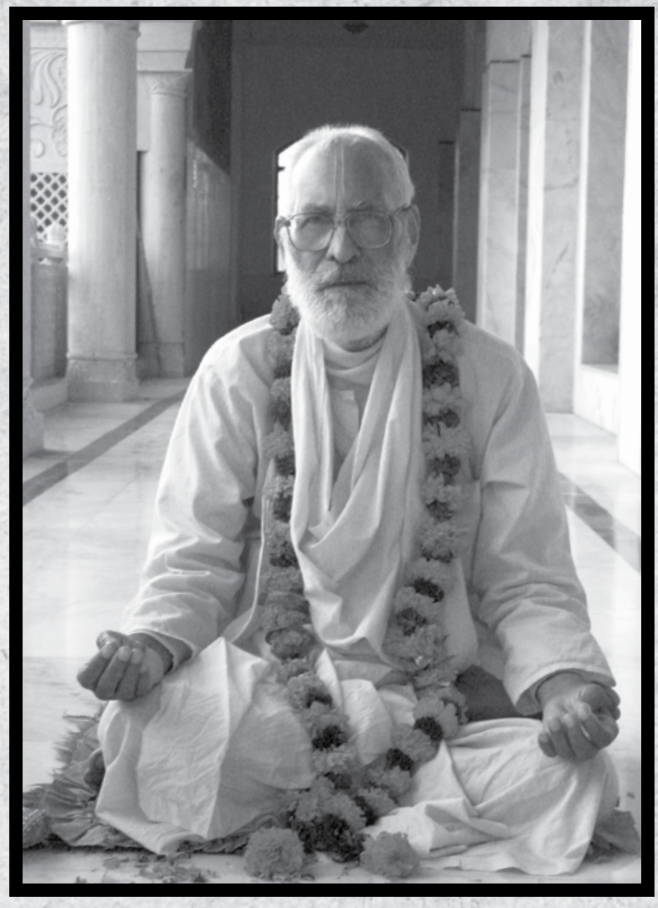
Harmony

Excerpts of lectures by

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa
Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Gaudiya Vedanta Publications



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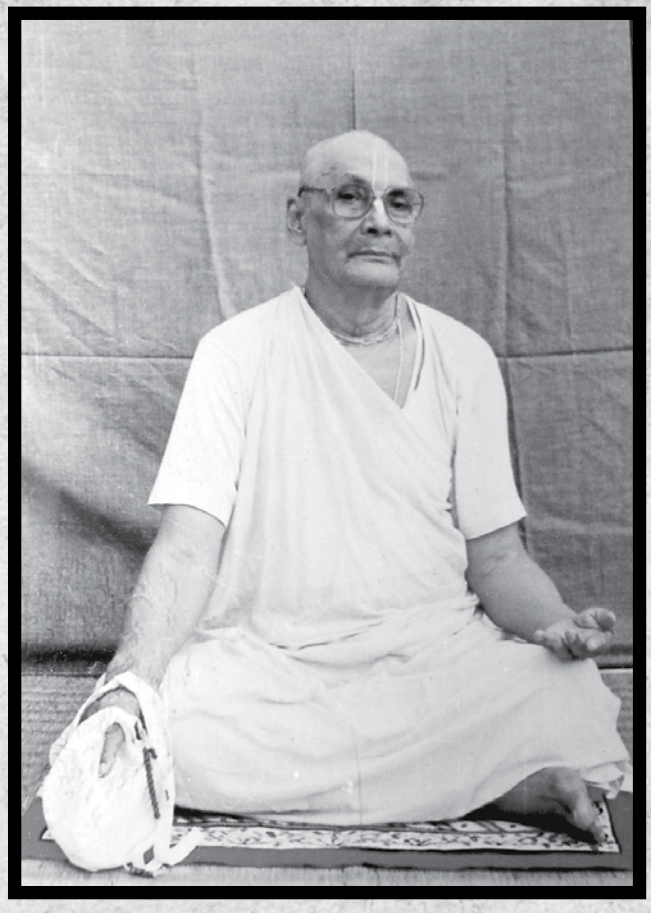

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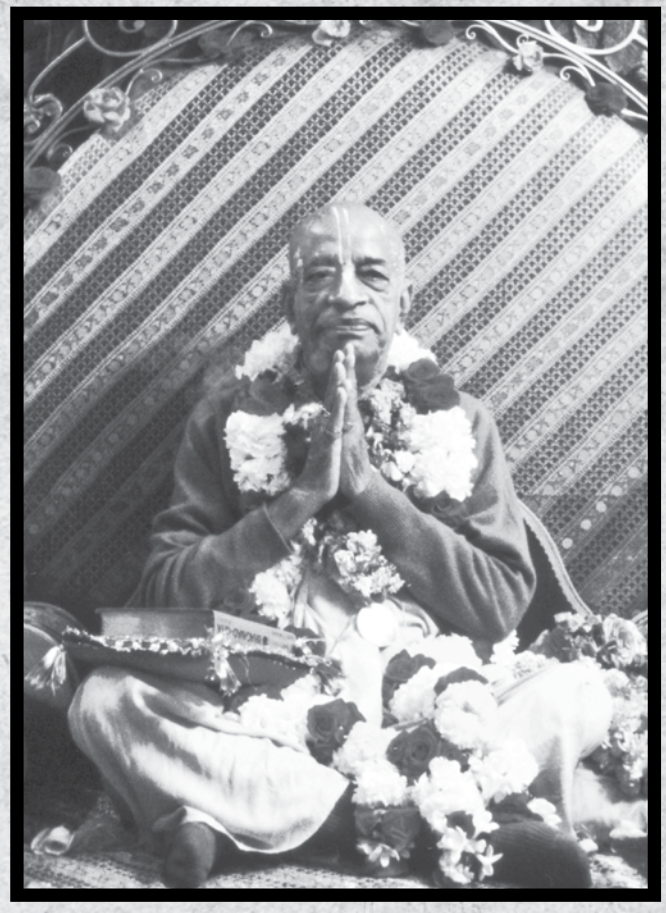

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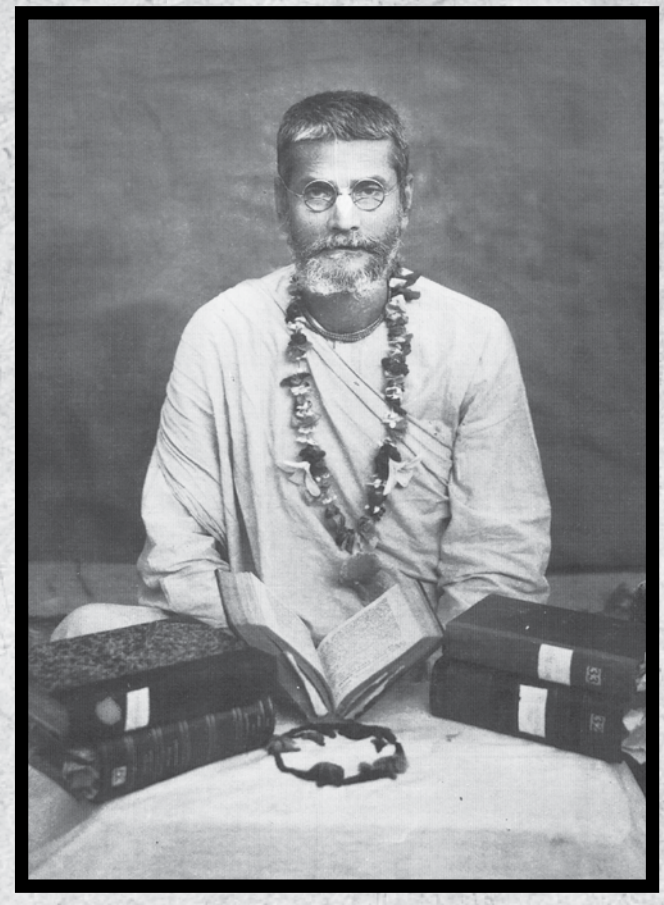

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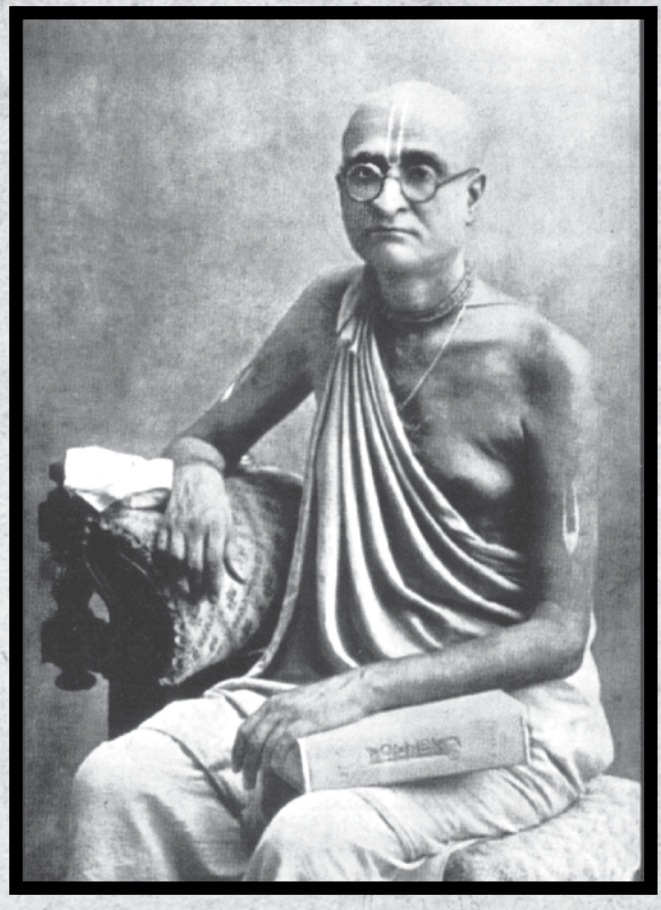

Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda

Harmony

Excerpts of lectures by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

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www.gvpbookdistribution.com
www.bhaktistore.com

ISBN:978-1-935428-33-6
First Edition: February 2011 (5,000 copies)
Printed by: Spectrum Printing Press (P) Ltd., New Delhi, India

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Foreword

The word harmony is defined as a combination of parts into a pleasing or orderly whole; congruity; agreement in feeling, action, ideas, interests; and peaceable or friendly relations. Musically, harmony is achieved when different instruments and voices come together and work to complement one another in order to bring out the best in the entire composition. The aim is not for each musician to claim more or less attention for his own part in the arrangement, but to enhance the experience of the audience, and also of the other musicians. Each musician gives his undivided attention to improving his contribution to the production, and the conductor is responsible for suggesting areas of improvement for each musician.

We are the musicians, our *saṅga* is the orchestra, and our worshipful Śrīla Gurudeva is our conductor. Śrīla Gurudeva is well-known for presenting the very elevated and confidential aspects of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy. At the same time, he is avidly practical and down-to-earth in his approach to communication, relationships, and group dynamics. He is a cutting-edge revolutionary, not only in the most exalted transcendental topics, but also in basic transactional processes.

His approach to *bhakti-siddhānta*, conclusive philosophical truths, is precise, systematic, and scientific. He is deeply realized in the transcendental pastimes of the Lord, and his narrations of the Lord's pastimes are enchanting. At the same time, he exemplifies and emphasizes harmony with others and with the divine arrangements in all circumstances. As an eternal associate of the Supreme Lord's internal pleasure potency, what is hidden from him? What is beyond

his power? Yet, although all-knowing and powerful, he appeared in our midst as a surpassingly humble and unassuming personality.

The instructions presented in *Harmony* appear to be extremely simple, but we think you will find that they are actually extraordinary. We published a preview of this book during Kārtika, 2010, and this present work is the revised and full edition. After publishing the preview, we did some minor editing while reviewing Śrīla Gurudeva's sound-files. Still, we are very conditioned souls. So we beg you, honored readers, to kindly excuse whatever mistakes we have made in compiling this presentation of Śrīla Gurudeva's guiding words.

Your aspiring servants,
The Editors

On the anniversary of the auspicious appearance day of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja:
February 22, 2011

All the footnotes in this book have been written by the editors based on the explanations of Śrīla Gurudeva.

Perfecting Society

Beautiful Leadership

Śrīpāda Nemi Mahārāja: Śrīla Gurudeva, you are a very beautiful leader. Will you tell us what is the meaning of 'leadership?'

Śrīla Gurudeva: You can learn by my example – by my life and behavior. Be equal to all, be kind to all, and preach. Don't be selfish; be broadminded.

Venice, Italy: June 12, 2009

God: The Most Respectful Leader

[Śrīla Gurudeva tells this history, as told here in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya-khaṇḍa*, Chapter Nine]

We read that in ancient times, many great sages assembled on the bank of the sacred Sarasvatī River to perform the Vedic sacrifice of hearing the Purāṇas are the sages were very learned and well versed in the scriptures, and they discussed only transcendental topics.

In the course of their meeting, they resolved to discover which of the three divinities – Brahmā, Śiva, and Viṣṇu – is the chief and Supreme over all. Some said that Brahmā is the Supreme, others said Maheśvara (Śiva), and yet others maintained that Viṣṇu is the Lord of all Lords.

All of the three major divinities were proposed as the Supreme by the various Purāṇas. This of course, was confusing, so the sages turned to the sage Bhṛgu Muni for help in resolving the issue. Bhṛgu was the right person to make the investigation, because he was not only the most senior and expert amongst the sages, but also the son of Lord Brahmā, being born from his mind. The sages agreed that they would unanimously accept Bhṛgu Muni's decision when he had personally tested each of the divinities. Upon hearing their request, the great sage Bhṛgu left for Brahma-loka, the abode of Lord Brahmā.

Śrī Bhṛgu Muni entered the court of Lord Brahmā and stood in front of him. Lord Brahmā was very happy to see his son, and asked about his well-being. However, the sage had come to test his father, so he acted haughtily instead of paying attention to Lord Brahmā's words. He did not offer respects or endearing words, as a son should to his father. Lord Brahmā became livid with rage when he saw his son's misdemeanor and uncouth behavior, and when Bhṛgu saw his father's

burning eyes, which could quickly reduce him to ashes, he swiftly fled from the scene. Some of Lord Brahmā's associates began to pacify him saying, "After all, your Lordship, you are his father and he is your son, so how can you be so angry with him?" The words of Lord Brahmā's courtiers acted like water upon a fire and, overcome with paternal affection, Brahmā put aside his anger. Bhṛgu then returned to Lord Brahmā to explain everything, and next proceeded to Mount Kailāsa to test Lord Śiva.

When Lord Śiva saw Bhṛgu Muni, he became very exultant and stood up with his wife, Śrī Pārvatī-devī, to greet him. Bhṛgu Muni was Śiva's elder brother, so he approached the sage respectfully and wanted to embrace him. However, Bhṛgu said, "O Maheśa, do not touch me! You always dress like an uncivilized barbarian. Besides that, you are always surrounded by unclean and vulgar ghosts, hobgoblins, and other untouchable creatures and your own behavior is unpredictable and ill-mannered. Which scripture recommends one to smear ashes all over the body? Stay away from me, because I will have to take a bath if you touch me!" Of course, Bhṛgu Muni was speaking these words only to test Śrī Maheśvara; otherwise, not a single word of criticism about Lord Śiva would be heard from his mouth.

Lord Śiva became so enraged that he forgot that Bhṛgu Muni was his elder brother. Lifting his trident and looking as if he were about to destroy the three worlds, he rushed towards the sage. Śrī Pārvatī-devī stepped in between them and caught hold of her husband's hand.

Falling at his feet, she propitiated him, saying, "My Lord, is it proper to be so angry with your elder brother?" His wife's wise words calmed Lord Śiva, and he felt ashamed for his outburst.[1] After this episode, the sage proceeded to Vaikuṇṭha to test Śrī Viṣṇu. The Supreme Personality of Godhead was reclining upon His gem-studded bed,

[1] Brahmā and Śiva actually have no false ego. They were simply assisting in the Lord's pastime of instruction.

while the goddess of fortune, Śrī Lakṣmī-devī, massaged His lotus feet. Suddenly, Bhṛgu Muni appeared as if from nowhere and kicked the Lord upon His chest.

Seeing the sage Bhṛgu, the Supreme Lord immediately stood up and offered His respects with folded hands, feeling very pleased. The Lord and His wife, Śrī Lakṣmī-devī, bathed the sage's feet and then offered him their finest seat. With His own hands, the Lord anointed the sage's body with sandalwood paste, acting as if He were an offender who was trying to exonerate Himself from His offenses.

Lord Viṣṇu told the sage, "Kindly forgive Me for My transgression of etiquette, for I was not at all aware of your auspicious arrival. The holy water from the bathing of your feet purifies all the places of holy pilgrimage. Today, it has purified all the kings and emperors of the innumerable universes that are situated in My personal form. May your character and personality remain forever unstained.

"With great happiness I will keep the dust from your foot imprinted upon My breast, in the same place where My beloved wife, Śrī Lakṣmī-devī, is seated as *śrīvatsa*[2]. Let the Vedas declare My name as 'Śrīvatsa-lāñchana', one who is marked with the sign of *śrīvatsa*." The sage was truly amazed when he heard the Supreme Lord's words and witnessed His humble demeanor, which was free from lust, greed, anger, and illusion. Feeling very ashamed, he remained for a long time with his head hung down.

The actions of Bṛghu Muni were not really his own doing. Certainly, he had acted under some compulsion, as if under a spell. When he came out of this spell, he was overcome with joy and reverence for the Supreme Lord. Saturated with the ambrosia of *bhakti-rasa*, he began to dance, laugh, tremble, perspire, horripilate, and swoon at the same time.

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[2] *Śrīvatsa* refers to marks of silver hairs on the right side of the Lord's chest, indicating the residence of the goddess of fortune.

Rags

There is not just one world – there are millions upon millions of worlds – and within all these worlds the eternal spirit soul wanders through the various species of life. Sometimes he takes the form of a human, sometimes a tree, and sometimes a creeper or an animal. In the course of his wandering, if he is fortunate, he receives the association of pure devotees.

What is that fortune? One becomes fortunate if he has performed any activities related to Kṛṣṇa and His associates, or related to anyone or anything connected with Kṛṣṇa; such as Tulasi-devī, His temples, or His land (Vṛndāvana-dhāma, Navadvīpa-dhāma or Purī-dhāma). Here is an example of how one becomes fortunate.

The Gift of Sukrti

Once there was a Vaiṣṇava saint who used to go from door to door, begging for chapatis, rice, or any other foodstuff. He wandered throughout Vraja-maṇḍala, and as he was begging he constantly called out, "Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare," or "Rādhe Śyāma, Rādhe Śyāma!" or "Rādhe Rādhe, Rādhe Rādhe!" He was simply absorbed in chanting, "Rādhe, Rādhe, Rādhe!"

One day he went to the door of an old lady who was in a very angry mood. She did not want to hear "Rādhe Rādhe" or "Hare Kṛṣṇa," and in fact she rebuked him, saying, "Don't come to my door in the future, otherwise I will break this stick on your back! Always remember this! Don't come to my door!"

However, the Vaiṣṇava returned the next day at the same time, and just as before, he called out again and again, "Rādhe Śyāma!" "Rādhe, Rādhe!" and "Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare."

Unconditional Kindness

That lady became furious and rebuked him again. He left, but he returned again on the third day. The lady thought, "He must be coming just because he wants to eat something!" At that time she was cleaning her room with cow-dung mixed with water. "You have come again?!" she said to the Vaiṣṇava. "Oh! Take this!!" She took the moldy, worn-and-torn cloth full of the cow-dung and water, and threw it at him.

He gladly took the cloth and went to the Yamunā River, where he washed off the clay and rinsed it until it became soft, clean, and smooth. Then, he dried it, tore it into small pieces, dipped the pieces into the ghee that someone else had donated him, and used the small ghee-wicks to offer *ārati* (ceremony of worship) to his Deity.

On the fourth day the Vaiṣṇava again went to that lady's house, and called out loudly, "Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare." That day, the lady's mood had completely changed. "O Baba," (respectable *sādhu*) she said, "Wait a minute, I am coming." She gave him some chapatis, which he accepted very gladly.

This is an example of *sukṛti*[3]. She gave something to that saint, he used it in the service of Kṛṣṇa, and she received *sukṛti*.

New York: May 25, 1998

[3] A spiritual pious activity, performed knowingly or unknowingly, which creates spiritual impressions on the heart of the performer and gradually qualifies him to enter the path of *bhakti*.

An Ideal Society

Try to develop your Kṛṣṇa-consciousness by following the process of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and others in our line – especially Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Always maintain the conception that we are all in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's family, and thus try to honor all devotees without consideration of caste or creed. Of course, it is ideal to respect devotees according to their quality of *bhakti*, and not blindly. After so many years you are coming to the stage of *madhyama-adhikārī*, so try to realize these truths.

I have heard somewhere that human beings are social animals. We cannot live without society. Either we will have to choose some society of which we can be part, or else we will have to create some society ourselves. We want a society in which we can chant, remember Kṛṣṇa, and be happy.

What is the meaning of preaching? Its purpose is only to develop a very good society everywhere, so that everyone can be happy forever. We want to start by developing such a society here, and training is required for that. If this society is Kṛṣṇa-conscious, it will help everyone, and everyone will be happy.

Do not think only of yourself, but of your children, because they will also be members of the society. Train them in the principles and teachings of Kṛṣṇa-consciousness. I encourage the school here to expand, so that it can facilitate the training of all children.

You will require a committee that can meet and try to solve any problems that arise. If there is goodwill, and if you all honor each other, then all problems will disappear and the children will be well-trained and happy.

Everyone, whether junior or senior, should be honored according to his/her position in *bhakti*. Those who are senior disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja should be honored, and they should have great affection for their juniors. This is the way to make a very ideal society.

Your Prabhupāda – my Svāmīji – also wanted this, and he tried to establish it. However, due to false ego, some persons wanted to control others by intelligence and not by love and affection; and consequently, they could not succeed. The process for achieving success has nothing to do with controlling. It has to do with universal love and affection. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had that universal love, and we ardently wish to follow Him.

If any problems come, try to reconcile the situation by thinking, "This is due to my past *karma*," or, "Kṛṣṇa wants to test me and operate on me." There is no need to be angry and upset about disturbing occurrences.

I request that a school be established specifically to teach spiritual association on the basis of developing love and affection for each other. Meetings and classes may be held fortnightly, weekly, or on the occasion of any festival. Sometimes one devotee can give class, sometimes another, and everyone will benefit. There should be harmony; this is most essential. You will be successful through harmony.

It is so beneficial for you to associate with Vaiṣṇavas who are really *madhyama-adhikārī*, whose character is very elevated and spotless. Thus you can advance, you can create a very beautiful and strong community, and you can enter into the Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Upadeśāmṛta* and Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's *Manaḥ-śikṣā*.

Badger, California: 1999

A Society Without Politics

We can learn from Mahāprabhu and His associates, who never engaged in politics. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara always thought about how to please Mahāprabhu; nothing else.

All disciples should be like this; thinking, how to please their guru. Myself, Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja and others were always like this. We were not selfish, not engaged in politics, and we did not hear *kaṭha* about anyone but Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees. In this way we served our Gurudeva, and this is why he became pleased with us. Thinking how to please *guru* later transfers into thinking how to please Kṛṣṇa.

Cebu, Philippines: January 5, 2009

Loving Management

Śrīpāda Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Maharaja (ISKCON GBC member): We see that we must be so careful not to commit *nāma-aparādha*, *sevā-aparādha,* and *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. But sometimes, as managers of an institution, we must distinguish right from wrong, and we must analyze another person's behavior for the purpose of protecting our institution, and even perhaps helping that person.

So, how do we keep free from *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, and at the same time be able to perform *sevā* to the Vaiṣṇava or the institution when we have to analyze or even perhaps criticize? It may be criticism in a helpful way, but still it is criticism.

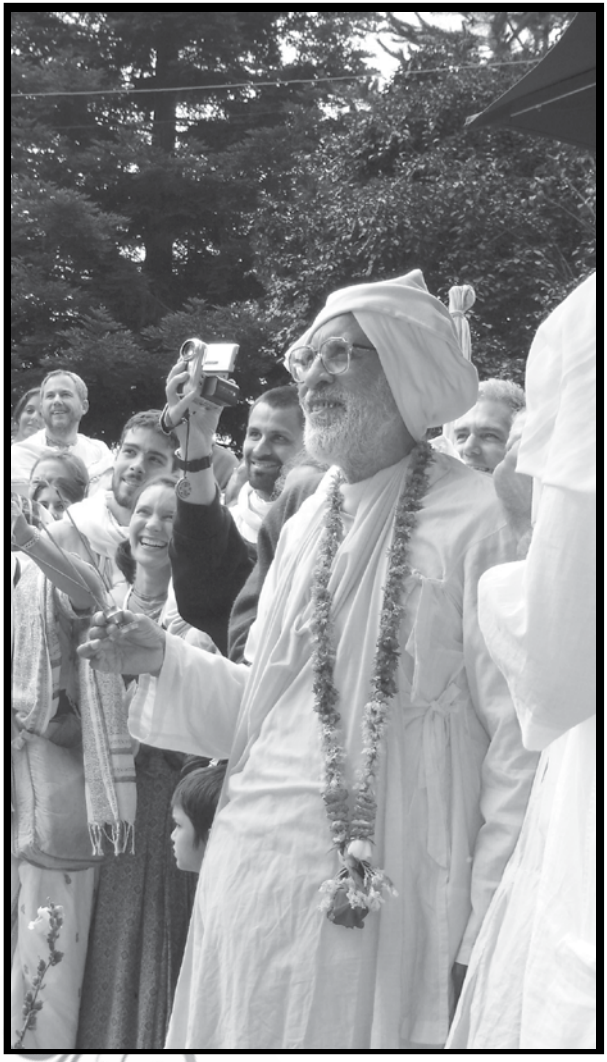
Śrīla Gurudeva: At that time we may remember Kṛṣṇa and Yaśodā in the pastime of Mother Yaśodā tying Kṛṣṇa to the grinding mortar (*dāmodara-bandana-līlā*). Yaśodā says to Kṛṣṇa, "May I beat You?" and she 'rebukes' Him so much. She does not slap Him, but she shows her stick as if she will do so, and she strongly chastises Him. But she is not committing any *aparādha*, because her heart and mood is favorable (*anūkula-bhāva*). This means she desires only His happiness. Her heart is devoid of any unfavorable mood (*pratikūla-bhāva*).

We should be very careful. We may use some rough words for the purpose of management; but this must be done with love (*prīti*), and it can only be done with *prīti* if our inner heart is such. There cannot be any mood of revenge, or hatred, or anything of the sort. We can give someone a slap and rebuke him, but with *prīti*, so that his nature will change. If someone is acting against *bhakti*, we will give him appropriate *śikṣā*. A *madhyama-adhikārī* has the ride to act in this way.

However, if we are not pure and we criticize repeatedly, our heart becomes like a stone and our fear of committing *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*

goes away. So, we should be very careful. If we do anything wrong to anyone, by heart also, with Kṛṣṇa also, or with any Vaiṣṇavas, it is essential that we try to please those Vaiṣṇavas according to their position in *bhakti*.

Mathurä, India: November 11, 1991



The Advisory Committee Meeting

[After the successful completion of the Navadvīpa-dhāma parikramā, an Advisory Council Meeting was held at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha on Śrīla Gurudeva's request. He personally dropped in a couple of times and participated briefly. Here are some excerpts.]

Group Dynamics

Śrīla Gurudeva: Your votes will be by majority, and two/thirds vote is better. In this way you can decide everything.

Considerate Preachers

Śrīla Gurudeva: Five or six or seven sannyāsīs and other preachers go to the same place at the same time, and this creates a burden for the local devotees. It is best that the preachers first discuss among themselves, and then decide who will go where and when they will go.

I request the sannyāsīs and other preachers not to press anyone, saying, "I am coming to your area, so you should give me my 'coming and going' fare." They may not insist. Do you understand? Devotees can give, but of their own accord.

Don't Fear

(To all devotees) I think you should all tell your ideas openly and bravely; don't fear from anyone. You all have a right to express your ideas. Don't think, "Oh, only they are controlling."

Navadvipa (Koladvipa), India: March 24, 2008

Learning Harmony

Humility

I offer millions of humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my *paramaradhyadeva* (most worshipful master), *oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and the same unlimited obeisances unto the lotus feet of my *śikṣā-guru, oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja.

I became very satisfied this morning when I visited the school and saw the students and teachers. I want this school to advance further, and I want more students to come. The students should learn Vaiṣṇava etiquette. They should learn to be very polite and humble and to honor all Vaiṣṇavas; and they should also learn our *siddhānta* from the beginning.

The teachers should also be very humble. If they are not humble and polite, and do not honor their superiors, they will never be able to teach these principles to their students. I know personally that Vrajendra-nanda prabhu and Nityā-mañjarī dāsī are very humble and polite, and I desire the other teachers to be like them.

Some of the teachers may sometimes become upset, because they are young, but it is important for them to understand that, as teachers, they must practice in order to teach. Students learn from their teachers' behavior. I want this school to advance still further so that devotees will be inspired to send students from every part of the world.

Humility Springs from Bhakti

Now we will come to the subject of our class on *Bhajana Rahasya*. We are explaining *niṣṭhā*, the stage of steadiness in *bhakti*, and in this regard Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has quoted the third *śloka* of *Śrī Śikṣāstakam:*

tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

Śrī Śikṣāstakam, (verse 3)

> One who considers himself lower than the straw in the street, who is more tolerant than a tree, who does not expect honor for himself but who is always prepared to give all respect to others, can very easily chant the holy name of the Lord at all times.

Try to remember this *śloka*. Even more importantly, try to follow it and practice it in your daily life. Mere remembrance will not suffice. You cannot become humble just by imitating humility. If your *bhakti* increases, humility will come naturally.

To attain humility, it is essential to increase your *sādhana-bhajana:* chanting "Hare Kṛṣṇa", serving your Gurudeva and Vaiṣṇavas, and properly respecting all Vaiṣṇavas. It is especially essential to engage in the five most important limbs of *bhakti*, namely associating with devotees (*sādhu-saṅga*), chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names (*nāma-kīrtana*), hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*bhagavat-śravaṇa*), living in Mathurā, or Vṛndāvana (*mathurā-vāsa*), and serving the Deity with faith (*śrī-mūrtira śraddhayā-sevana*). Without these, your humility will not be real.

Giving Like a Tree

Mahāprabhu addressed Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya in the Gambhira:

> O Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya, please hear from Me the process of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to

> awaken one's dormant love for Kṛṣṇa. One who considers himself lower than the straw in the street, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect honor for himself but who is always prepared to give all respect to others can very easily chant the holy name of the Lord at all times.
>
> The symptoms of one who chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* are as follows. He is actually very exalted, but he thinks himself lower than the straw in the street. His tolerance is like that a tree, which does not protest when it is cut down and does not ask anyone for water when it is drying up. The tree gives its own wealth of fruits, flowers, and so on to anyone who asks. It gives shelter to others, even while tolerating scorching heat and torrents of rain itself. A Vaiṣṇava is the most exalted of all, but he does not think that he is better than others. On the contrary, he gives all respect to others, knowing that Kṛṣṇa resides in the hearts of all.
>
> *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* (20.20-25)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has said that if you want to chant pure *nāma*, then be indifferent to all worldly desires and intoxications, the heart disease of lust, the attachment to wealth and reputation, and so on. Then natural humility will automatically manifest in your heart.

Not Asking In Return

In *Śrī Bhajana-Rahasy*a, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura discusses the importance of *nirmala-dayā*, which means 'showing mercy without ever wanting anything in return.' The trees are an example of this. Offering their entire lives to others, they never ask anything in return from anyone.

You can become like these trees only by chanting and remembering, and by serving *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas. To the extent you engage all your senses and moods in devotion to Kṛṣṇa, to that proportion *nirmala-dayā* may awaken. *Nirmala-dayā* is the mercy of helping others advance in

Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If you turn someone's mood from worldly desires to serving Kṛṣṇa, this is the best mercy (*dayā*) and compassion. Giving donations of money or food, or giving your daughters for marriage are worldly things, and by doing so you will simply be engaged in matter.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has also glorified *nirmala-dayā*. He has said that it is very hard to turn an ordinary person into a devotee; it takes so many hundreds of gallons of blood, or in other words, vast amounts of energy. Try to come to the platform on which you can practice *nirmala-dayā*. Become devotees yourselves, and try to make others devotees.

More Humble Than the Grass

Try to give up all false ego: "I am very learned," "I am the most qualified devotee," "I am very wealthy," "I am very beautiful," "I can attract others." Otherwise, you will not be able to chant the pure holy name.

Offering All Respect to Others

Most importantly, give proper respect to devotees according to their advancement in *bhakti*. In order to help us do this, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described the symptoms of different classes of devotees. One who cannot give proper respect to Vaiṣṇavas is considered to be arrogant.

If you want *bhakti*, always remember Kṛṣṇa's words:

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

Bhagavad-gīta (4.34)

In order to know this truth, one must approach a spiritual master, offer obeisances to him, inquire from him submissively, and serve

> him. Those who are self-realized can give you knowledge because they directly see the Transcendental Reality.

Gurudeva will automatically give you knowledge if you perform these activities. From today onward, let us give proper respect to Vaiṣṇavas according to their level of *bhakti* as neophytes, intermediate devotees, and advanced devotees (*kaniṣṭha, madhyama,* or *uttama-adhikārī*). We consider those who chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* to be our family members, whether they are initiated or not. I know that you cannot realize who is exalted (*uttama*) and who is on another level. Still, try to give proper respect. One who does not do so is not even a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*.

Badger, California: June 1, 2002

Love and Affection

Kṛṣṇa is love, and love is Kṛṣṇa. The aim and object of the teaching of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is simply to know this. Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have combined to become Śacīnandana Gaurahari (Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu), who is more merciful than either of Them. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu traveled throughout India, from north to south, from east to west, preaching love and affection everywhere He went. This was also the mission of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmi Mahārāja and our entire *guru-paramparā.*

We want to associate with everyone on the platform of love and affection, not by controlling others. You cannot bring others to Kṛṣṇa's service by manipulating them or controlling them. You cannot even control your own mind, what to speak of controlling others'.

Dedication to Others' Welfare

Mahāprabhu exhibited His love and affection in the jungles of Jharikhaṇḍa by causing the wild animals to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* together in ecstatic love. By His influence, the behavior of these wild animals towards each other changed; they lived together peacefully and even drank from the same watering places. It was by His mercy that He quickly spread love and affection throughout this planet and the universe. The love that He preached is Śrīmatī Rādhikā's special *prema*.

If you want to make your life successful, happy, and peaceful, then try to give all of your love and affection to Kṛṣṇa and, with Kṛṣṇa in the center, give your love and affection to all living beings. Don't try to control others by your order or your thoughts. Try to give your whole being. Love has nothing to take but everything to give.

If your aim is to preach Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's love and affection, then dedicate your whole life for others' welfare. They will reciprocate with that love, and thus give their life to serve Kṛṣṇa. However, if you try to control them, they will not offer their love and affection. Avoid criticizing others; criticize your own mind and bad habits instead.

The first point is that if we want to show love to others, it is essential not to cause them any pain or suffering, or to burden them for our personal happiness or maintenance. Our first concern is for the happiness and satisfaction of others.

We want to be completely selfless in our dealings, and for this, we have the example of the tree, which gives its bark, roots, fruits, leaves, wood, and shade. The tree offers everything to others with no expectation of remuneration. Why can't we human beings be so selfless?

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given us this verse:

> A devotee thinks himself to be even lower and more worthless than insignificant grass that has been trampled beneath everyone's feet. He is more tolerant than a tree, he has no pride, and he offers respect to all others according to their respective positions. Thus, he is able to chant the holy name of Śrī Hari continuously. (*Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam* verse 3)

I want my sannyāsīs and preachers to understand this verse and follow it completely, and to teach others by their personal example. I want them to behave selflessly, trying to give their hearts to others. I have come to give my heart, not to take anything from you. This is the preaching of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He gave His heart even to dogs, lions, and tigers.

We need not ask anyone for money. If we preach the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu selflessly, God will automatically send money

like a shower of rain from the sky. We need not worry about that at all. This is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teaching and example.

Please listen very carefully to my words so that they don't evaporate in the air. Don't forget what I am saying. Listen carefully, write down these instructions, and then try to follow them.

My desire is that you understand the object of the mission of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmi Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and our *guru-varga*. Spread it broadly all around the world. Begin where Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmi Mahārāja left off, and continue to preach more and more.

At the present moment, we see that many senior Vaiṣṇavas and *sannyāsīs* are falling down, derailed from their devotional service and giving up their practice of chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa. I request that our preachers set a high standard of behavior, and preach the mission of their *gurudeva*.

Giving up Self-Praise

If you want to be successful in your life, the first necessity is to give up the desire to praise yourself. Don't think, "I am very glorious and talented. I can preach everywhere." Instead, glorify your *dīkṣā-guru* and *śikṣā-guru* everywhere. If you do this, you will be successful in your preaching and glory will come into your pocket. I have realized this, and you should also realize this fact. If you glorify your *guru-paramparā*, everyone will be pleased with your preaching and praise you. Go on with your preaching, and take care not to seek that praise. Remember that you are a servant of your *dīkṣā-guru* and *śikṣā-guru*. Don't be ambitious to create your own disciples; rather, try to bring disciples to your *gurudeva's* lotus feet.

Odessa, Ukraine: September 22, 2002

Teachers Need These Qualities

Never Retaliating

We are discussing *Uddhava-Saṁvāda*, the instructions imparted by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava just prior to Kṛṣṇa's departure from this world. Uddhava asked Kṛṣṇa, "What is *bhagavat-dharma*? What are the symptoms of pure devotees? How can we become pure devotees? How can we achieve *uttama-bhakti* (pure devotional service)? In this connection Kṛṣṇa replied, "The qualities of My devotees are as follows:

kṛpālur akṛta-drohas
titikṣuḥ sarva-dehinām
satya-sāro 'navadyātmā
samaḥ sarvopakārakaḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.29)

> O Uddhava, a saintly person is merciful and never injures others. Even if others are aggressive, he is tolerant and forgiving toward all living entities. His strength and meaning in life come from the truth itself, he is free from all envy and jealousy, and his mind is equal in material happiness and distress.

Kṛṣṇa said, "O My dear Uddhava, My devotee is very merciful. He cannot tolerate the sufferings of the conditioned souls. That is why, like Nārada, he travels throughout the world without invitation."

No one invited Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Maharaja: "Please come and preach here." He came 'automatically,' by his mercy. He was sent by his Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who was the embodiment of mercy. Devotees like them are very, very

compassionate. They go from door to door, like Nityānanda Prabhu. Even if they are insulted or beaten, they continue preaching, inviting everyone to somehow or other chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Jagāi and Mādhāi hit Nityānanda Prabhu with an earthen pot and made His head bleed. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu became extremely angry and wanted to kill them with His *cakra* (disk weapon), but Nityānanda Prabhu stopped Him, pleading, "No, Lord, please do not do this. You killed the demons in other incarnations, but please don't do so in this incarnation." His devotees are also like this. They do not give up their avowed intent to preach, even if someone insults them.

The Sage and the Scorpion

Once, two saints were standing on the bank of a river, when they saw that a scorpion was being carried away by the current. One of the saints picked up the scorpion on the palm of his hand to save him, but the scorpion stung him and again fell into the stream. Again the saint lifted out the scorpion and again the scorpion stung him, but the saint picked him up yet again. His friend said, "Why are you doing this? Let's go. Don't try to save him. Let him die." That saint replied, "If this scorpion is not giving up his nature to bite, why should I give up my nature to save him?"

Never Taking Revenge

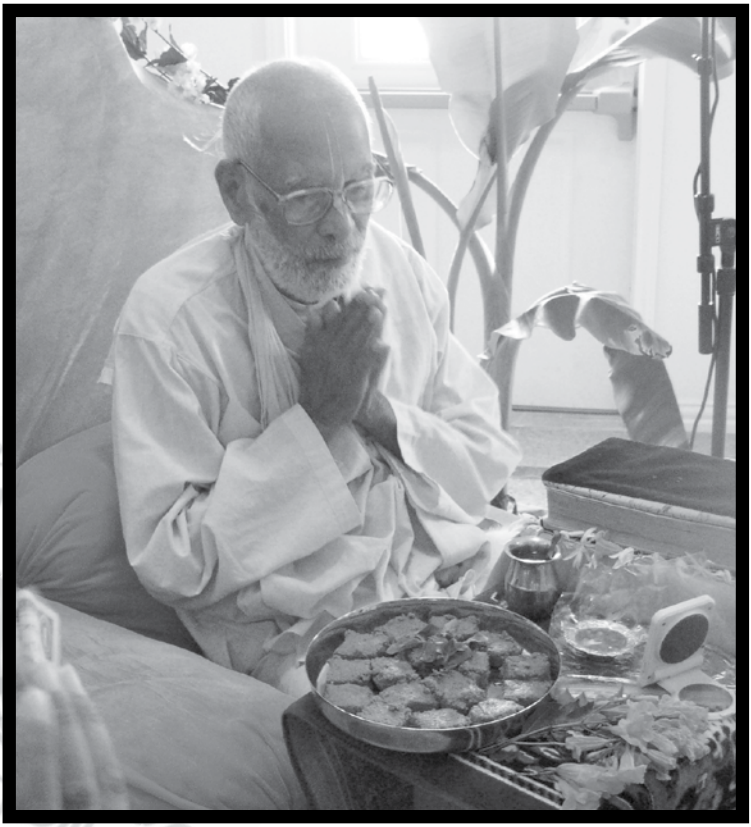
If someone does something against you, don't take revenge. Even if a great calamity befalls a devotee, he tolerates it. Tolerance is a very high-class quality.

Kṛṣṇa is Truth, the Absolute Truth, and His devotees are like Him. From the core of their heart, they never want to see mischief come to others. They always use their life, their wealth, their power, and their strength for others; to save others, to help others.

Their intelligence never becomes contaminated, and they always follow this principle: "Thinking oneself to be even lower and more worthless than insignificant grass which has been trampled beneath everyone's feet, being more tolerant than a tree, being prideless, and offering respect to all others according to their respective positions, one should continuously chant the holy name of Śrī Hari."

If you want to be able to constantly chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, kindly follow this instruction. The nature of devotees is very sweet. They don't disturb anyone. They never use harsh words when speaking to anyone. They behave and speak very sweetly.

Murwillumbah, Australia: February 6, 2008



Honoring Even the Grass

[Śrīla Gurudeva called on Sundara-gopāla dāsa to recite and explain this verse:]

arcāyām eva haraye
pūjāṁ yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu
sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.47)

> A devotee who faithfully engages in the worship of the Deity in the temple but does not behave properly toward other devotees or people in general is called a prākṛta-bhakta, a materialistic devotee, and is considered to be in the lowest position.

Sundara-gopāla dāsa: Śrī Havir is explaining to King Nimi the qualities of the *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*. He has already discussed the qualities of the *uttama-bhakta* and *madhyama-bhakta*, and now is describing the qualities of the *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*.

The *kaniṣṭha-bhakta* is one who serves the Deity of the Supreme Lord with faith, but is unable to properly respect Vaiṣṇavas and people in general. Such a person is a materialistic devotee.

Śrīla Gurudeva: Why has it been told that such a person is a *bhakta* (devotee)? Why has he been called a *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*?

Sundara-gopāla dāsa: Although he is only like the shadow of a *bhakta*, he worships Hari on the altar.

Śrīla Gurudeva: The verse states that he does not honor ordinary persons. Why should he honor them? Do you understand my question?

Sundara-gopāla dāsa: The *madhyama-adhikārī bhakta* can differentiate between different levels of devotees and non-devotees, but the kaniṣṭha does not know how to make that differentiation.

Śrīla Gurudeva: My question is this: To say that he has the flaw of not respecting *bhaktas* (*tad-bhakteṣu*) is alright, but why should he honor ordinary people (*anyeṣu*)?

Sundara-gopāla dāsa: Oh, you are asking, "Why should he?"

Śrīla Gurudeva:

> *uttama haññā vaiṣṇava habe nirabhimāna*
> *jīve sammāna dibe jāni' 'kṛṣṇa'-adhiṣṭhāna*
>
> *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā* (20.26)

> Although a Vaiṣṇava is the most exalted person, he is prideless and gives all respect to everyone, knowing everyone to be the resting place of Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, whether or not we are aware of it. Therefore, we honor even a blade of grass.

Padua, Italy: June 26, 2009

Respecting the Kanistha and the Deer

Even if one knows all *siddhānta* or established philosophical truths, it is essential to be very humble and to honor everyone. If you do not properly honor others, and instead you are thinking, "I know better

than anyone," you may end up challenging even your *gurudeva*. You may end up challenging Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and also Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. When you speak, you will take the credit for yourself, saying "These are my words," rather than giving credit to our *ācāryas*.

Gurudeva is very, very humble. He always says, "Oh, I have heard this from my *gurudeva*, and I am simply explaining his words."

This humility is imperative; giving proper respect even to *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*, as Śrīmatī Rādhikā gave great honor even to the deer.

dhanyāḥ sma mūḍha-gatayo 'pi hariṇya etā
yā nanda-nandanam upātta-vicitra-veśam
ākarṇya veṇu-raṇitaṁ saha-kṛṣṇa-sārāḥ
pūjāṁ dadhur viracitāṁ praṇayāvalokaiḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.11)

Blessed are all these foolish deer because they have approached Mahārāja Nanda's son, who is gorgeously dressed and is playing on His flute. Indeed, both the doe and the bucks worship the Lord with looks of love and affection.

Rādhikā used to say, "I want to be a deer, because they can easily get the *darśana* of Kṛṣṇa, whereas I cannot." Such is Her humility.

Always be more humble than a blade of grass; persons with this quality will develop their Kṛṣṇa-consciousness. On the other hand, if one is overwhelmed with false ego, thinking, "I know everything. Why should I honor all these bogus persons?" he will deviate. Try, therefore, to learn Vaiṣṇava etiquette, follow properly, and honor all according to their development in *bhakti*. Honor even those who are *kaniṣṭha*, and especially the *madhyama*, *madhyama-uttama*, and *uttama-adhikārī*.

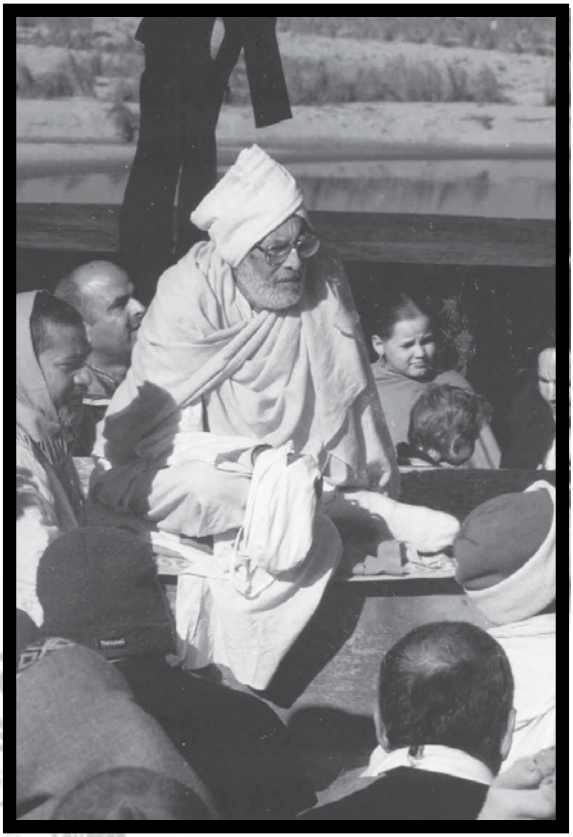
kṛṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta
dīkṣāsti cet praṇatibhiś ca bhajantam īśam

śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya-
nindādi-śūnya-hṛdam īpsita-saṅga-labdhyā

Nectar of Instruction, (text 5)

One should mentally honor the devotee who chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. One should offer humble obeisances to the devotee who has undergone spiritual initiation (*dīkṣā*) and is engaged in worshiping the Deity, and one should associate with and faithfully serve that pure devotee who is advanced in undeviated devotional service and whose heart is completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others.

Holland: June 8, 2001



Criticism Destroys Bhakti

Criticize, and Lose the Holy Name

To Surely Receive Krsna-prema

sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana
sakala-sādhana-śreṣṭha ei pañca aṅga
kṛṣṇa-prema janmāya ei pāṅcera alpa saṅga
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.128-129)

One should stay in Vṛndāvana under the guidance of a *sādhu*, chant the holy names, hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from the lotus mouth of a *rasika* Vaiṣṇava and serve the Deity of the Lord with faith. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has promised, so there is no doubt; by performing these five activities one will surely receive *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

On One Condition

But there is one condition, and that is the disrespect of, or offense to Vaiṣṇavas. This is our dilemma. We chant *hari-nāma*, residing in the holy place and hearing Bhāgavatam; but we are not really hearing, and some of us only act as if we are following. We speak publicly on the Bhāgavatam and give instructions to others, but we do not protect ourselves from offense to Vaiṣṇavas. Joking and laughing, we somehow disrespect or criticize them.

The holy name, who is God Himself, cannot tolerate this. Therefore, we deceive ourselves and are deprived of the real fruit of chanting. In this way, many lifetimes are wasted. By all means, be very, very cautious to avoid offense to Vaiṣṇavas, for offense to Vaiṣṇavas is offense to the holy name.

If you see another devotee doing something wrong, don't look. There are elevated Vaiṣṇavas who will see their faults and rectify them. You cannot do so, so just tend to your *bhajana*. If someone else is not doing *bhajana*, why are you worrying about it? Just look at your own behavior. We don't see our own faults, but we want to see others'; and day and night, we talk about this. Nowadays this is the fashion, and in this way, we lose the chance to do *bhajana*.

Please understand this clearly. In our own lives, wherever we see some kind of fall-down, some disaster, some digression from *bhajana*, or some material difficulties, the main cause is disrespect to *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas.

Ajāmila was more fallen than fallen, but he did not disrespect Vaiṣṇavas. He was sinful, but as soon as he had the association of Vaiṣṇavas, he stopped his sinful activities and was able to chant the pure holy name. Wherever there is a little bit of disrespect for the Vaiṣṇavas, guru, saints, *sādhus*, the holy abodes of the Lord in this world, or the holy names, there is a decline in *bhakti*.

As You Sow, So Shall You Reap

You may have heard the history of Prajāpati Dakṣa. He cursed Śrī Nārada Muni, saying, "You gave my sons instructions on the performance of bhajana of the Supreme Lord, and now they have left our home and family. You have ruined everything for me, and for that I curse you that you will not be able to remain in one place for more time than it takes to milk a cow." Śrī Nārada became very pleased because he took this as a benediction rather than a curse. But how would others react?

There is a Hindi saying: "If you place a thorn in someone's path, that thorn will become three, like a trident, and it will return to pierce you. On the other hand, if you do good for others you will be showered with flowers." Therefore, never harbor bad thoughts about anyone

with intent to harm them. Even if someone unjustly abuses you, simply tolerate; do not retaliate.

[Translated from Śrīla Gurudeva's Hindi class, by Mādhava-prīya dāsa brahmacārī]

Mathura, India: 1994

The Vaisnava and the Prostitute

Once, two Vaiṣṇavas went to live in a town. One of them took up residence under a banyan tree, and it so happened that not far away from that banyan tree a prostitute lived on the second storey of a very beautiful building. The other Vaiṣṇava resided in a temple in the middle of that town.

The Vaiṣṇava who was living near the prostitute had one mood in his heart, while the mood of the Vaiṣṇava in the temple was different. The Vaiṣṇava in the temple saw that so many people were coming to visit the prostitute and then leaving again, and he imagined, "Oh! That Vaiṣṇava is there with a prostitute!"

Regarding, the mood of the Vaiṣṇava who lived near the prostitute, He considered, "Oh, I am so unfortunate that I cannot live in the temple. That other Vaiṣṇava is so fortunate – he is always performing *kīrtana*, always chanting, and always remembering Kṛṣṇa." The first Vaiṣṇava was always thinking of the fortune of the Vaiṣṇava living in the temple, whereas the second Vaiṣṇava was always criticizing: "I am so lucky that I am in the temple, while that wretched person is there with that prostitute."

In due course of time, death came to the Vaiṣṇava in the temple. He saw three very frightful figures approaching him, and he asked them "Who are you?" "We are Yamadūtas, the messengers of Death, and we have come to take you with us," they replied. The Vaiṣṇava protested, "Oh, no! I am not the man you are looking for. He is over there! He is always with that prostitute, but I am a holy person, living in a temple!" "No, no." the Yamadūtas replied. "We know everything. We have come especially for you." "Where will you take me? To Svargaloka?" "No, we will take you to the most wretched of places and punish you, for you

are always criticizing. That other Vaiṣṇava is a real *sādhu*. He is always thinking favorably of you. He is always chanting the holy name and engaging in other devotional practices."

My instruction is the instruction of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*: never criticize anyone. If someone is doing bad things, he only causes harm for himself. If you criticize someone, thinking, "This is wrong," or "This fellow is very bad," then all the bad qualities that you are thinking about will enter your heart and the Yamadūtas will come to punish you first. Always try to remember the good qualities of real Vaiṣṇavas and Kṛṣṇa; hearing, chanting, and remembering hari-kaṭha.

I have heard that some of my disciples criticize ISKCON leaders and others. Please avoid this; it is not what I want. No matter whether persons belong to ISKCON or any other institution, no matter what is their caste or creed, do not criticize them. Even if such persons are actually bad, still, do not criticize them. Always remember true devotees and glorify them. This is a good process. This is the instruction of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and also of *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja. Please be careful about this.

Badger, California: June 26, 1997

We Are Not Masters to Chastise

Try to advance. Don't waste your time criticizing or trying to control everything around you. Gurudeva can control. He is a controller. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu are

controllers. It is best to think in this way: "I am not the controller. Rather, I should be controlled by Them. I should try to control myself." This is the way to develop our Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We must protect ourselves from committing offenses to others while chanting, remembering, and engaging in devotional service. Otherwise, those offences will spoil everything. All of our endeavors will be wasted and go into the garbage can.

If you see that a person is wretched, then don't associate with him. Offer *daṇḍavat-praṇāma* from a distance, meaning, don't think about him at all. Otherwise, you can say, "Oh, my *daṇḍavat-praṇāmās*. Now I should go." But do not criticize. Guru can criticize and chastise, but we are not masters to chastise.

Be very humble and hanker for *bhakti* so that your hearts will melt. Try to serve Vaiṣṇavas and *guru*. If you are performing abundant service to *gurudeva* but at the same time chastise Vaiṣṇavas instead of honoring them, *gurudeva* will not accept your service.

Don't spend time thinking, "Śrīla Prabhupāda's *vyāsāsana* is made only of cloth, and there are no jewels. I should fix it." Everything is correct externally; just correct your mind. The external situation is sufficient. You only need more love and affection.

Please don't be disturbed by my strong words. I don't want to create any problem or give you any trouble. You are free to accept or disregard what I am saying. You can accept more, or less. I have a shop here. You can come and take the goods in my shop, or you can leave without them. If you think my goods are all right, you may take them; if not, then don't take them.

Badger, California: May, 1997

A Special Hell for Vaisnava-Aparadhis

If you commit *nāma-aparādha* and *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, and at the same time you are chanting the holy name, what will be the result? Especially if you are criticizing Vaiṣṇavas, you will have to go to hell. The holy name cannot bear anyone criticizing His devotees. Śrī Kṛṣṇa will make another kind of hell for you – a special kind of hell. He considers that these present hells are not enough.

Holland: June 7, 2001

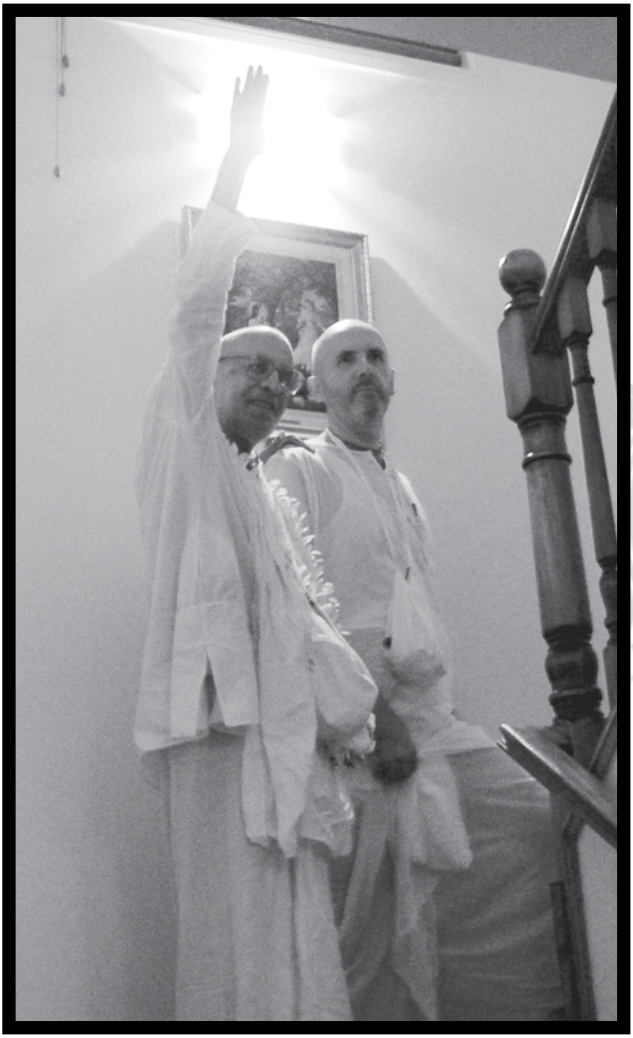
If You Have the Power

Do not criticize anyone. You can correct a person only if you can change him. For example, Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva were doing wrong, so Nārada came to them and cursed them out of pity. He did not pay specific attention to what they were doing. He considered only this: "Oh, their lives have gone in vain. How shall I reform them?" He had the power to do what was necessary, and that is why he pointed out their fault. Thus, his curse turned out to be a benediction.

Try to follow this principle; all *sannyāsīs* must especially follow.

Malaysia: January 27, 2009

Editors' Note: The image on the following page is original. It has not been altered or enhanced.



Not Even In the Mind

Padmanābha dāsa (from Delhi)**:** Śrīla Gurudeva, yesterday you said that we should not criticize or praise anybody, but sometimes we criticize or praise people in our minds.

Śrīla Gurudeva: I know that you criticize. This is a very bad thing. Don't do this.

Padmanābha dāsa: By tongue we may not criticize, but criticism starts from the mind.

Śrīla Gurudeva: We should also try to take this out of our mind. Try to see an individual's good qualifications.

uttama hañā vaiṣṇava habe nirabhimāna
jīve sammāna dibe jāni' 'kṛṣṇa'-adhiṣṭhāna
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (20.25)

Although a Vaiṣṇava is the most exalted person, he is prideless and gives all respect to everyone, knowing everyone to be the resting place of Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīpāda Padmanābha Mahārāja: A question came into my mind yesterday, when you quoted this verse:

para-svabhāva-karmāṇi
na praśaṁsen na garhayet
viśvam ekāmakaṁ paśyan
prakṛtyā puruṣeṇa ca
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.28.1)

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: One should neither praise nor criticize the conditioned nature and activities of

> other persons. Rather, one should see this world as simply the combination of material nature and the enjoying souls, all based on the one Absolute Truth.

Here it is said, "Do not criticize or praise." You have also said that by criticizing, one builds a bridge to the other person's bad qualities, which then come into the body of the person who is criticizing. However, if we praise someone and build a bridge, and his good qualities come into us, what is the problem?

Śrīla Gurudeva: This injunction applies to sense enjoyers. Do not criticize or praise any sense enjoyer. Nevertheless, it is essential to always glorify devotees.

Śrīpāda Sādhu Mahārāja: (Translating from Russian) Dāmodara prabhu says that he is always seeing faults in others and his mind meditates on others' bad qualities. He is asking how he can get rid of this habit.

Śrīla Gurudeva: (To Dāmodara dāsa) Has Gurudeva told you to criticize others? You are disobeying your Gurudeva if you do so. Don't disobey him. If you find that your mind is criticizing others, simply turn it away and forcibly focus it on Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Badger, California: June 17, 2008

The Kingdom of Kali

The servant of the *guru* is deeply respected. Understanding this, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī always saw Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as his *gurus*.

We should also have this behavior amongst ourselves, for that will create love between us. We may think, "I am *guru*. He knows nothing. He is not as good a servant of our Gurudeva as I am. He doesn't even know any *siddhanta*." Or, "I am the only *ācārya* and no one else is qualified." If we think in this way, there will be quarrels among us; as is going on nowadays. Where there is hatred and similar mentalities, that place is *kali-rājya*[5], the kingdom of Kali.

Mathura, India (Lecture on Sri Vilapa-kusumanjali, text 6): 1991

The Medicine to Cure Criticizing

Ānandinī dāsī: How can I stop myself from criticizing?

Śrīla Gurudeva: You can criticize yourself, but not others. This is an offense, and bhakti will go away. Be careful.

Vrndavana, India: August 9, 2009

Prakāśātma dāsa: How can I curb my tendency to always speak *prajalpa* and criticize others?

Śrīla Gurudeva: You can do so by always being in *sādhu-saṅga* and hearing hari-kaṭha. Parīkṣit Mahārāja had no time to speak with anyone, or to sleep or eat or drink. He was drinking only the nectar of *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. *Sādhu-saṅga* is the best medicine. Chant the holy name in sādhu-saṅga, and don't associate with persons who are chattering and pattering. Read books and engage your mind at all times. If the mind

[5] Kali-yuga is the iron age of quarrel and hypocracy.

is not engaged by you, then it will automatically engage itself in bad things. The mind wants something to eat, so we should give it *hari-kaṭha* – as much as you can hear and chant and meditate on.

Paris, France: June 30, 2009

Bhakti Avoids Quarrels

Don't Quarrel

I offer my so many humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual master, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. And I offer my same obeisances in the lotus feet of my *śikṣā-guru*, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa oṁ viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja.

"I Have Not Come to Sit in Court"

Once, during Navadvīpa-parikramā, two disciples of my Gurudeva were quarreling between themselves. Taking burning sticks of wood from the kitchen, both were bitterly arguing. Someone came and told Gurudeva, "Oh, they are quarrelling so much. Please do somehow make them stop. They won't listen to anyone." Guru Mahārāja replied, "Let them quarrel. They should quarrel, and after that, they should go to court and file a case against each other.

"I am not a judge. I have not come to sit in court and decide about worldly things. I have not told them to quarrel. I told them that those who want to do bhajana of Kṛṣṇa will follow the principles of *tṛṇād api sunīcena, taror api sahiṣṇunā, amāninā mānadena*. Following these principles, devotees are humble like a blade of grass and more tolerant than the trees.

"Trees never complain about anything to anyone, even if they are being cut down. Even if the tree is drying up, it never begs water. Rather, it always serves others. If you throw a stone at it, it will give you sweet fruits in return. Its bark, fruit, wood, and everything else are for others.

"I have told them that I came to help them develop transcendental love and affection for Kṛṣṇa, not to be a judge. In India, and especially in Bengal, there are thousands of courts where one can go and complain: no harm. Don't come to me for that."

"I Am Not a Court"

As you may know, when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was residing in Purī, Gopīnātha Paṭṭanāyaka, the brother of Śrīla Rāya Rāmānanda, who was very dear to Mahāprabhu, had kept a large sum of money which belonged to the king. He had been given a service by the State to collect money, and he was collecting it, but he once withheld a large amount. So he was guilty.

The son of the king went to him and demanded, "Why are you withholding the money?" He arrested him and brought him to court, where it was decided that he should be given the death sentence; the next day he would be put to death.

Very worried, all the devotees approached Mahāprabhu and begged, "O, please save him." Mahāprabhu replied, "You want Me to go to the king? I cannot help him. I have not told him to do as he did. Why should he not pay that money? He must pay. I will not interfere. I am not a court. I have only come to give love and affection for Kṛṣṇa. I can help you only with this."

"I Am Also Not a Court"

Similarly, I am also not a court. You can go to court if you have any dispute. I have not told any man to quarrel with his wife, nor have I told that wife to quarrel with her husband. I have not come from India to be like a court. I have come simply to help devotees advance in *bhakti*. For millions of births you have been quarreling in courts here and there, but I have not come for this. This is not my duty, so do not come to me with these things. I do not want to waste my time.

If you have a problem in chanting and remembering, or if you are weak, I can help so much. My life is dedicated for that. Do you understand? If you have some desire to serve Kṛṣṇa, I can make you strong. However, if you have no faith in the holy name, in *guru*, or in Kṛṣṇa, how can I help? If you do not want to perform devotional

activities, you are free, to do as you like. You are independent to do all bogus activities for sense gratification. What can I do?

We see from history, and we also see from the Vedas, Purāṇas, and all other scriptures, that a man cannot be happy, and neither can a woman be happy, if he or she is not chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa. This can never be. If you want to be happy, then follow the path of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and have strong faith in *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. The Vedas, the Upaniṣads, and all other *śāstras* say the same thing.

My request is that wife and husband avoid quarreling with each other. Be tolerant, otherwise your life will be spoiled. Be like chaste Indian ladies and chaste Indian husbands. Be like Rāma and Sītā, like the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa, like Sāvitrī and Satyavān, like Anusūyā and Atri, and all others like them. There are so many sincere senior devotees here who are very peaceful, and I become happy to see them.

I want you to be happy forever.

Aberyswyth, Wales: July 2, 2000

No One Quarrels In Goloka Vrndavana

How Best To Avoid Quarrels

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and all their associates used to weep bitterly, "O Kṛṣṇa, where are You? O Śrīmatī Rādhikā, where are You? O Viśākhā, where are you? If I don't receive your mercy, I will give up my life. Please be merciful to me." They would weep here and there, at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, at Śyāma-kuṇḍa, and sometimes at Vaṁśī-vaṭa in Vṛndāvana. Engaging in this way throughout the day

and night, they would sometimes become unconscious in ecstasy, and sometimes Śrīmatī Rādhikā would appear to them.

I want all of you to be like them; then there will never be quarreling. Don't quarrel among yourselves for any reason. Try to honor everyone as *guru*. Try to make your chanting of the Lord's names like this: [Śrīla Gurudeva began chanting slowly and with great absorption]

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

Oh, you will see that everything has changed. Chanting in a pathetic tone, Kṛṣṇa will hear your prayers. Your chanting will enter Kṛṣṇa's ears. Otherwise, if you neglect Him, He will also neglect you.

There are so many things to say, but how can I express everything in one or two days?

Trees Don't Quarrel

Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva entered Vṛndāvana with Their thousands upon thousands of cows and cowherd friends. Outwardly it is seen that Kṛṣṇa is going out to cowherd, but His motive is much deeper. He is expert; there are so many purposes in His one action.

When Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva entered the forest, beautiful trees and creepers full of fragrant flowers surrounded Them on all sides. Very sweet honey flowed from the trees, which were all full with blossoming flowers, and which were laden with mangos and other sweet fruits. When They arrived in the forest, all the trees bent over as if they were offering *praṇāmās* along with their fruits and flowers.

Very happy, Kṛṣṇa said to Baladeva Prabhu, "Oh brother, see how beautiful this scenery is. The life of the trees is truly successful, so everyone should learn from them how to live in this world. How humble these trees are, always giving their life and soul for others. They do

not live for themselves; they donate their seeds, fruit, branches, shade, wood, bark, and juice to others. I think they are actually offering everything at Your lotus feet. O Baladeva, You are the Lord of Lords."

Those who want to be happy must be like the trees in tolerance and other excellent qualities. I have never seen two trees quarreling, but I see so many devotees quarrelling. What are we? Are we lower than animals, trees, and creepers?

Do not disturb anyone for your own interest. Even if trees dry up because they have no water, still, they never ask anyone, "Oh, please give me water. I am drying up." It does not matter to the trees if someone comes to cut them down, or if a storm comes to ravage their sweet fruits. Still, they give their fruits. Why should we not give of ourselves?

The King Didn't Quarrel

Once, a very strong and famous king in India conquered a kingdom, and was returning home with his generals and entire army. On the way home, he and his entourage became tired, so he decided to take rest under a mango tree in a large garden.

Some village boys came along while he was taking rest there. Seeing the sweet, ripe mangos in that tree, they began throwing stones at the tree to get the fruit. Unfortunately, one of the stones hit the king's eye. Blood flowed from the wound, and the king became blind in that eye.

The sorrowful generals caught the boy and brought him to the king. "What shall we do with this boy?" they asked. "Please give us permission to cut him in pieces." The king replied, "Wait, wait. Why were the boys throwing stones at the tree? To get fruit. And, when they threw the stones at the tree, the tree responded by giving them fruit. I am not less than this tree, so I must also give him very sweet fruit. Why not? Some part of the kingdom should be given to this boy."

Krsna Doesn't Quarrel

Always remember the behavior of Kṛṣṇa. Pūtanā came to kill Him, but He allowed her to take birth in Goloka and offer to Him her breast milk there with a motherly mood. Why should devotees quarrel amongst themselves if they are really devotees? There should be some difference between devotees and ordinary people.

I worry when I hear that devotees quarrel and don't get along. Aren't you able to change this? In selflessness, there is no quarreling. I don't want to hear any problems caused by quarrels over silly things.

Always remember: if you are not tolerant donors, like the trees, you will never be happy and you will never attain pure *bhakti*. Don't waste your time; become like this at once. This is my request to all.

The Quarreling Demon Named Mura

There was once a demon named Mura, who was killed by Kṛṣṇa. This place, Murwillumbah, may be like that. I don't want to hear that the devotees in Murwillumbah are afflicted by the quarreling demon named Mura. Never quarrel with anyone. Why quarrel? If anyone wants anything from you, then donate to them whatever they want.

Ordinary people may quarrel about something due to their own self-interest. But you are devotees and have been initiated by a good devotee; so why are you all quarreling and not helping each other? This is a big problem everywhere. I don't want to hear quarrel-related topics. Don't give shame to real devotees. If you do not change, then ordinary people will think, "Devotees always quarrel with each other; they are all bogus."

I know husbands and wives in India who have lived together without quarreling for eighty years. Sometimes they may have a love-quarrel, but not a real quarrel. From now on, don't cause any problems for anyone.

Krsna's Friends Don't Quarrel

śrī-śuka uvāca
itthaṁ śarat-svaccha-jalaṁ
padmākara-sugandhinā
nyaviśad vāyunā vātaṁ
sa -go-gopālako 'cyutaḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.1)

Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Thus, the Vṛndāvana forest was filled with transparent autumnal waters and cooled by breezes perfumed with the fragrance of lotus flowers growing in the clear lakes. The infallible Lord, accompanied by His cows and cowherd boyfriends, entered that Vṛndāvana forest.

Kṛṣṇa is known as Acyuta because He is infallible and eternal, and the devotees of Kṛṣṇa are *acyuta-gotra*, coming in Kṛṣṇa's lineage.

I know so many persons who don't attend class, who hardly chant, and who hate others. Why? Being devotees, it is improper for them to think, "I am better than others." Avoid this false ego; rather, be like trees.

Kṛṣṇa takes all His cows and cowherd friends from one forest to another, and plays with them along the way, searching for something. Dāma, Sudāmā, Madhumaṅgala, and billions of other cowherd boys surround Him, but I have never heard that He quarrels with them. Why quarrel? In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, it may seem as if there is some quarreling going on, but that is solely in love and affection.

Kṛṣṇa tells His friends, "I am defeated and you have won." He allows others to win. Lord Rāmacandra is also like this. He used to behave in this same way with Lakṣmaṇa and others, and He would become so happy.

Krsna's Gopis Don't Quarrel

As Kṛṣṇa wanders from one forest to another, the *gopīs* are in their homes, unable to tolerate His separation. We cannot imagine how

much attachment and affection the *gopīs* have for Him. If there is no attachment, there is no *bhakti*.

From neck to feet, Kṛṣṇa is decorated with a garland of colorful forest flowers, especially *belī*, *cāmeli*, and *jūhī*. Beautifully playing His flute in the forest, He is also decorated with Tulasī leaves and *mañjarīs*, which exude so much honey that numerous bumblebees hum around them. The cowherd boys sing and dance in glorification of Kṛṣṇa, calling out, "*He Kṛṣṇa, tomare jaya ho*! – O Kṛṣṇa, all glory to You!" It is difficult to find the equivalent English words to express this Sanskrit phrase.

The *gopīs* give very masterful descriptions of Kṛṣṇa. He is in the forest and they are in their homes, in their rooms, discussing in groups of likeminded friends His qualities and pastimes. None of them are chattering and pattering; and no one is quarreling. Always carrying Kṛṣṇa is their minds and hearts, they talk about Him as if they are physically present with Him in the forest.

barhāpīḍaṁ naṭa-vara-vapuḥ karṇayoḥ karṇikāraṁ
bibhrad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapiśaṁ vaijayantīṁ ca mālām
randhrān veṇor adhara-sudhayāpūrayan gopa-vṛndair
vṛndāraṇyaṁ sva-pada-Rāmaṇaṁ prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.5)

Wearing a peacock-feather ornament upon His head, blue *karṇikāra* flowers on His ears, a yellow garment as brilliant as gold, and the *vaijayantī* garland, Lord Kṛṣṇa exhibited His transcendental form as the greatest of dancers as He entered the forest of Vṛndāvana, beautifying it with the marks of His footprints. He filled the holes of His flute with the nectar of His lips, and the cowherd boys sang His glories.

Like-minded *gopīs* sit in groups, of which there are four types: *svapakṣa*, *vipakṣa*, *taṭasthā*, and *suhṛt*. The *gopīs* see Kṛṣṇa dancing,

speaking as if singing, and gazing with sidelong glances that attract the world. They describe Him as if He were in front of them. Brahmā may see Kṛṣṇa in a trance, but not like the *gopīs* see Him. They want to forget Kṛṣṇa, but they can't.

The *gopīs* hear the very beautiful flute-song, *klīṁ*, and think, "He is calling me." They vividly hear Him calling them with His flute from many miles away, and all are attracted. They glorify His sweetness and beauty when He stealthily gazes at them with sidelong glances. They speak to each other in this way; not about any worldly topics. When we assemble together, we should share Kṛṣṇa-related questions and answers, and also discuss the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. This is the process to become attached to Kṛṣṇa.

If you like, you can also hear His flute-song wherever you are, by simply thinking, "I want to hear the flute-song of Kṛṣṇa." Always follow in the footsteps of the gopīs, and be attached to Kṛṣṇa like they are. They gave Him their heart, remembering nothing but Him. They were very humble, very humble, very humble.

Kṛṣṇa should always manifest in your heart. If He does not appear there, then take the shelter of a high-class devotee in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, and you will quickly realize His pastimes.

Krsna's Cows Don't Quarrel

The gopīs describe Kṛṣṇa's gait, His appearance, and His behavior. When Kṛṣṇa goes to herd the cows, seeing them thirsty He says to them, "Come on, come on; *niri*, *niri*. Oh, you are thirsty. Come on. This is Pāvana-sarovara." Or, "This is Manasi-gaṅgā. You can drink water here." Then, after the cows drink, He tells them, "Now you are satisfied. *Tiri*, *tiri*; come on the bank." And, "*Dhiri*, *dhiri*; come easily. Don't give trouble to others." When Kṛṣṇa plays on His flute, calling,

"O Kālindī, O Dhavalī, O Kavarī," they immediately come to Him.

I Will No Longer Hear About Quarrels

Now it is late.Tomorrow I will speak further on these beautiful topics of Vṛndāvana. Come and hear very attentively, and follow my instructions. From tomorrow, I will not hear any quarrel-related problems. Try to give this up, at least for seven days. Then, if you continue in this way, you will become humble like trees throughout your life.

Murwillumbah, Australia: June 19, 2001

Like Red Bulls

We have been discussing Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, ślokas one and two:

vāco vegaṁ manasaḥ krodha-vegaṁ
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viṣaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmāṁ pṛthivīṁ sa śiṣyāt

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

atyāhāraḥ prayāsaś ca
prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ

jana-saṅgaś ca laulyaṁ ca
ṣaḍbhir bhaktir vinaśyati

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

An aspiring devotee may be very good, simple, and humble at times. Yet, at other times he may become mad if anything happens against his desire, and he will begin to beat anyone who comes in front of him. Sometimes he may be controlled by anger, and this is very harmful. Let us be always humble and tolerant; not mad.

I hear that many devotees are very humble sometimes, and sometimes like red bulls; if you come in front of them, they will lift you up and throw you with their horns. Do not take on that quality of bulls. Instead, be like bulls when they serve and support like fathers; take on this quality. Never be like bulls when they fight with others or beat them.

How can you control these urges? You cannot control them. We can remember, or memorize, the instructions given in the first two *ślokas* of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, but it is essential that we also try to follow them. The six urges delineated in *śloka* number one and the six impediments to *bhakti* in *śloka* number two are out of our control.

There is one process, however – a very grand process – which can control them. What is that process? It is explained in the third *śloka*:

utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt
tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt

saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ
ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati

Progress in *bhakti* may be obtained by the following six practices: (1) enthusiasm to carry out the rules which enhance *bhakti*, (2) firm faith in the statements of the *śāstra* and the *guru* whose words are fully in line with the *śāstra*, (3) fortitude in the practice of *bhakti*, even in the midst of obstacles, or patience during the practice stage of *bhakti*, even when there is delay in attaining one's desired goal, (4) following the limbs of bhakti such as hearing (śravaṇa) and chanting (kīrtana) and giving up one's material sense enjoyment for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, (5) giving up illicit connection with women, the association of those who are overly attached to women and the association of Māyāvādīs, atheists and pseudo-religionists, and (6) adopting the good behavior and character of pure devotees.

If you follow this third *śloka*, then the two previous *ślokas* will be followed automatically. Your mind, your tongue, and all your senses will thus be and very easily controlled. Try to know the meaning of this *śloka*, and then follow. If you do not follow all these principles, it means you are not following me, you are not following Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and you are not following Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Conjugal.

If you have committed an offense to another devotee, then go to him at once and beg pardon: "I have done wrong to you. Please excuse me." When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu liberated Jagāi and Mādhāi, each of the two brothers said, "I promise that I will no longer be a sense enjoyer. I will not do anything wrong again." And they never did. They became so humble. Try to be like this.

Murwillumbah, Australia: January 21, 2001

No One Else To Blame

Pay Attention to This Message

What are you doing? Stop making garlands. You can make garlands at night, after my class. In fact, it is best to make the garland of this *hari-kaṭha* in your heart. Your attention is not here; you're losing your time. I have come for only four or five days, and this is perhaps the third.

Don't even chant. You can chant when ordinary devotees like yourselves give class. At that time you can chant and remember Kṛṣṇa; but don't neglect any senior Vaiṣṇava who is on the level of *guru*.

Don't allow your eye lids to drop down. Rather, continually drink that Vaiṣṇava's words with your eyes and ears, and also with your mouth. By this process Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the personification of transcendental knowledge and the embodiment of *bhakti*, may come to you.[6]

This is the process. Many devotees who were there during the manifest presence of *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja did not follow this process, and now you are not following. That is why you have no taste for chanting and hearing.

Freedom from Anger

Try to hear this very carefully. If you want to do *bhajana*, you will have to remember this *śloka* of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* – not the *śloka*, but its meaning and mood. Without such remembrance you will always be angry and beset with many problems. You will always be upset, and you will not be able to do *bhajana*.

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[6] In his previous manifestation as Śrīmatī Rādhikā's parrot in Vraja, Śukadeva Gosvāmī entered the wide-open mouth of Vyāsadeva's wife while she was hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam from him. Through her mouth, Śukadeva Gosvāmī entered her womb and remained there for eleven years, after which he took birth from her womb as a youth.

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.8)

> One who seeks Your compassion and thus tolerates all kinds of adverse conditions due to the *karma* of his own past deeds, who engages always in Your devotional service with his mind, words, and body, and who always offers obeisances unto You, is certainly a bona fide candidate for becoming Your unalloyed devotee.

What is the meaning of *su-samīkṣamāṇo*? It is the careful consideration or judgment of what is good and what is bad. *Su* means that 'considering.' We consider that everything in this world, both good and bad, is due to the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. We determine, "Kṛṣṇa is arranging everything, good and bad, for my benefit, for my auspiciousness."

Considering Krsna's Mercy

When the Muslims were beating Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura in the market places, he considered, "Kṛṣṇa wants to teach the world tolerance, and He wants to use me as an example of that. He wants to glorify me throughout the world. Kṛṣṇa has mercifully done this; Mahāprabhu has done it."

We should see something good in whatever happens to us. We should see how Kṛṣṇa has arranged all circumstances for our benefit. What is the best way to think when a problem comes? "Kṛṣṇa has sent this. There is certainly something good here for me." We will have to reconcile everything in this way.

Why has Kṛṣṇa sent what He has sent? *Su-samīkṣamāṇo bhuñjāna evātma-kṛtaṁ vipākam*. What is the meaning of this phrase of the

above-mentioned *śloka*? Why are all the troubles, miseries, sorrows, suffering, and problems coming to us? Kṛṣṇa is not the cause. Such conditions are the results of our past activities; they come to purify us. It is the arrangement of Kṛṣṇa that reactions must come as a result of whatever actions we perform, and we will have to be ready to taste these results.

No One Else Is Guilty

"No one else is guilty, and Kṛṣṇa is also not responsible, for any troubles that fall upon me. Who is responsible? I am. I am responsible for whatever activities I have performed." By thinking like this, we will always be happy – even if we have millions of problems. Thinking in this way, a devotee offers obeisances and considers, *su-samīkṣamāṇo bhuñjāna evātma kṛtaṁ vipākam hṛd-vāg-vapurbhir vidadhan namas te*. "O Kṛṣṇa, You have sent this to purify me from all the results of my past activities." High-class devotees think, "O Kṛṣṇa, you are very tricky. By this situation You want to glorify me by using me to set an example. How merciful You are."

Vidadhan namas te. The devotee always offers *praṇāmās* to Kṛṣṇa. If problems and sufferings approach, then *vidadhan namas te*; he offers *praṇāmās* by folding his palms.

Hṛd means 'by the core of the heart,' and *vāg* means 'by speech.' The sincere devotee prays, "O Prabhu, I am guilty, I am worthless, I am stupid, and I engage in more nonsense than Jagāi and Mādhāi. I am more insignificant than the worms in stool. You are merciful, so merciful, that You have invested Your whole power in Your name – and I can chant that name. Thus I will very quickly become free of these impurities, and I will be able to attain Your service. By having given me this difficult situation, You are creating the process by which I can very soon reach You and serve You."

Even if a father has not written a will, still, when he dies, his property automatically goes to his son. His son is his natural heir. Similarly, by rolling on the earth in appreciation of Kṛṣṇa's mercy, a devotee can become the heir to the Lord's service and attain *prema*. Kṛṣṇa will automatically give that devotee *vraja-prema*.

Toulouse, France: July 1999

Harmonious Asramas

Bhakti Doesn't Depend on Asrama

Once I was in Āsāma with my Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Maharaja. At that time, there were about forty *brahmacārīs* and ten *sannyāsīs* in our group. One day, one of the *brahmacārīs* gave class and said that all householders are rotten. He told his audience, "Householders have nothing to do with *bhakti*. We *brahmacārīs* and *sannyāsīs* are strong. We can preach and do *bhakti*, but these rotten householders cannot."

"You Are Rotten"

None of the *sannyāsīs* were in the class when the *brahmacārī* spoke in that way, but we heard about it afterwards an informed Śrīla Gurudeva. He at once became furious and told that *brahmacārī*, "You are rotten. You have no connection with *bhakti*. You don't know any *siddhānta*. Most of our *ācāryas* were married, and so was Kṛṣṇa Himself, because He married in Dvārakā. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, and all of the *gopīs* were married. Are they rotten? The Pāṇḍavas were householders. Are they rotten? Oh, you are especially rotten. You are not even a Vaiṣṇava. I don't think you have taken initiation at all."

After this incident everyone became very careful, understanding that advancement in *bhakti* depends only on *bhakti* itself.

yei bhaje sei bodo abhakta hina chara
kṛṣṇa-bhajane nahi jati-kuladi-vicara
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (4.67)

Anyone who takes to devotional service is exalted, but non-devotees are always condemned and abominable. Advancement in *bhakti* has nothing whatever to do with family prestige and one's position in society.

kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kene naya
sei kṛṣṇa-tattva vetta, sei guru haya
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (8.128)

One may be a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī*, or even a *śūdra*. In any case, no matter what his status, if he really knows the science of Kṛṣṇa, he is actually *guru*.

One may be a *gṛhastha*, a *brahmacārī*, a *sannyāsī*, or in any position. If he knows the established philosophical truths – the philosophy of the love and affection that was taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu - He is a pure Vaiṣṇava.

Everyone in our line – from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to *parama-pūjyāpada* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Maharaja and myself – takes this view. We do not think, "All the *gṛhasthas* are rotten, and they have nothing to do with *bhakti*."

Polite Householders

In fact, I actually prefer the *gṛhastha* devotees if they are more polite than the *sannyāsīs*. *Sannyāsīs* sometimes have a great false ego and think, "I am learned. I am a *sannyāsī*." If they have this conception, they are sure to fall down. All the *sannyāsīs* with such false egos have fallen down. They may return to the path of bhakti if they have not offended any Vaiṣṇava, and if they have not left the teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Maharaja and his paramparā; that is, the Vaiṣṇava line coming from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. However, those who are offending their guru and other Vaiṣṇavas cannot return.

It is very harmful for any *sannyāsī*, *brahmacārī*, or *gṛhastha* to offend a Vaiṣṇava. I think that for the most part *gṛhasthas* do not commit offences, because they are afraid of what will happen if they do so. But nowadays *sannyāsīs* and *brahmacārīs* are not at all afraid of committing offences; in fact many are desperate to commit offences. They commit offences one after another, again and again. They have no fear at all,

whereas *gṛhasthas* are somewhat polite and think, "We don't know anything. We are in family life, so we don't have so much association with high-class Vaiṣṇavas." Consequently, they respect Vaiṣṇavas.

Tolerant Householders

Householders are more tolerant and advanced in devotion to Kṛṣṇa than many modern *sannyāsīs*. They cannot give up the renounced order and fall down, because they have not accepted the renounced order in the first place.

Sannyāsīs sometimes give up their renunciation. They tell others to be careful regarding women and to give up their wives and children. Then, after saying this, they themselves become lusty and associate with women in the mood of sensual enjoyment. Sometimes a preacher may say as a point of reference, "Don't be lusty, don't be angry," without criticizing anyone. But if he criticizes others, then all the bad qualities that he describes will come on his head and in his heart.

Always glorify Kṛṣṇa, Gurudeva, the Vaiṣṇavas, the pastimes of Mahāprabhu, and especially the pastimes of Nityānanda Prabhu. Be careful. Do not criticize even if one does something to be criticized.

Los Angeles, California: June 5, 1998

Criticizing That Brahmacari

"He fled from here"

Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura once sent some devotees to preach in East Bengal, where they preached very successfully. When they asked him what he wanted them to do, he

replied, "I will be very happy if you establish a preaching center, and when you are ready I will come there with many devotees." Accordingly, they worked day and night to prepare the preaching center, expertly arranging all kinds of facilities so that Śrīla Prabhupāda would come there and be happy. They made a temple in that center, with Deities ready to be installed by him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived at the temple at mid-day, and was very pleased to see everything they had done. He then asked, "Where is the *brahmacārī* who came here first and worked so hard?" They told him, "O Gurudeva, at first that devotee was a good *brahmacārī*, but later he became entangled with a lady. We rebuked him so much for his behavior that he fled from here."

"Bring him to me"

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, "I do not want to establish a preaching center here, nor do I want to install the Deities. You know, in this world it takes hundreds of gallons of blood to rescue a person from the clutches of *māyā*. If that *brahmacārī* made some mistake, it would have been washed away by his chanting and service to Hari, *guru*, and Vaiṣṇavas. But you have chastised him and he has gone away. So I don't want to make a center here. Search for him and bring him to me; otherwise I will leave."

All the disciples became anxious, and they began searching everywhere for that *brahmacārī*. Hayagrīva Brahmacārī somehow discovered his whereabouts. He apologized to that *brahmacārī*, "Please excuse me. Śrīla Prabhupāda is very unhappy with us. Please come with me."

"Prabhupada is So Merciful"

The *brahmacārī* began to weep, crying out, "ŚrīlaPrabhupāda is so merciful. I was working here in a watch company, but I was not happy.

I wanted to return, but I was thinking, 'How can I show my face?' That is why I did not come back.

"But Śrīla Prabhupāda has called me. What endless mercy he has! He is more merciful than Lord Kṛṣṇa."

He immediately went running and weeping to Śrīla Prabhupāda. He fell flat at his Guru Mahārāja's lotus feet, and all his *anarthas* were washed away in a moment.

So, do not criticize anyone, neither devotees nor even worldly people. It is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.28.1-2):

śrī-bhagavān uvāca
para-svabhāva-karmāṇi
na praśaṁsen na garhayet
viśvam ekāmakaṁ paśyan
prakṛtyā puruṣeṇa ca

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: "One should neither praise nor criticize the conditioned nature and activities of other persons. Rather, one should see this world as nothing more than the combination of material nature and the enjoying souls, all based on the one Absolute Truth.

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

Whoever indulges in praising or criticizing the qualities and behavior of others will quickly become deviated from his own best interest by his entanglement in illusory dualities.

Do not glorify worldly people, whether they are good or bad. If you do so, all their bad activities will come to you and your life will be spoiled.

It is very, very difficult to bring someone from the clutches of *māyā*. Whatever lust and other attachments are present in that person's heart will go away very soon if he is chanting and remembering and listening to *hari-kaṭha*. Be very careful. First look at your own condition and try to purify yourself. Is there any lust in you? Is there any deceit and hypocrisy in you? Be worried about that; do not worry about others. Guru and Kṛṣṇa are responsible for others. You cannot do anything to help them, so you have no right to criticize. This instruction is for all.

Hilo, Hawaii: February 7, 2005

Harmonious Household-Life

Tit For Tat

We are human beings. Why should we take flesh or eggs? Eggs are like wombs. If we engage in sinful activities, we will surely have to taste the reactions. This is very serious; very serious.

If you abuse someone, he will abuse you. If you give others a slap, others will slap you. If you tell someone, "I will poke out your eyes," he will do the same to you. So be very humble, very polite, and very sweet to all – especially to Kṛṣṇa.

Good Behavior Brings Trust

I encourage you all to do nagara-saṅkīrtana in your area; preaching well and behaving very well. In this way everyone will trust you, and they will also trust Kṛṣṇa.

A No-Problem Household Life

I desire that all householders who are initiated by me become strong in their family life – husbands not divorcing their wives, and wives not divorcing their husbands; all husbands chaste to their wives, and wives chaste to their husbands. There may be some problems, or some difference of opinion, but I request that it be easily solved.

Always be very tolerant. Otherwise, while traveling to Vṛndāvana you may quarrel with each other, and from there you will have to return to your homes in the West; you will not reach Vṛndāvana. So be tolerant, don't quarrel, don't divorce each other, be happy, always be very strong, and help newcomers.

I want all my householders to be like Yaśodā-nandana and Anaṅga-mohinī. How loving they are to each other. Both are independent, but both are cooperating. Yaśodā-nandana has given all kinds of freedom to Anaṅga-mohinī. She considers that only half is hers and that all is for her husband, and Yaśodā-nandana thinks the same way toward her.

Our singer, Kṛṣṇa-kānta, and his wife Yogamāyā are so beautifully helping each other. Giving everything to me, their only problem is, "How can we attain the mercy of our Gurudeva?"

I request that all householders become like them – like Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita, like Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, and like Śyāmānanda Prabhu. They were all householders, and they had no problems.

Our only problem should be, "How and where can I have Kṛṣṇa's *darśana*?" Only this; nothing else. If you are householders, be like Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja, and if you have no wife and children, then be like Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

Controlled Senses Remove Problems

Even in family life, Prahlāda never wanted anything from Kṛṣṇa. He was always saw his worshipful Deity, everywhere and in everything,

and helped the children of the demons to be very bona fide devotees.

As far as Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī is concerned, he had nothing to do with opulence. All the teachings and moods of Prahlāda Mahārāja were situated in the dust of the lotus feet of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who was always and only immersed in *vraja-prema*, *gopī-prema* – service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. His renunciation was only for this. If you want to become pure devotees, you can follow Prahlāda Mahārāja, but more so, try to follow Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's character and devotion is topmost, but we cannot realize this at present. Therefore, we first imbibe all the teachings of Prahlāda Mahārāja. And, if we have the association of a *tattvajña-rasika-vaiṣṇava* in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, we will then be able to follow Śrīla Raghunātha-dāsa Gosvāmī.

Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī used to take the remnants of Jagannātha, but only those remnants that were rejected by even the cows. He used to happily take this. What was the reason? He rejected the tasteful prasādam of Jagannātha-deva, he rejected standing at Siṁha-dvāra and waiting to see if anyone would give him some *prasādam*, and he rejected everything his father offered him. His father told him, "You can do *bhajana*, but at the same time I want to help by sending you a *brāhmaṇa* and a servant. The *brāhmaṇa* will cook for you and give you very excellent *prasādam*. This is appropriate because you are my son, the son of a king."

Why did he refuse his father's offer? So that he could be a bona fide devotee. He considered that if he would take anything tasty, he would end up filling his stomach to the brim, thus calling for many problems. Rather, he used to take rotten Jagannātha *prasādam*; so rotten that it had been rejected even by the cows. He used to wash it with water, and then add one or two grains of salt. He considered that if he would take tasteful *prasādam*, he would end up taking more, more, more, more, more. He would then have to sleep, then wake up and search for more.

Krsna Removes Problems

If you want to be devotees, then try to learn all these principles. In that way you will solely remember Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Gaura-Nityānanda Prabhu. Kṛṣṇa will then take all your requirements on His head and carry them to you. If you are not doing anything for your maintenance and only observing these principles, He will be very anxious for you. He will take upon His head all your requirements and bring them to you.

You can make an experiment and test my words. Don't eat anything for one day, two days, three days – just chant, remember, and serve. You will see that Kṛṣṇa will somehow arrange everything for you. He is funny; somehow He will arrange.

If you have no trust in my words, then make an experiment and see for yourself. I am looking, and I am seeing although you are unaware; He is doing everything. Regarding those who do not follow these principles, Kṛṣṇa will be very far away.

gramya-katha na sunibe, gramya-varta na kahibe
bhala na khaibe ara bhala na paribe
amani manada hana krsna-nama sada la'be
vraje radha-krsna-seva manasa karibe

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (6.236, 237)

Do not talk like people in general or hear what they say. You should not eat very palatable food, nor should you dress very nicely. Do not expect honor, but offer all respect to others. Always chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and within your mind render service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.

Mahāprabhu instructed Raghunātha-dāsa, "Don't take delicious, rich foodstuffs, otherwise you will not be able to control your senses. Avoid decorating yourself with expensive, opulent dresses, and always

engage internally, in the service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa."

Mahaprabhu continued:

markaṭa-vairāgya nā kara loka dekhāñā
yathā-yogya viṣaya bhuñja' anāsakta hañā
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (16.238)

You should not make yourself a show-off-devotee and become a false renunciant. For the time being, enjoy the material world in a befitting way and do not become attached to it.

antare niṣṭhā kara, bāhye loka-vyavahāra
acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (16.239)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued, "Within your heart you should keep yourself very faithful, but externally you may behave like an ordinary man. Thus, Kṛṣṇa will soon be very pleased and deliver you from the clutches of *māyā*."

Internal and External Harmony

Don't show your *bhakti*, your devotion for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and Nityānanda Prabhu. Keep this in your heart, and outwardly speak in this way to others: "Are you okay? How are you? How are your children? I have so much affection for them."

Mahāprabhu further instructed Raghunātha dāsa, "Don't put your faith in the external." But that is what we are doing. We maintain so many attachments and we have so much affection to those attachments. We don't give our hearts internally. In making an offering to Kṛṣṇa, we say off-handedly, "O Kṛṣṇa, You should take this thing." We chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in *kīrtana* like monkeys dancing. If our faith is in externals and not in the internal, then what happens internally? We get the opposite of spiritual life.

Those of you who have been kicked out by your wives, or whose wives have died – be renounced, with no anxieties or problems. Your only problem should be this: "O Kṛṣṇa, where are You?" Then you will be very strong. Don't be greedy to eat the very big *laglu* (representing sense gratification). This is very dangerous; very poisonous. Always try to engage yourself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Aberyswyth, Wales: May 5, 1998

For Peace in The family

The ladies' duty is to create a peaceful environment in the house. In India, we find many examples of courageous women such as Lakṣmī Bāī, the famous Queen of Jhansi, and others who sacrificed so much for their country and society.

Ladies are not only responsible for cooking and bearing children. It is incumbent upon them to also see that their children become learned in *bhagavad-bhakti*, and strong and courageous like Bhīma and Arjuna. Mothers have more responsibility than fathers, for they must teach their children about Bhagavān and *bhakti* from the children's earliest years. Their children should be taught Vedic culture and should be protected from atheistic influence. Women play a very responsible role in educating children.

Men have their own part to play, and it is essential that they also treat women with respect. It is important for them to avoid thinking of women as mere servants of the house or as simply meant for bearing children. Vedic personalities such as Lord Rāmacandra and the Pāṇḍavas showed how to respect women.

India should reflect the principles of *sanātana-dharma* that prevailed when the Pāṇḍavas ruled the world; these principles should never become weak. Similarly, *sanātana-dharma* must prevail in Fiji, because Fiji is like India on a small scale. My dear sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers; please follow the teachings of *sanātana-dharma*. Everyone will be happy, and the society and country will be at peace.

[Translated from Śrīla Gurudeva's Hindi discourse by Jagannātha dāsa Adhikārī]

Lautoka, Fiji: February 8, 2002

If Someone Urinates On You

Be enthusiastic at the time of hearing, remembering, serving the Lord's lotus feet (*pāda-sevanam*), and worship of the Deity of the Lord (*arcanaṁ*). Cooking is also *arcanaṁ*.

Don't be neutral, unenthusiastic, at any time. This is the symptom of *bhakti*, to first please *guru* and then to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa. How will you know that guru is happy with your activities? Oh, he will know. You can hide from yourself, but not from *guru*.

In his *Bhagavat-ārka-marīci-mālā*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura emphasizes that we continue to practice *sādhana-bhakti* with firm determination, and in this regard we have the historic example of the *tridaṇḍi-bikṣuka* . When that *sannyāsī* went begging in his native place, some of the residents would take his water pot (*kamaṇḍalu*) and pass urine in it. They would break his *daṇḍa*, insult him, put stool on his head, and call him, "*Dongi sannyāsī* (bogus, imitation *sannyāsī*)." Still, he was very tolerant. He continued to go begging there again and again, without caring about the insults.

Similarly, if any bad person cheats you, it's best to think, "No harm." Be tolerant if someone insults you, or pushes you so that you fall down, or even acts with violence or extreme envy towards you. Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was beaten and tortured, and Prahlāda Mahārāja's enemies tried to kill him, but they remained tolerant. Be tolerant if someone spits on you, ties you up, forcibly takes away your entire wealth by cheating you, or steals from you before your eyes. If someone urinates on your head or body, still, be tolerant and continue performing *bhakti* with enthusiasm. Don't be hopeless, thinking, "I should not continue."

Everyone, please hear this carefully. *Sannyāsīs* should especially take note of this, and among sannyāsīs, senior sannyāsīs most of all. If you are tolerant in these cases and continue developing your bhakti, Kṛṣṇa will be very soon pleased with you. He will be happy and Gurudeva will be happy. You will also be happy, and you will achieve your goal. Sometimes I see that you are bewildered in these cases; you do not know what to do or what not to do.

In this regard, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has collected verses in his *Bhagavat-ārka-marīci-mālā*; *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* relates the life and character of the *tridandi-sannyāsī*; and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* tells the history of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura and others. Be like them – this is *sādhana*.

Be very strong at the time of *sādhana*, following the examples in the life histories I have mentioned. I see that some persons become hopeless and give up *bhakti*. Thinking, "*Bhakti* is nothing. Why do so many calamities and sufferings come? I should give up." Don't give up.

Badger, California: June 17, 2005

Accepting Responsibility

On Good Communication

First try to give up all aspects of your false ego, such as anger. You will not be able to understand the topics I am going to explain [on the subject of *Bhakti-tattva-viveka*] if you maintain anger.

Try to be very humble:

tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam, (verse 3)

This verse is in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, but let us not leave it there; let it also come into your heart. Some devotees are always in an arrogant mood. They tell others, "You should obey me, I will not obey you. What I say is the true to the highest extent." They do not consider what the other person is saying, or whether the other person's advice is good or bad.

Hearing the Other Person's Moods

Please don't be like this. Try to be like Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates, who were so broadminded. Always see what other people want. Try to realize their difficulties. Try to understand their suffering. Let us try to keep our own mood concealed, and try to hear and accept the other person's. Let us try to understand the other person's happiness and distress, giving up our own moods and hearing the other person's. Then, together, we can all consider what to do. If we keep our own mood prominent instead of hearing the other person's mood, then our association is not really in the category of 'association, or *saṅga*.'

The *madhyama-adhikārī*, intermediate devotee, has four duties. The first of which is to give love (*prema*) to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The second duty is to relate in friendship with Vaiṣṇavas: friendship and service to Vaiṣṇavas who are our superiors, so much friendship to those who are equal, and friendship with mercy and compassion to those who are junior.

The third duty is to give abundant mercy to those who are innocent, including *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇavas, who are not very advanced. Always tell them *hari-kaṭha*. They may do something wrong, but we should tolerate that. Doctors are very patient and tolerant if a patient they are operating on abuses them. They simply tolerate and do the needful. The same is true of a mother with her child.

The fourth duty is to neglect those people who have an opposing mood and are committing offenses. Let us not quarrel with them. Rather, let us follow the example of Prahlāda Mahārāja in his reciprocal dealings with his father, and also the example of Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja's reciprocation with Duryodhana. Duryodhana and his party performed many harmful and offensive activities against Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, but Yudhiṣṭhira never thought, "Duryodhana is my enemy." In fact, instead of calling him "Duryodhana" (evil warrior), he always called him "Suryordhana (pure, well-behaved warrior)." He also addressed Duśāsana (ill-behaved ruler) as Suśāsana (well-behaved ruler), and Karṇa as Sukarṇa.

These principles are the ground-level platform of *bhakti*. If we do not create this platform, then although showers of instructions may come, they will not remain with us. If our ego is like a mountain, their showers will not remain on it; they will flow down the mountain. Those who are polite and humble (*tṛṇād api sunīcena*) will gain everything, whereas those who are proud will gain nothing.

Badger, California: Summer, 1997

Our Problems: Not Due To Others

Yesterday in my class, I was speaking about the need to control the urges of our senses: our speech (*vāco-vegaṁ*), mind (*manasaḥ-vegaṁ*), anger (*krodha-vegaṁ*), tongue (*jihvā-vegam*), belly and genitals (*udaropastha-vegam*). We encounter many problems, and continue to create more, only because we do not want to control our senses.

It is possible to control one's breathing. A *yogī* can stay alive without breathing for a thousand years. Dhruva survived in this way for four months, and Kaśyapa and Aditi also did this for thousands of years. Can you survive without air for even one minute? This is a very difficult task, but it is still more difficult to control the mind.

The mind wanders aimlessly, without reason, and thus it is very hard to control. The only way – only, only, only – is to engage all your senses and moods in chanting, remembering, and serving Kṛṣṇa.

Since your hand is not able to chant, remember, or meditate upon Kṛṣṇa, you can engage it always in the service of Śrī Hari, *guru*, and Vaiṣṇavas by sweeping, cutting vegetables, shopping at the market, cooking, offering obeisances, and so on.

Your feet can be engaged in traveling with devotees to Vṛndāvana, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, Śyāma-kuṇḍa, and Girirāja Govardhana, or to shop in the market for Ṭhākurajī.

Your tongue can be engaged in always chanting the names of the Lord and glorifying Vaiṣṇavas. Don't criticize Vaiṣṇavas in any way. In fact, don't criticize anyone. Let others do as they wish. There are many persons who have no job to attend to, who do not chant or remember, and who don't come to hear *hari-kathā* even though they may live nearby. Chattering, pattering, gossiping, speaking ill, and criticizing Vaiṣṇavas, they discourage others from coming to hear *hari-kathā*.

Remaining far from such persons and behavior, chant, remember, and engage in *bhajana*. If you cannot think of any other engagement to do, you can mix uncooked rice and dāl together while chanting, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa," Then, again separating them, chant, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa." If you cannot do even this, please let me know.

Murwillumbah, Australia: January 20, 2001

Don't Worry About Others' Behavior

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told Rāmānanda Rāya, "I am a Māyāvādī *sannyāsī*." Why did He say this although it isn't true? The reason is that He was humble, more humble even than a blade of grass. He followed the principles of the following verse, and all devotees follow Him in this regard.

tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam, (verse 3)

All devotees must follow this principle, especially *sannyāsīs*, giving honor to others. Don't worry about what others are doing. Don't look to see whether others are doing nonsense or acting improperly. Don't criticize anyone. Rather, ask yourself, "How well am I developing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness? Am I following *tṛṇād api sunicena, taror api sahiṣṇunā, amāninā mānadena*?"

Let us take a look at Kṛṣṇa's statement in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. "*Api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk* – One who is engaged in devotional service is to be considered saintly, even if he commits a most abominable action, because he is properly situated in his determination" (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.30). Don't worry about the temporary material contamination in a sincere devotee. If you do, your own life will be spoiled.

Try to be surrendered, always one-pointed, and help others as well. Don't criticize someone who is beginning to develop one-pointed *bhakti* but still has some impurity in his being. Don't quarrel with him.

Our constitutional religion is *bhakti*, but time is one of the biggest obstacles. Know that the time factor (*kāla*) is very powerful, but those that who have taken shelter at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa will be able to walk on the head of personified time and all other obstacles.

When Vaiṣṇavas meet, there is no question of asking, "How are you?" Rather, they ask, "How is your *bhajana*?" Try to ask questions like this: "How is your *bhajana*? How are you developing in your hearing, chanting, and remembering Kṛṣṇa?"

Murwillumbah, Australia: April 29, 2005

I Cheated Them First

Śrīla Gurudeva: Let us try to control our heart and our mind. Some people have cheated us, that is true; but we should respond in the following way, "I have cheated them in a previous birth. That is why they are cheating me today." It should not make us angry.

Question: But those people can put many people in confusion.

Śrīla Gurudeva: If you hit someone and that person hits you back twice as hard, you cannot complain. You started and he reacted. You can think, "I have caused him some harm in a previous birth. Now, through him, Kṛṣṇa is giving me the reaction." Don't become angry or envious, otherwise your mind will become agitated and you won't be able to perform *bhakti*. This teaching is for all of you.

If someone abuses you with words, you can think, "His insult doesn't affect me. I am not offended." The offense will turn back against the person who committed it. It is not necessary to become angry.

Mathura, India: August 1992

Happy To Be Cursed

Once, the grandson of the great Pāṇḍavas, Parīkṣit Mahārāja, the king of entire world, was touring his kingdom. Upon returning home he committed an offense at the lotus feet of a self-realized sage, and that sage's son became so disturbed and angry that he gave a cursed him: "Oh, you have dishonored my father! I curse you that after seven days you must die by a snake-bite. You must die. No one will be able to save you."

Nowadays we don't honor devotees. Disobeying them, we want to dishonor them, offend them, and criticize them. Such persons may create false rumors about devotees, but they don't know what will be the effect of these bogus rumors and criticizing Vaiṣṇavas. Vaiṣṇava-*aparādha* is the very biggest kind of *nāma-aparādha*, or offense to the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

If you commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, you must go to hell. What hell? Kṛṣṇa has to manage a new one, so that you will be crushed in such a way that no one will be able to save you.

Although nowadays offenders of Vaiṣṇavas don't repent their offenses, Parīkṣit Mahārāja repented his so-called offense[7] to the sage. He was thinking, "If I have dishonored this saint, then I must be crushed. What shall I do?" In the meantime, a student of the sage came and told him. "A curse has been given to you by the sage's son. You will be bitten by a snake, and you will die in seven days."

Very happy to hear this, Parīkṣit Mahārāja considered, "Oh, it is not that millions of my births have been affected by this curse. I have not been cursed to lose my devotion to Kṛṣṇa. So actually, nothing bad has happened. Today, right now, I am giving up my wealth, reputation, children, wife, and position."

The king thus left his palace and kingdom and came to the bank of Ganges. As he was wondering about the best course of action for his spiritual welfare, Srila Śukadeva Gosvāmī arrived at that same spot. He honored Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who was then seated on a *vyāsāsana*, and heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from him.

Toulouse, France: July 1, 1999

7 His action, garlanding the sage with a dead snake, was not actually an offense. He was acting by the supreme will of Krsna, so that ultimately he would hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam; and through him, the world would hear.

Freedom from Anger and Resentment

Taking Responsibility for Our Experience

Once there was a very poor *brāhmaṇī* widow, whose only son was a beautiful and charming boy of about nine. She lived in a hut and maintained herself and her son by begging. She had been initiated by a high-class Vaiṣṇava and worshiped Ṭhākurajī every day. She was happy in her life of worshiping, chanting, and remembering Kṛṣṇa.

One day, very early in the morning while the *brāhmaṇī* was engaged in some duty, she requested her son to bring some flowers from the nearby bushes for her worship. The boy happily set out to follow her order, and began to pick *belī*, *cāmeli*, and other flowers from the bushes. While he was in the midst of picking flowers, a poisonous black snake came and suddenly bit him. His whole body at once became black, and he fell flat on the ground and died.

A hunter happened to be walking in the forest at that time, and became very compassionate when he saw this incident. He chanted a *mantra* by which one can control snakes very easily. When the serpent heard the hunter's *mantra*, it became peaceful, and the hunter was thus able to put it in the clay pot he had been carrying. The hunter covered the mouth of the pot and picked it up again, and then approached the boy's mother, carrying his body in his arms.

When the old widow saw her son, she cried out, "What happened?" and began to weep bitterly, "Alas! Alas!" After some time, when she became somewhat pacified, the hunter told her, "Mother, I was there when the boy was picking flowers. He was innocent. He didn't attack or disturb the snake at all. The snake came from inside the bushes and bit him for no reason.

"I have caught that poisonous snake by *mantra*, and kept it in this pot. Please order me to cut the snake into pieces. I will then burn it, and there will be no trace of its existence. Please order me. Please order me."

The hunter appealed to the old widow again and again, but she simply asked him, "Oh, hunter, suppose you kill this poisonous serpent and burn its body. Will that bring my son back?"

"Never." he replied.

"Then why should you kill it?" she asked. "I don't want to kill it."

The hunter insisted, "This serpent is wicked. He may bite someone else. You must order me to kill and burn it." That kind *brāhmaṇī* widow was a realized soul and a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. She simply replied, "Why should you kill the serpent if that will not bring my son back? Please don't kill it." Again the hunter repeated, "If I don't kill this serpent, he will attack some other passer-by without any reason."

At this point, the serpent interrupted, "Why should you kill me? I was living in those bushes for years and years without biting anyone. I only bit this boy today because Death came and told me, 'You should bite him.' I'm innocent. Don't kill me."

At that moment Yamarāja Mahārāja, Death personified, the controller everyone's deaths, personally appeared at that spot. He said to the snake, "Are you saying that I have caused this to happen? That I have ordered you to bite the boy? I never did so. Why accuse me? I am not responsible for this.

"The boy is responsible for his own actions. When he was a human being in his previous life, the serpent also had a human body. They had a fight, and this boy killed the other person. The person he murdered has now taken birth as the snake and has taken his revenge. Actually, the boy's past actions are like a poisonous snake, which bit and killed him. I myself, Yamarāja, am not responsible for this; neither is the serpent."

If any problem comes in your life, it means that you have done something wrong in the past and now the result is coming. Why are you now afraid to taste the result? You must taste it. If you are fearing, if you don't want the result, still it will come. You will have to taste the results of all of your bad actions, and this is similarly true regarding your good actions. Don't fear. Kṛṣṇa has arranged all situations.

No blame, No Revenge

If you abuse anyone, Kṛṣṇa will arrange that you are also abused. You cannot clap with one hand. In other words you have done bad things in the past, and that is why reactions are coming. If the widow had asked the hunter to chop and burn the snake, in her next life she would have had to take birth, and again the serpent would have come as a human to take revenge.

If someone abuses you, don't abuse him in return. Even if someone creates problems to the extent of giving you poison, be careful. Be like Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Although Haridāsa Ṭhākura was beaten in so many market places, he prayed, "O Kṛṣṇa, be kind and excuse them. These beatings are the result of all my previous sinful activities, and Your mercy is coming in this way." Be calm and quiet, and chant, "Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare."

Consider thinking in this way: "I am worthless. I have offended many Vaiṣṇavas, and the reaction is that I am stupid and nonsense. Although I chant the holy name, tears do not come and my heart does not melt. O Kṛṣṇa, What shall I do?"

You can also remember Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and pray: "O Caitanya Mahāprabhu, You are causelessly merciful. Please bestow Your mercy upon me. In this *Kali-yuga* life is short, there are many problems, and the mind is always upset. What should I do? I am always besieged with obstacles in my attempt to execute bhakti. I am without

Vaiṣṇava association, I am weak, and I have not obtained Kṛṣṇa's mercy. O Caitanya Mahāprabhu, I know only You. You have given mercy to Jagāi and Mādhāi. Why not to me? I am more wretched than them, and therefore I am qualified to receive Your mercy."

If you weep in this way, Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy. By chanting in this way, your heart will melt and tears will come. If tears are not coming, you can think, "I have committed so many offenses." Always repent like this and chant, "Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare."

Toulouse, France: July, 1999

Two Loving Brothers

Hearing, hearing, hearing – so many billions of years have come and gone, and where are we now? We are still where we were. Are you hearing so that you will be able to practice? Or, are you hearing only for the sake of hearing? I encourage you all to hear to practice. By properly hearing we will be very humble; giving honor to all, not creating any problems for others, being very tolerant, and always remembering Kṛṣṇa.

tṛṇād api su-nīcena
taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam,(3)

Brothers in the Mode of Goodness

Once, during the time of India's ancient Vedic culture, there were two brothers, named Śaṅka and Liket. Sanka was elder and Liket was younger. When the boys were about five years old, they were admitted in the *gurukula* of a very high-class devotee. They were trained there until they reached the age of about twenty-five, and when they finished their studies they returned to their village.

The two brothers never married. Rather they each made separate *bhajana-kuṭīras* just outside their village. They had so much love and affection for each other. They were very qualified, especially in etiquette and friendly behavior. They knew how to behave towards others according to the laws and regulations of Vedic culture.

One day Liket, the younger brother, went to take *darśana* of his elder brother at his *bhajana-kuṭīra*. The hut was very simple, but it was situated in a beautiful garden with a river flowing by. It was a very charming *bhajana-kuṭīra,* enclosed in an atmosphere surcharged with the mode of goodness. In such an atmosphere purity manifests, automatically purifying the thoughts and the heart.

When Liket entered the garden to offer *praṇāma* to his brother, he was overcome by the very lovely flowers there, such as *belī*, *cāmeli*, and *jūhī*. Unable to check his greed, he plucked and smelled a fragrant yellow *campaka* flower.

He immediately became very worried and thought, "Why did I do this? I am guilty of theft. I did not ask my brother's permission for this flower." No one should take even an insignificant thing without permission of the owner. He realized that he should not have done it, for he knew all the rules and regulations of Vedic culture.

Upset, he took that flower to his brother, where he offered *sāṣṭāṅga-praṇāma* to him and began weeping loudly. His brother asked, "Why are you weeping?" Liket wanted to embrace his brother, but ridden by guilt he could not bring himself to do so. He said, "Oh, brother, I have

done something wrong, I've committed a theft. I've taken something without your permission. First purify me, and then I will be qualified to be your brother. I don't feel pure, so please give me punishment. Punish me to purify me. Otherwise I will simply be overwhelmed with guilt."

"What have you done brother? "

"Oh, when I entered your garden I saw so many beautiful flowers. Unable to check my heart, I took this flower without your permission. I plucked it and smelled it for my own sense gratification and enjoyment. I have done wrong, so please punish me." Śaṅka began to smile and, putting his hands on his brother's shoulders, told him, "This is nothing. If I can punish you, I can also excuse you. So, I am excusing you, because it was nothing. Please come, and we will talk."

Liket continued to weep, and said, "No brother, I want you to punish me. Please don't excuse me."

Sometimes, if there is no punishment, there is no purification. That is why governments throughout the world have made jails for punishment. In ancient times the punishment for stealing was to cut off a thief's hands. In this way the thief would always remember his sin, and the rest of the citizens would fear sinning.

Liket repeatedly requested Śaṅka to punish him, even though Śaṅka repeatedly said, "I have excused you." Thinking, "I must become pure," Liket insisted that he should be ideal and take some punishment. Finally, Śaṅka asked him, "Which hand did you use to take the flower?" and then cut off both hands, because both had touched the flower. Liket was now happy, even though blood flowed profusely from his wrists. After his brother medically treated him, he returned to his *bhajana-kuṭīra* and continued doing *bhajana*.

After some time, Liket decided to visit his elder brother again. He became worried, however, because he could not offer *sāṣṭāṅga praṇāma*

as he had no hands.[8] His brother came at that time, sprinkled some water on him, and said, "Why are you worried? Your hands will come back." At once his hands appeared, and then he embraced his brother.

In India's ancient Vedic culture there are very, very strict laws. Śaṅka and Liket each wrote two of the eighteen Smṛtis concerning all the rules and regulations of Vedic culture, and so we find *Manu-smṛti*, *Yajyavalkya-smṛti*, and *Śaṅka-* and *Liket-smṛti*. Śrī Rāmacandra and Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja followed all the principles therein, and that is why everyone used to fear them. Nowadays no one cares for law and order, rules and regulations. Anyone can do anything without permission, without fear of admonishment.

Rules and Regulations Create Peace

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, "Kindly write down some rules and regulations, so that devotees can follow them and become qualified to chant and remember Kṛṣṇa. They should not quarrel with each other or create any problems for each other." Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī thus wrote *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*.

If any Vaiṣṇava does not follow the rules and regulations of *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, he is not really a Vaiṣṇava. He may be a *sannyāsī*, *brahmacārī*, *vānaprasthī*, or anyone else; he must start from here:

vāco vegaṁ manasaḥ krodha-vegaṁ
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viṣaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmāṁ pṛthivīṁ sa śiṣyāt

Śrī Upadeśāmṛta, (verse 1)

[8] When offering *sāṣṭāṅga praṇāmās*, one's head is on the earth, as are one's knees, nose, two hands, and two feet; all eight parts of one's body touch the floor.

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

I see that if everyone strictly follows these first instructions of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, there will be no problems at all, and everyone's life will be so exalted. If you want to be initiated, if you want the association of elevated devotees, then first follow *vāco vegaṁ*.

The Uncontrolled Tongue Creates Wars

Vāco vegaṁ means 'urge of the tongue.' The tongue has no backbone. It is independent; it can go up, down, and sideways, and it can turn in any direction. It was the uncontrolled tongue that caused the great battles of Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa.

Although it was not Draupadī's nature to make fun of others, she once slipped. She told Duryodhana, "Oh, as your father was blind, you are also blind – like father like son."

What Draupadī said it was right, but Sītā was not right. What mistake did Sītā make? She said to Lakṣmaṇa, "You have come like a spy for Bharata and Kaikeyī. You want Rāma to be killed so that you can satisfy your lusty desire for me. Beware. I will not allow this. I cannot tolerate this. I will give up my life in the fire. I don't mind dying, but I refuse to change my husband."[9]

So, be very careful with the tongue. Never say anything that will make a devotee or anyone else become angry or opposed to you. If someone is speaking against *bhakti*, or committing offenses to Vaiṣṇavas, guru, Kṛṣṇa, or Mahāprabhu, then simply try to defeat their

[9] Draupadī and Sītā were acting by the wish of the Lord, to facilitate His pastimes and to teach us conditioned souls.

arguments. Hanumān can cut out the tongue of an offender, but we are not Hanumān.

Because it is crooked and is without 'backbone,' the tongue has another uncontrolled activity, in the sense that it wishes to taste so many delicious things. Try to control your eating, as did Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.

Once, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja wanted to eat a *chapatti*. He put a dry *chapatti* in water, and then, just as he was about to add salt, he said to his tongue, "Oh, you want some salt? And after that you will want some ghee and something sweet? All right. I will at once give you a very good preparation, and you will be happy." He then took some very bitter neem leaves and ate them, saying. "Take this. How beautiful! How sweet!"

If any delicious preparation was offered to Mahāprabhu, He would give it to Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, or to the devotees. For Himself, He would only take what was required to maintain His life. If you are coming toward *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, you will have to be very strong like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Gaṅgāmātā Ṭhākurāṇī, and Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākurāṇī. Though Gaṅgāmātā Ṭhākurāṇī, and Śrī Jāhnavā Ṭhākurāṇī were ladies, they were *gurus* of entire Vaiṣṇava communities.

Uncontrolled Thoughts Create Quarrels

Vāco vegaṁ manasaḥ. *Manasa* refers to the mind: If your mind is not controlled, you will quarrel with everyone, creating problems for yourself and for others. What will you remember? You will think, "He is very wicked. I am very good. I should control him, I should finish him. I should do this and that." If you harbor thoughts like this, Kṛṣṇa will go from your mind and heart.

What shall we do? Chant "Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti." Always chant the names of Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā, and Mahāprabhu. Always remember the glory of Nityānanda Prabhu and the glory of our *guru-paramparā*.

How will we make advancement? By thinking, "I am a very wretched person; I have no *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*." Repenting like this always, you will see that all worldly thoughts will disappear and you will stop being obsessed with thoughts of controlling others. There is a saying in Hindi: "*Maṇina raṅgāyo raṅgāya yogī kapra*," which means, "You cover your body in saffron-colored cloth, but why not color your mind?" I have a very powerful dye – *anurāga*, the color of love and affection – and I am giving it to you.

Try to color your mind so that it will be like the minds of the *gopīs*. Wherever the *gopīs* look, they always remember, "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa." Kṛṣṇa is merciful. He will make your environment favorable. Everything is in His hands, so He can do this very quickly. But we have no faith. We want to control.

Be like Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja and Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Prahlāda Mahārāja never wanted to control his demoniac father, despite the fact that his father repeatedly tried to kill him. Rather, he was thinking, "Kṛṣṇa is in my heart. He will support, nourish, and save me."

An Atom Bomb to Kill a Mosquito

Nowadays, for any insignificant thing, like a mosquito, we search for an atom bomb. We think, "I will die, my family will die, all the villagers will die; no harm. But I must use an atom bomb to kill that mosquito." This is the problem.

If you cannot control the mind and tongue, you will automatically become angry. Not only anger; so many unwanted moods will immerse you. *Vāco vegaṁ manasaḥ krodha-vegaṁ. Krodha*, anger, will spoil you. Your mind will be upset; you will be confused and bewildered, thinking, "Oh, what should I do? What shouldn't I do?"

> Śrī Bhagavān said: This desire to enjoy sense objects, which indeed transforms into wrath, is born of passion. It is all-devouring and extremely formidable. Know it to be the primary enemy of the *jīvas* in this world.
>
> *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.37)

Uncontrolled Eating Creates Madness

If the belly is not controlled, so many problems arise. The belly wants ever-new tastes, and thus it creates very big problems. Besides bringing on disease of the stomach, you will not be able to control your lust. Lust is our greatest enemy. If you cannot tolerate lust, you become like mad dogs.

On the other hand, by resisting the urges of the tongue, mind, speech, anger, belly, and genitals, you will see everywhere that the environment is favorable to you; everything is favorable. Try to follow me; how I behave, how I do *bhajana*, how I don't waste a moment of time. I am giving my whole time for you.

Gaura premānande.

Murwillumbah, Australia: January 19, 2001

A Pure Heart

Once, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa was worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead in Vrndavana, observing the vow of Dvādaśī. On Dvādaśī, the day after Ekādaśī, when he was about to break his Ekādaśī fast, the great mystic *yogi* Durvāsā appeared in his house and became his guest. King Ambarīṣa respectfully received Durvāsā Muni, and Durvasa Muni, after accepting his

> invitation to eat there, went to bathe in the Yamuna River at noontime. Because he was absorbed in *samādhi*, he did not come back very soon. Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, however, upon seeing that the time to break the fast was passing...
>
> *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Summary of Canto 9, Chapter 4)

Mahārāja Ambarīṣa was thinking, "What shall I do? On one hand, it will be an offense on my part it if I honor *prasāda* before my guest returns. On the other hand, I must consider Ekādaśī. If I do not properly observe Ekādaśī, which includes concluding it by honoring the Lord's *prasāda* at the proper time on the following day, then I am offending Ekādaśī.

"It is far more harmful to disobey *bhakti* than to disobey a *brāhmaṇa*. I may go to hell if I offend the *brāhmaṇa* in this way, but Bhakti-devi will remain with me. However, if I offend *bhakti*, then even in heaven my existence would be useless."

Thus, after consulting with his learned *brāhmaṇa* associates, he decided to drink *caraṇāmṛta*, the water that had bathed the Deity. Drinking water may be considered in the category of eating, but it may also be considered in the caregory of fasting.

When Durvāsā returned to the palace of Mahārāja Ambarīṣa after taking bath, he was greeted by him with open arms. Mahārāja Ambarīṣa told Durvāsā, "O Muniji, please come and take *prasāda*."

Durvāsā Muni was furious, because he had understood during his meditation at the river that Mahārāja Ambarīṣa had drunk water. He chastised him with great resentment, "You are a hypocrite! You say that you are a devotee of Viṣṇu, but your Viṣṇu shows honor to *brāhmaṇas* whereas you don't! You ate before feeding me, and this is your neglect! You are cruel, and therefore I will punish you!"

Full of wrath, Durvāsā grabbed a lock of his hair and threw it towards Mahārāja Ambarīṣa; and it immediately became the fiery demoness named Kṛtyā.

He Fully Depended On Krsna

A purchased animal does not think about his own protection or maintenance, and Mahārāja Ambarīṣa maintained this mood in relation to Bhagavān. Therefore, the Lord personally protected His devotee by sending His ultimate weapon, the Sudarśana *cakra*. Sudarśana immediately burned Kṛtyā to death, and then he ran towards Durvāsā.

Durvāsā was a powerful *yogi*, and yet he now ran in fear for his life. Following very closely behind, Sudarśana was almost touching him, ready to burn him as he ran across oceans, into caves, and on the tops of mountains.

Durvāsā then went to Brahmaloka and prayed to Brahmā for protection. Brahmā replied, "How can I save you? Simply by His glance, Lord Viṣṇu performs the acts of creation and destruction of all the universes. If He is now sending His *cakra*, how can I save you? You should go now, otherwise that Sudarśana *cakra* will also come to me."

Durvāsā then ran to the planet of Śaṅkara, Lord Śiva, but Lord Śiva told him, from a distance, to leave.

He Returned Evil With Well-Wishing

Durvāsā Muni then ran to Rāma-priya Vaikuṇṭha and begged Lord Viṣṇu, "Please save me form Your *cakra*. You are brahmaṇya-deva, the Lord and protector of the *brāhmaṇas*, so please protect me."

Bhagavān then told Durvāsā Muni, "I'll let you know how you can be saved. Listen to Me. Go and take shelter of Mahārāja Ambarīṣa."

Durvāsā replied, "How can I go to him? He'll be angry."

Bhagavān said, "No, he'll not be angry. He is *samadarṣī* – he sees everyone, enemies and friends, with equal vision. Just go and see. One of the symptoms of high-class Vaiṣṇavas is that they'll forget whatever harm another person does to them, but they'll never forget whatever good one does to them.

Don't see Mahārāja Ambarīṣa as the creator of your suffering. You are the cause of your own suffering. You brought him suffering, but still he prayed to the Sudarśana *cakra* to spare you. It was only because of his prayers that the cakra did not destroy you."

The devotee considers that suffering is coming to him from a past life, so he never takes revenge, nor does he blame anyone else.

Bhagavān continued, "You are not qualified. Your so-called knowledge is actually ignorance. You think that you are very intelligent and learned, but you should know that austerity and knowledge never stay with proud persons. For a *brāhmaṇa*, austerity and learning are certainly auspicious, but when acquired by a person who is not gentle, such austerity and learning are most dangerous."

A person who is proud, puffed up with false ego, and devoid of faith in a self-realized guru cannot possess the results of austerity and knowledge. Even if one is able to give good lectures due to his learning and scholarship, if he is not surrendered, his austerity and knowledge will become like death for him, as was the case with Durvāsā Muni. One must be humble, practicing the principles of *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam*:

tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

He Blamed Himself

Finally convinced and, feeling the burning heat of the Sudarśana *cakra*, Durvāsā Rsi left Vaikuṇṭha to fall at the lotus feet of Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. At that time Mahārāja Ambarīṣa felt ashamed, thinking, "A *brahmarsi* like Durvāsā is suffering on my behalf."[10]

[10] He had been fasting for the entire year that Durvāsā was being chased throughout the universe by Sudarśana. Thinking that the fault in the entire incident was his own, he did this as a repentance.

He therefore prayed, "O Sudarśana, you destroy demons and maintain *bhaktas*. For the benefit our dynasty, please give shelter to this *brāhmaṇa*." Still, Sudarśana was emitting tremendous heat. He then prayed, "If in my life I have given donations to devotees and *sadhus*, and if I have rendered any service to Bhagavān, then please cool down Your heat." Sudarśana was still not pacified, and therefore he prayed, "If God is pleased with me, and if I have seen others with equal vision, then please become cool." Sudarśana now became cool like the moon.

He Controlled By Love

When Durvāsā saw that Sudarśana's heat had vanished, he began to understand the glory of Ambarīṣa Maharaja. He said, "O King. Now I have seen the glory of the *bhaktas*." We have seen *guru* and *bhaktas* so many times, but we have never really seen them.

Ambarīṣa told him, "O Brāhmaṇa, I have been waiting for you for one year. I have been so worried, because you have been going here and there without food, just because of me. Please take prasāda."

In this way Durvāsā Muni saw that the greatness of the *bhakta* was more than that of any *brāhmaṇa*. If a *brāhmaṇa* does not honor a Vaisnava, he is not a *brāhmaṇa*.

Mahārāja Ambarīṣa served *guru* and Kṛṣṇa with all his senses. Although he was a *gṛhastha*, all his senses were engaged. No harm if one is a householder; no harm if one is renounced. In whatever situation one finds himself, if he engages all his senses in service, he is a devotee.

If a devotee is not in *bhava-bhakti*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa will not send His *cakra*. This is our problem. Although we try to engage our senses in the Lord's service, we can't. On the contrary, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa engaged all his senses and moods. We should do the same, either in *vaidhī-bhakti* or *rāgānuga-bhakti*, either in Vṛndāvana or anywhere else.

[Translated from Śrīla Gurudeva's Hindi lecture, by Śrīmatī Umā dāsī]

Mathura, India: August 22, 2001

Scriptural References

The Wisdom of Sastra

What if I Point the Finger?

The King (Pariksit) said: O you who are in the form of a bull! You know the truth of religion, and you are speaking according to the principle that the destination intended for the perpetrator of irreligious acts is also intended for one who identifies the perpetrator. You are no other than the personality of religion.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.17.22)

Neither Friend nor Enemy

Prahlāda Mahārāja replied: Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose external energy has created the distinctions of "my friend" and "my enemy" by deluding the intelligence of men. Indeed, I am now actually experiencing this, although I have previously heard of it from authoritative sources.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.11)

When the Supreme Personality of Godhead is pleased with the living entity because of his devotional service, one becomes a paṇḍita and does not make distinctions between enemies, friends and himself. Intelligently, he then thinks, "Every one of us is an eternal servant of God, and therefore we are not different from one another."

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.12)

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: The humble sage, by virtue of true knowledge, sees with equal vision a learned and gentle brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater (outcaste.

Bhagavad-gītā (5.18)

Lord Kapiladeva said: I am present in every living entity as the Supersoul. If someone neglects or disregards that Supersoul everywhere and engages himself in the worship of the Deity in the temple, that is simply imitation.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.21)

One who worships the Deity of Godhead in the temples but does not know that the Supreme Lord, as Paramātmā, is situated in every living entity's heart, must be in ignorance and is compared to one who offers oblations into ashes.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.22)

For Peace of Mind

One who offers Me respect but is envious of the bodies of others and is therefore a separatist never attains peace of mind, because of his inimical behavior towards other living entities.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.23)

My dear Mother, even if he worships with proper rituals and paraphernalia, a person who is ignorant of My presence in all living entities never pleases Me by the worship of My Deities in the temple.

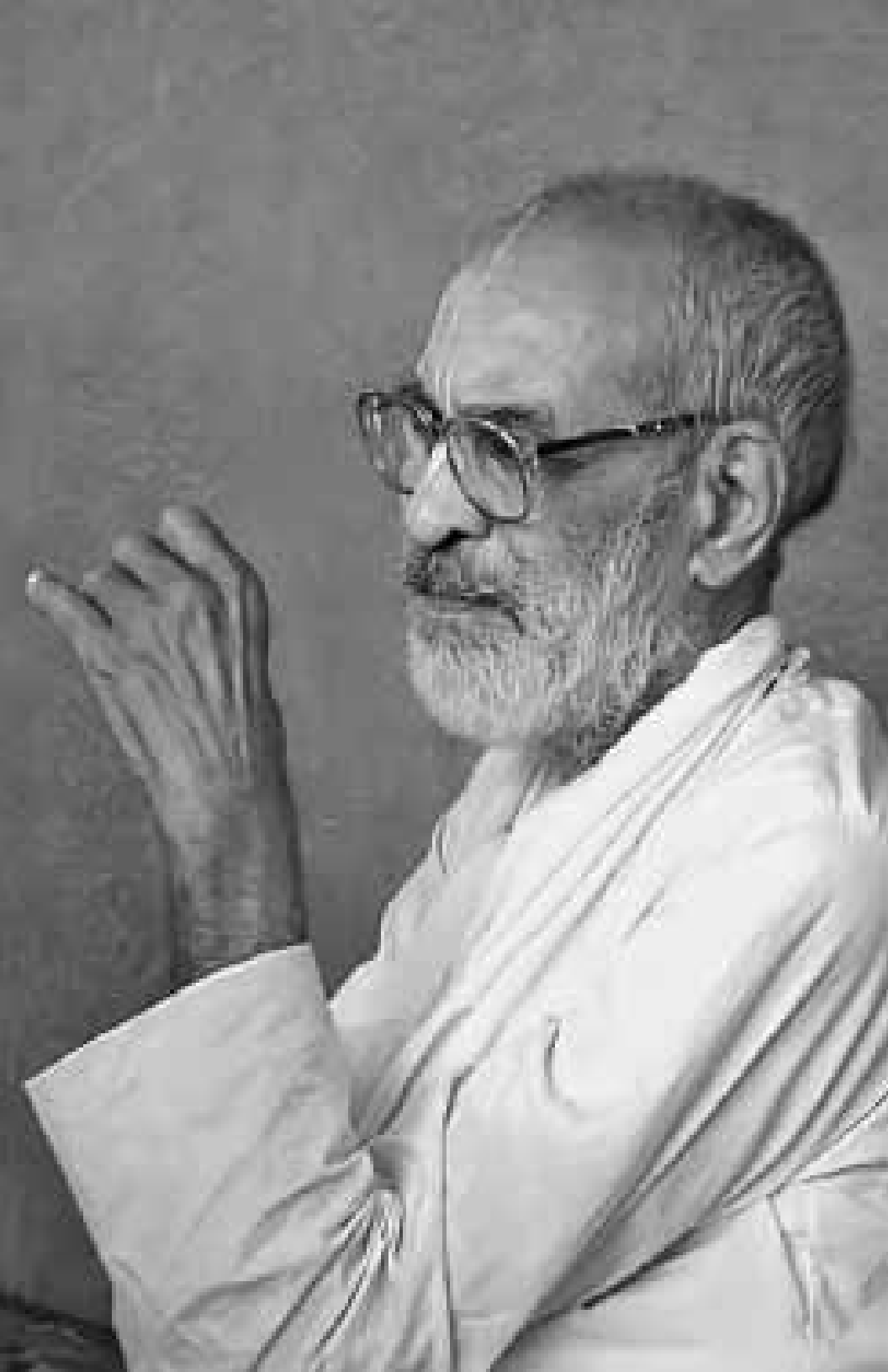
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.24)

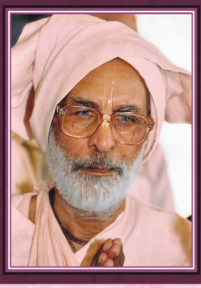
As the blazing fire of death, I (Lord Kapiladeva) cause great fear to whoever makes the least discrimination between himself and other living entities because of a differential outlook.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.26)

Therefore, through charitable gifts and attention, as well as through friendly behavior and by viewing all to be alike, one should propitiate Me, who abide in all creatures as their very Self.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.27)





Mahābuddhi dāsa: So, how can I serve you best?

Śrīla Gurudeva: You are trying to serve me.

Mahābuddhi dāsa: Trying, but not doing very well.

Śrīla Gurudeva: I am desirous that the *gaura-vāṇī*, the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu which our *paramparā* preached and which Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally followed, should not stop after I leave this world. It should continue.

Everyone should be united. Try to preach every-where and publish my books; there are so many books. The temples should not be divided into separate *maṭhas* with separate interests. All the temples and devotees should be united. You will have to try for that.

Mahābuddhi dāsa: ...How will we perform substantial service to you, to make sure it doesn't disappear?

Śrīla Gurudeva: If all the *sannyasis* and other preachers give up their false pride, self-interest, and desire for their own prestige, then all endeavors will easily yield positive fruits. If for the service of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa we give up these contaminations, all devotees can be united.

Mahābuddhi dāsa: What about us fallen householders?

Śrīla Gurudeva: This instruction is true for *gṛhasthas* (householders) as well. A Vaiṣṇava *gṛhastha* lives in his home, but his heart is given totally to *guru* and Kṛṣṇa.

Actually there is no difference between *gṛhasthas* and *sannyāsīs*. In fact, sincere *gṛhasthas* are superior to those *sannyāsīs* who have worldly desires and selfish motives, and who are not properly following the principles of *bhakti*:

tṛṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam (3)

Our Guru Maharaja has said that if a gṛhastha follows this verse, he is superior.

Mahābuddhi dāsa: In order to keep this gaura-vāṇī alive, your books are most important because of the realizations you have illuminated there.

Śrīla Gurudeva: If anyone reads my books, he will surely become attracted to bhakti.

Next day....

Mahābuddhi dāsa: Śrīla Gurudeva, yesterday you said that it is your mission to protect gaura-vāṇī, but we may not be qualified to assist in that mission.

Śrīla Gurudeva: I was not referring to everyone. I told this for those who are preachers. Try to help them stay together and preach. How can you help them? You can beg them, "Oh, Prabhu, please do not be influenced by prestige and self-interest. Please remain together and preach."

Morning Walk Miami, Florida: May 20, 21, 2008

Forgiveness and Mercy

The first two results in the performance of *bhakti* are *kleśāgni*, the dissolution of suffering caused by sinful activities, and *śubhadā*, the appearance of auspicious qualities.

At the present moment our path to *bhakti* is full of obstacles, we have to face many troubles, and our *śubhadā*, our good fortune, is very slight.

The symptoms of good fortune are qualities like mercy, forgiveness, and generosity. If anyone wrongs us, we should forgive them. Do we do this or not? If we automatically, naturally forgive others, that is *śubhadā*.

We can judge whether or not our *bhakti* has manifest our good fortune.

If we have lust, if we are running after praise, wealth, and so on, which are all *kleśas*, or sources of suffering, then how can we have mercy for anyone else?

If we are actually doing *bhakti*, all these qualities will surely come, and if they are not yet in our heart, we can know that we are not performing *bhakti* in a proper way. We should not pretend to have *bhakti*.

Mathura, India, October 21, 1991