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*śrī śrī guru gaurāṅgau jayataḥ
śrī śrī rādhā-vinoda-bihārījī kī jaya!*

ŚRĪ ŚLOKĀMṚTAM-BINDU

The Sublime Nectar of Vaiṣṇava Verses

Compiled under the guidance of
ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD BHAKTIVEDĀNTA NĀRĀYAṆA
GOSVĀMĪ MAHĀRĀJA

by Bhaktivedānta Giri Mahārāja
and Bhaktivedānta Bhagavata Mahārāja



KARISMA-SECTION

Śrī Ślokāmṛtam-bindu ~

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ŚRĪ ŚLOKĀMṚTAM-BINDU

Essential Ślokas

Maṅgalācaraṇa śloka

**gurave gauracandrāya rādhikāyai tadālaye
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-bhaktāya tad-bhaktāya namo namaḥ**

Arcana-dīpikā

gurave – unto Śrī Guru; *gauracandrāya* – unto Gauracandra; *rādhikāyai* – unto Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *tad-ālaye* – unto Her pastime place, Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma, and Her associates; *kṛṣṇāya* – unto Kṛṣṇa; *kṛṣṇa-bhaktāya* – unto Kṛṣṇa’s devotees; *tad-bhaktāya* – unto the devotees of Kṛṣṇa’s devotees; *namaḥ namaḥ* – I offer my obeisances time and again.

I offer my obeisances time and again unto Śrī Guru, Śrī Gauracandra, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Her associates and Her *dhāma*, Śrī Vṛndāvana, and unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His devotees and the devotees of His devotees.

The definition śloka of pure bhakti

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

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.11), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

anya-abhilāṣitā-sūnyam – devoid of any desires [other than those for the service and pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa]; *jñāna* – [speculative] knowledge [aimed at impersonal liberation]; *karma* – fruitive activities; *ādi* – artificial renunciation, *yoga* for mystic powers and so forth; *anāvṛtam* – not covered by; *ānukūlyena* – favourable; *kṛṣṇa-anuśīlanam* – cultivation of service to Kṛṣṇa; *bhaktiḥ uttamā* – first-class devotional service.

[The prefix *anu* in the word *anuśīlanam* indicates that the cultivation of *bhakti* must be in *ānugātya* (under guidance) as well as continuous and uninterrupted, like an unbroken stream of honey. In other words, pure *bhakti* necessitates continuous *śikṣā* from a pure devotee.]

Uttamā-bhakti, pure devotional service, is the cultivation of activities that are meant exclusively for the pleasure and benefit of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is the uninterrupted flow of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, performed through all endeavours of body, mind and speech, as well as through expression of various spiritual moods (*bhāvas*). It is not covered by *jñāna* (speculative knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation), *karma* (reward-seeking activity), mystic *yoga* or austerities; and it is completely free from all desires other than the aspiration to bring happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Controlling the mind and senses is the first duty of a sādḥaka

**vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam**

**etān vegān yo viṣaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmām pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt**

Upadeśāmṛta (1), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

vācaḥ – of speech; *vegam* – the urge; *manasaḥ* – of the mind; *krodha* – of anger; *vegam* – urge; *jihvā* – of the tongue; *vegam* – urge; *udara-upastha* – of the belly and genitals; *vegam* – urges; *etān* – these; *vegān* – urges; *yaḥ* – whoever; *viṣaheta* – can tolerate; *dhīraḥ* – sober person; *sarvām* – entire; *api* – even; *imām* – this; *pṛthivīm* – world; *saḥ* – that personality; *śiṣyāt* – can give spiritual instruction.

A wise and self-composed person who can tolerate 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 on the science of *bhakti*.

The definition śloka of tolerance – perceiving Kṛṣṇa’s mercy in all circumstances

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.8)

tat – therefore; *te* – Your; *anukampām* – compassion; *su-samīkṣamāṇaḥ* – eagerly seeking or hoping for; *bhuñjānaḥ* –

experiencing; *eva* – certainly; *ātma-kṛtam* – caused by himself; *vipākam* – results of his pious and impious activities; *hṛt* – heart; *vāk* – words; *vapurbbhiḥ* – with the body; *vidadhan* – offering; *namaḥ* – obeisances; *te* – unto You; *jīveta* – he can live; *yaḥ* – anyone who; *mukti-pade* – at whose lotus feet liberation takes shelter; *saḥ* – he; *dāya-bhāk* – deserves to ultimately inherit Kṛṣṇa’s grace.

[*Lord Brahmā said:*] “One who, while always expecting Your mercy, undergoes the reactions to his past pious and impious actions, understanding them to be the result of his own past activities, while constantly offering homage unto You with his body, mind and words is eligible to attain Your lotus feet, which are the shelter even for the goddess of liberation.”

The definition śloka of humility and the method for attaining prema

**trṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ**

Śikṣāṣṭaka (3), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

trṇāt – than the grass; *api* – even; *sunīcena* – by being humbler; *taror* – than a tree; *api* – even; *sahiṣṇunā* – by being more tolerant; *amāninā* – by being prideless; *mānadena* – by giving respect to others; *kīrtanīyaḥ* – should be chanted; *sadā* – always; *hariḥ* – Śrī Hari’s names.

One who is humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree, who gives due respect to others without desiring it for himself is qualified to always chant the Holy Names of Śrī Hari. **

[In this connection, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja often mentioned the following three basic principles:]

- (1) Never criticize (**vaco vegam**)
- (2) Never complain (**tat te 'nukampām**)
- (3) Always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa (**ṭṛṇād api sunīcena...
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ**)

*The jīva's svarūpa and relationship with Kṛṣṇa –
the basis of jaiṅva-dharma*

**jīvera 'svarūpa' haya—kṛṣṇera 'nitya-dāśa'
kṛṣṇera 'taṭasthā śakti' 'bhedābheda-prakāśa'**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (20.108)

jīvera – of the living entity; *svaṛūpa* – the constitutional position or eternal spiritual form; *haya* – is; *kṛṣṇera* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *nitya-dāśa* – eternal servant; *kṛṣṇera* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *taṭasthā* – marginal; *śakti* – potency; *bheda abheda* – one and different; *prakāśa* – manifestation.

The *jīva's* constitutional position and inherent function is to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. The *jīva* is the marginal potency of Kṛṣṇa and a manifestation simultaneously one with and different from Kṛṣṇa.

One's eternal identity

**nāham vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśya na śūdro
nāham varṇī na ca gr̥ha-patir no vanastho yatir vā
kintu prodyan-nikhila-paramānanda-pūrṇāmṛtabdher
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ**

Padyāvalī (74)

na – not; *aham* – I; *viprah* – a *brāhmaṇa*; *na* – not; *ca* – also; *nara-patiḥ* – a king or *kṣatriya*; *na* – not; *api* – also; *vaiśyaḥ* – a merchant; *na* – not; *śūdraḥ* – a worker; *na* – not; *aham* – I; *varṇī* – a *brahmacārī*; *na* – not; *ca* – also; *gr̥ha-patiḥ* – a householder; *no* – not; *vana-sthaḥ* – *vānaprastha*; *yatiḥ* – a mendicant or renunciant; *vā* – either; *kintu* – but; *prodyan* – forever expanding; *nikhila* – all; *parama-ānanda* – of transcendental bliss; *pūrṇa* – complete; *amṛta-abdheḥ* – of the ocean of nectar; *gopī-bhartuḥ* – of the maintainer of the *gopīs* [or He who is maintained by the *gopīs*' love]; *pada-kamalayoḥ* – of the two lotus feet; *dāsa* – of the servant; *dāsa anudāsaḥ* – this insignificant servant of the servant.

[Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said:] “I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*, nor a *brahmacārī*, *gr̥hastha*, *vānaprastha* or *sannyāsī*. My only identity is that of an insignificant servant of the servants of the servants of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the ever expanding ocean of fully nectarean transcendental bliss, who is renowned as the maintainer of the milkmaids of Vraja.”

The definition and three qualities of a bona fide guru

**tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam
śābde pare ca niṣṇātaṁ brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.3.21)

tasmāt – therefore; *gurum* – *gu* (ignorance), *ru* (eradicator), i.e. one who can eradicate ignorance; *prapadyeta* – one should take shelter of; *jijñāsuḥ* – one who is inquisitive; *śreyaḥ* – ultimate good; *uttamam* – the highest; *śābde* – in the Vedas; *pare* – in the Supreme Lord (Śrī Kṛṣṇa); *ca* – and; *niṣṇātam* – fully conversant; *brahmaṇi* – in the Absolute Truth; *upaśama-āśrayam* – fixed in detachment from material desires and conceptions.

Therefore, a person who seriously desires to inquire about the ultimate transcendental benefit must take shelter of a bona fide *guru*. The qualifications of *śrī guru* are that (1) he has fully realized the purport of all Vedic scriptures (*śabda-brahmā*), (2) has full realization of the Supreme Absolute Truth (Parabrahma Śrī Kṛṣṇa) and (3) is completely free from material desires and attachments.

The essence of śāstra is revealed only to he who has unflinching faith in both śrī guru and Śrī Kṛṣṇa

**yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ**

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23)

yasya – of whom; *deve* – in the Supreme Lord; *parā* – transcendental; *bhaktiḥ* – devotion; *yathā-deve* – as in the Lord; *tathā* – in the same way; *gurau* – in the spiritual master; *tasya* – to him; *ete* – these; *kathitāḥ* – as described; *hi* – certainly; *arthāḥ* – the imports; *prakāśante* – are revealed; *mahātmanaḥ* – of that great soul.

The conclusive imports of the scriptures are revealed only to that great soul who has the same transcendental devotion (*parā-bhakti*) for *śrī gurudeva* that he has for Śrī Bhagavān.

To become free from māyā and attain perfection one must accept śrī guru as his very life and soul

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.37)

bhayaṁ – fear; *dvitīya* – in something seeming to be other than the Lord; *abhiniveśataḥ* – because of absorption; *syāt* – it will arise; *īśāt* – from the Supreme Lord; *apetasya* – for one who has turned away; *viparyayaḥ* – misidentification; *asmṛtiḥ* – forgetfulness; *tat* – of the Lord; *māyayā* – by the illusory energy; *ataḥ* – therefore; *budhaḥ* – an intelligent person; *ābhajet* – should worship fully; *tam* – Him; *bhaktyā* – with devotion; *ekayā* – unalloyed; *īśam* – the Lord; *guru-devatā-ātmā* – one who sees his own spiritual master as his lord and very soul.

Fear arises when a living entity misidentifies himself as the material body because of absorption in the external, illusory energy of the Lord. When the living entity thus turns away from the Supreme Lord, he also forgets his own constitutional position as a servant of the Lord. This bewildering, fearful condition is effected by the potency for illusion, called *māyā*. Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service of the Lord, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and as his very life and soul.*

*Śrī guru must be approached with surrender,
a service attitude and inquiries*

**tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninaḥ tattva-darśinaḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (4.34)

tat – this knowledge; *viddhi* – understand; *praṇipātena* – by offering prostrated obeisances [to the *guru* who gives instructions about transcendental knowledge]; *paripraśnena* – by relevant inquiries on every aspect; *sevayā* – by rendering devotional service; *upadekṣyanti* – they will reveal; *te* – unto you; *jñānaṁ* – that knowledge; *jñāninaḥ* – those in knowledge; *tattva-darśinaḥ* – who have seen the Absolute Truth.

Understand this transcendental knowledge by offering your prostrated obeisances to the spiritual master, who

imparts such knowledge, by asking him relevant questions and by rendering service to him. Those who have direct perception of the Supreme Absolute Truth and who are well-versed in the imports of the scriptures can enlighten you by instructing you on this science.

*Human life is meant only for spiritual perfection,
not for sense gratification*

**labdhvā su-durlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam artha-dam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anu-mṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.9.29)

labdhvā – having obtained; *su-durlabham* – that which is very difficult to obtain; *idaṁ* – this; *bahu* – many; *sambhava* – births; *ante* – after; *mānuṣyam* – human form of life; *artha-dam* – which awards great value; *anityam* – not eternal; *apī* – although; *iba* – in this material world; *dhīraḥ* – one who has sober intelligence; *tūrṇam* – immediately, without wasting a single moment; *yateta* – should endeavour; *na* – not; *pated* – one may fall; *anu-mṛtyu* – always subject to death; *yāvat* – as long as; *niḥśreyasāya* – for ultimate perfection; *viṣayaḥ* – sense gratification; *khalu* – indeed; *sarvataḥ* – in all [species of life]; *syāt* – is possible.

This human birth is very rare, because it is only attained after many lifetimes. Although temporary, it can give the highest benefit [and be a springboard leading to spiritual

perfection]. After all, sense gratification is available in all species [whereas spiritual perfection is possible only for human beings]. Therefore, an intelligent person should immediately, without wasting a single moment, begin to endeavour [with one-pointed dedication] to achieve the ultimate good fortune, before death comes.

The human body is like a boat and śrī guru is the captain

**nṛ-deham ādyam su-labham su-durlabham
 plavam su-kalpaṁ guru-karṇadhāram
 mayānukūlena nabhasvateritam
 pumān bhavābdhim na taret sa ātma-hā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.17)

nṛ-deham – the human body; *ādyam* – source of all auspicious results; *su-labham* – easily obtained; *su-durlabham* – rarely obtained; *plavam* – a boat; *su-kalpaṁ* – well-designed, robust; *guru* – one who dispels ignorance; *karṇa-dhāram* – he who navigates the boat [or the chastizer who pulls one by the ear]; *mayā* – by Me; *anukūlena* – with favourable; *nabhasvatā* – winds [remembrance in the form of *hari-kathā*]; *iritam* – propelled; *pumān* – a person; *bhava* – of material existence; *abdhim* – the ocean; *na* – not; *taret* – cross over; *saḥ* – he; *ātma-hā* – the killer of his own soul.

This human body is the basis of the attainment of all auspicious results, and although it is very rare, it has been obtained easily. It is like a strong boat in which to cross the

ocean of material existence. Simply accepting the shelter of the spiritual master, who becomes the captain and navigator of this boat, and being blown by the favourable winds of remembrance of Me, it is propelled towards its destination. After acquiring this human body, a person who does not endeavour to cross this ocean of material existence, even after receiving so much facility, is certainly considered to be the killer of his own soul.

Even a moment's association with a sādhu can award all perfection

**sādhu-saṅga sādhu-saṅga sarva-śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhu-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.54)

sādhu-saṅga sādhu-saṅga – repeated association with pure devotees; *sarva-śāstre* – all the revealed scriptures; *kaya* – say; *lava-mātra* – even for a moment; *sādhu-saṅge* – association with a pure devotee; *sarva-siddhi* – complete spiritual perfection; *haya* – there is.

The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that even a moment's association with a *sādhu*, a pure devotee, can award complete spiritual perfection.*

Sādhu-saṅga is the birth-place of bhakti

**kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla haya 'sādhu-saṅga'
kṛṣṇa-prema janme, teṅho punaḥ mukhya aṅga**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.83)

kr̥ṣṇa-bhakti – of devotional service; *janma-mūla* – the root cause; *haya* – is; *sādhbu-saṅga* – association with saintly devotees; *kr̥ṣṇa-prema* – of ecstatic transcendental love of Kṛṣṇa; *janme* – upon the awakening; *tenho* – that [same association with saintly devotees]; *punaḥ* – again; *mukhya aṅga* – the chief principle.

The root cause of *kr̥ṣṇa-bhakti* is *sādhbu-saṅga*. Even when one's dormant *kr̥ṣṇa-prema* awakens, such association will still remain the most essential principle for one's spiritual life.

Divine greed is the only qualification for rāgānuga-bhakti

**kr̥ṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ
krīyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalam
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate**

Padyāvalī (14);

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (8.70)

kr̥ṣṇa-bhakti-rasa – in the mellows of spontaneous devotional service [or in the mood of the *gopīs'* love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa]; *bhāvitā* – absorbed; *matiḥ* – consciousness; *krīyatām* – let it be purchased [immediately]; *yadi* – if; *kutaḥ api* – anywhere; *labhyate* – it is available; *tatra* – in this regard; *laulyam* – greed; *api* – indeed; *mūlyam* – price; *ekalam* – only; *janma-koṭi* – from millions of births; *sukṛtaiḥ* – through pious deeds; *na* – not; *labhyate* – is obtained.

[*Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya said:*] “If consciousness infused with the mood of spontaneous devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is available

anywhere, then buy it at once, without delay. The only price to get it is greed. Without this divine greed, it cannot be obtained even by performing pious activities for millions of births.”

The essence of our rūpānuga line and the teachings of Mahāprabhu in a nutshell

**ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas
tad-dhāma vṛṇḍāvanam
ramyā kācid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-
vargeṇā yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam
premā pumārtho mahān
śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhor matam idaṁ
tatrādarō naḥ paraḥ**

Caitanya-manjusa,

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

ārādhyah – worshipable, object of love; *bhagavān* – the Supreme Lord; *vraja-īśa-tanayah* – the son of the King of Vraja, Nanda Mahārāja; *tad-dhāma* – His abode; *vṛṇḍāvanam* – Vṛndāvana; *ramyā* – sublime; *kācit* – any; *upāsanaṁ* – the process of worship; *vraja-vadhū* – of the maidens of Vraja; *vargeṇā* – by the group; *yā* – which; *kalpitā* – performed; *śrīmad-bhāgavatam* – *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *pramāṇam* – the evidence; *amalam* – spotless; *prema* – pure love of Kṛṣṇa; *pum-arthah* – the ultimate goal of life for human beings; *mahān* – the great; *śrī-caitanya* – of Śrī Caitanya, the embodiment of *cetana*, the living force;

mahāprabhoḥ – the great master [*mahā* indicating *mahābhāva-svarūpiṇī*, Śrī Rādhā, and *prabhu* indicating *rasa-rāja*, the King of sweet mellows, Śrī Kṛṣṇa]; *matam* – the opinion; *idam* – this; *tatra* – that; *ādarāḥ* – regard; *naḥ* – of us; *paraḥ* – the highest.

Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is our exclusive object of worship and love. In the same way that He is worshipful, so is His transcendental abode, Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma. The mood in which the young brides of Vraja [the *gopīs*, headed by Śrīmatī Rādhikā] worship Him is the highest and ultimate form of love of God. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* alone is the immaculate scriptural evidence of this. *Kṛṣṇa-prema* is the supreme objective of life [beyond mundane religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and impersonal liberation]. This is the conception of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (*gaura-vāṇī*). We hold this conclusion (*siddhānta*) in supreme regard [and have no inclination or respect for any other conclusion or cheating opinions].

Gaura-vāṇī is encapsulated in Daśa-mūla-tattva

**āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim iha paramaṁ
sarva-śaktiṁ rasābधिṁ
tad-bhinnāśmīś ca jīvaṁ prakṛti-kavalitān
tad-vimuktāś ca bhāvād
bhedābheda-prakāśaṁ sakalam api hareḥ
sādhanam śuddha-bhaktiṁ**

sādhyam tat-prītim evety upadiśati janān gaura-candraḥ svayam saḥ

Daśa-mūla-tattva (invocation),
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

āmnāyaḥ – the Vedas, which are transmitted through aural reception from *guru* to disciple; *prāha* – proclaim; *tattvam* – Absolute Truth; *harim* – Śrī Hari; *iba* – here; *paramam* – the supreme; *sarva-śaktim* – the possessor of all potencies; *rasa-abdhim* – an ocean of *rasa*; *tad-bhinna-āṁśāḥ* – His separated parts; *ca* – and; *jīvān* – living beings; *prakṛti* – His deluding potency; *kavalitān* – swallowed up; *tad-vimuktān* – His separated parts [which are of two types: (1) those who are swallowed up by *prakṛti*, material nature and (2) those who are totally free from *prakṛti*]; *ca* – and; *bhāvād* – through the process of attaining *bhāva*; *bheda-abbheda* – one and different; *prakāśam* – a manifestation; *sakalam* – everything; *api* – and; *hareḥ* – of Śrī Hari; *sādhanam* – the means for attainment; *śuddha-bhaktim* – pure *bhakti*; *sādhyam* – the ultimate goal; *tat-prītim* – love for Him; *eva iti* – certainly thus; *upadiśati* – instructs; *janān* – the people; *gaura-candraḥ* – the Golden Lord whose effulgence resembles a moon; *svayam* – personally; *saḥ* – He.

Pramāṇa (evidence): (1) The teachings of the Vedas received through *guru-paramparā* are known as *āmnāya*. The infallible evidence of the Vedas, of the *smṛti-śāstras* headed by the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as well as evidence such as direct sense perception, that concur with the guidance

of the Vedas, are all accepted as *pramāṇa* (evidence). This *pramāṇa* establishes the following *tattvas* (fundamental truths):

Sambandha (our relationship with Śrī Hari): (2) *Parama-tattva* – Śrī Hari alone is the Supreme Absolute Truth. (3) *Sarva-śaktimān* – He is the possessor of all potencies (omnipotent). (4) *Akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti* – He is the ocean of all nectarean mellows and divine sweetness. (5) *Vibhinnāmśa-tattva* – Both the *mukta* (liberated) and *baddha* (conditioned) *jīvas* are His eternally separated parts and parcels. (6) *Baddha-jīvas* – Conditioned souls are subject to the control and covering of *māyā*. (7) *Mukta-jīvas* – Liberated souls are forever free from *māyā*. (8) *Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* – The entire universe, consisting of the conscious (*cit*) and unconscious (*acit*), is Śrī Hari's *acintya-bhedābheda-prakāśa*. That is to say, it is His manifestation which is inconceivably both different and non-different from Him.

Abhidheya (the process): (9) *Śuddha-bhakti* – Pure devotional service is the only practice (*sādhana*) to attain spiritual perfection (*sādhya*).

Prayojana (the ultimate goal): (10) *Kṛṣṇa-prīti* – Transcendental love and affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the one and only final object of attainment (*sādhya-vastu*). The Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva has herein instructed ten distinct *tattvas* (fundamental truths) to the faithful *jīvas*.

The ultimate treasure bestowed by Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari

**anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvātīrṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ purāṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hr̥daya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanaḥ**

Vidagdha-mādhava, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

anarpita – not bestowed; *carīm* – formerly; *cirāt* – for a long time; *karuṇayā* – by causeless mercy; *avatīrṇaḥ* – descended; *kalau* – in the Age of Kali; *samarpayitum* – to bestow; *unnata* – the most elevated; *ujjvala-rasām* – *mādhurya-rasa*; *sva-bhakti* – of His own service [*rādhā-dāsyam* in *mañjarī-bhāva*]; *śriyam* – the beauty; *hariḥ* – Śrī Hari; *purāṭa* – golden; *sundara* – beautiful; *dyuti* – splendour; *kadamba* – with a multitude; *sandīpitaḥ* – radiant, lighted up; *sadā* – always; *hr̥daya-kandare* – in the core of the heart; *sphuratu* – let Him be manifest; *vaḥ* – your; *śacī-nandanaḥ* – the son of mother Śacī.

May the son of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī, Śrī Gaurahari, forever manifest within the innermost core of your heart. Adorned with the radiant splendour of molten gold, He has descended in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow upon the world that which has not been given for a long time – the beauty of His own brilliantly radiant *ujjvala-prema-rasa bhakti*, service in the highest mellow of amorous love.

The essence of all instructions

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

Upadeśāmṛta (8), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

tad – of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa [Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Rādhikā and Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa]; *nāma-rūpa-caritādi* – of the names, form, qualities and pastimes; *sukīrtana-anu-smṛtyoḥ* – in lovingly chanting and remembering; *krameṇa* – sequentially [according to the sequence of Their eternal eightfold pastimes]; *rasanā* – the tongue; *manasī* – and the mind; *niyojya* – by engaging; *tiṣṭhan vraje* – living in Vraja; *tad* – for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *anurāgi-jana* – of the eternal residents of Vraja who possess *rāga*, inherent spontaneous love; *anugāmī* – as a follower; *kālaṁ nayed* – one should utilize all his time; *akhilam* – of all; *iti* – thus; *upadeśa* – of instruction; *sāram* – is the essence.

While living in Vraja as a follower of the eternal residents of Vraja [such as *śrī guru* and the Six Gosvāmīs] who possess inherent spontaneous love for Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, one should utilize all his time by engaging the tongue and the mind in lovingly chanting and remembering Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes according to the sequence of *aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā*. This is the essence of all instructions.

*One must hear Kṛṣṇa's rāsa-līlā-kathā to conquer
the heart disease of lust*

**vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktim parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.33.39)

vikrīḍitam – the playful pastimes [*rāsa* dance]; *vrajavadhūbhiḥ* – with the damsels of Vraja, the *gopīs*; *idam* – this; *ca* – and; *viṣṇoḥ* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *śraddhā-anvitaḥ* – with transcendental faith; *anuśṛṇuyāt* – continually hears under the guidance of *śrī guru*; *atha* – also; *varṇayet* – describes; *yaḥ* – he who; *bhaktim* – devotional service; *parām* – transcendental; *bhagavati* – unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *pratilabhya* – attaining; *kāmam* – lusty material desires; *hṛt-rogam* – the disease of the heart; *āśu* – very soon; *apahinoti* – gives up; *acireṇa* – without delay; *dhīraḥ* – one who is thoughtful.

If a thoughtful person regularly hears from his *guru* with faith the narrations of Lord Kṛṣṇa's unprecedented *rāsa* dance with the young *gopīs* of Vraja, and also describes those pastimes to others, he very soon attains *parā-bhakti*, or *prema-bhakti*, for the Supreme Lord, and is thus able to dispel the heart disease of lust.

One who hears Kṛṣṇa's confidential pastimes becomes exclusively devoted to Him

**anugrahāya bhaktānām mānuṣam deham āsthitaḥ
bhajate tādṛśīḥ krīḍā yāḥ śrutvā tat-paraḥ bhavet**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.33.36)

anugrahāya – to show mercy; *bhaktānām* – to His devotees; *mānuṣam* – human-like; *deham* – a body; *āsthitaḥ* – assuming; *bhajate* – He accepts; *tādṛśīḥ* – such; *krīḍāḥ* – confidential pastimes; *yāḥ* – about which; *śrutvā* – hearing; *tat-paraḥ* – devoted to Him; *bhavet* – one must become.

In order to bestow mercy upon the devotees, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifests His human-like form and performs such extraordinary pastimes [as the *rāsa-līlā*] that anyone who hears about them must become exclusively devoted to Him.

The glories of hearing hari-kathā from a pure devotee

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.25)

satām – of pure devotees; *prasaṅgāt* – through the exalted association; *mama* – My; *vīrya* – gloriously wonderful activities; *saṁvidaḥ* – by discussion of; *bhavanti* – become;

hṛt – to the heart; *karna* – to the ear; *rasa-ayanāḥ* – elixir; *kathāḥ* – narrations; *tat* – of that; *joṣaṇāt* – by cultivation; *āśu* – quickly; *apavarga* – liberation from material bondage; *vartmani* – on the path; *śraddhā* – transcendental faith [here indicating *sādhana-bhakti*]; *ratiḥ* – *bhāva*, the sprout of love of Godhead; *bhaktiḥ* – pure devotion; *anukramiṣyati* – will follow in order.

In the exalted association of pure devotees, the recitation and discussions of My glorious pastimes become a rejuvenating elixir for both the heart and the ears. By such cultivation one quickly becomes liberated from the ignorance of material bondage. He then progressively attains *śraddhā* (*sādhana-bhakti*), *rati* (*bhāva bhakti*) and *bhakti* (*prema-bhakti*) unto Me.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's key śloka

**vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṃ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti bhagavān iti śabdyate**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.11)

vadanti – they say; *tat* – that; *tattva-vidas* – those who know the truth; *tattvam* – the Absolute Truth; *yaj* – which; *jñānam* – knowledge; *advayam* – non-dual; *brahma iti* – known as *brahma*; *paramātmā iti* – known as *Paramātmā*; *bhagavān iti* – known as *Bhagavān*; *śabdyate* – it is so declared.

Great seers of the truth, who understand the nature of the Absolute Truth, describe that Supreme non-dual truth in

three as impersonal *brahma*, localized Paramātmā and Svayam Bhagavān, the Personality of Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa's topmost instruction in the Bhagavad-gītā

**man-manā bhava mad-bhaktō
mad-yājī mām namaskuru
mām evaiśyasi satyaṁ te
pratijāne priyo 'si me**

Bhagavad-gītā (18.65)

mat-manāḥ – offer your mind to Me; *bhava* – become; *mat-bhaktāḥ* – My devotee [engage in hearing and chanting about My name, form, etc.]; *mat-yājī* – My worshipper; *mām* – to Me; *namaskuru* – offer your obeisances; *mām* – Me; *evaiśyasi* – you shall attain; *satyaṁ* – truthfully; *te* – to you; *pratijāne* – I promise; *priyaḥ* – dear; *asi* – are; *me* – to Me.

Absorb your consciousness in Me; become My devotee by dedicating yourself to such practices as hearing about and glorifying My names, forms, qualities and pastimes; worship Me and offer obeisances to Me. Thus, you will certainly attain Me. This truth I swear to you because you are most dear to Me.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja: “Always think of Kṛṣṇa, become His devotee, worship Him and offer your respects, obeisances to Him. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That’s all.”

The nectar ocean of the Bhāgavatam in one śloka

**jayati jana-nivāso devakī-janma-vādo
yadu-vara-pariṣat-svair dorbhir asyann adharmam
sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ su-smita-śrī-mukhena
vraja-pura-vanitānām vardhayan kāma-devam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.90.48)

jayati – let there be glorification and victory; *jana-nivāsaḥ* – one who resides amongst the cowherdsmen of Vraja, or the members of the Yadu dynasty, or the Supersoul of all living entities; *devakī-janma-vādaḥ* – who is known as the son of Devakī; *yadu-vara-pariṣat* – the best of the Yadu dynasty or the cowherd men of Vṛndāvana; *svaiḥ dorbhiḥ* – by His own arms [or by His devotees like Arjuna]; *asyan* – casting out; *adharmam* – the demons or irreligion; *sthira-cara-vṛjina-ghnaḥ* – the destroyer of all calamities [especially the pain of separation] of all living entities, moving and non-moving; *su-smita* – always smiling; *śrī-mukhena* – by His beautiful face; *vraja-pura-vanitānām* – of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana; *vardhayan* – increasing; *kāma-devam* – the amorous desires.

Residing within the hearts of all living beings, He is known as the son of Devakī. With His [mighty] arms in the form of the members of the Yadu dynasty such as Arjuna and Bhīma, He slays all demons and dispells irreligion, and with His beautiful smiling face He destroys all calamities of material existence for all beings, moving and inert, and increases the amorous desires of the milkmaids of Vraja. Let there be all victory for Him!

By performing śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana, one obtains all transcendental perfections

**ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-
mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitarāṇam
vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam prati-padam
pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate
śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam**

Śikṣāṣṭaka (1), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

cetaḥ – of the heart; *darpaṇa* – the mirror; *mārjanam* – cleansing; *bhava* – of material existence; *mahā-dāva-agni* – the blazing forest fire; *nirvāpaṇam* – extinguishing; *śreyaḥ* – of good fortune; *kairava* – the white lotus; *candrikā* – the moonshine; *vitarāṇam* – spreading; *vidyā-vadhū* – of Divya-Sarasvatī, who awards divine knowledge; *jīvanam* – the life; *ānanda* – of bliss; *ambudhi* – the ocean; *varḍhanam* – increasing; *prati-padam* – at every step; *pūrṇa-amṛta* – of the full nectar; *āsvādanam* – giving a taste; *sarva* – for everyone; *ātma-snapanam* – bathing of the self; *param* – transcendental; *vijayate* – let there be victory; *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* – for the congregational chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

Let there be supreme victory for the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which cleanses the mirror of the heart and completely extinguishes the blazing forest fire of

material existence. *Śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* diffuses the moon rays of *bhāva*, which cause the white lotus of good fortune for the *jīvas* to bloom. The holy name is the life and soul of Divyā Sarasvatī, who reveals divine knowledge in the devotees' hearts. He continuously expands the ocean of transcendental bliss, enabling one to taste complete nectar at every step, and thoroughly cleanses and cools everything, both internally and externally, including one's body, heart, self (*ātmā*) and nature.

The definition of sādhanā-bhakti hinges on the goal of one's sādhanā being bhāva-bhakti

**kṛti-sādhyā bhavet sādhyā-bhāvā sā sādhanābhidhā
nitya-siddhasya bhāvasya prākāṣyam hṛdi sādhyatā**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.2),

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

kṛti – by the senses; *sādhyā* – that which is executed; *bhavet* – it should be [understood as]; *sādhyā-bhāva* – of which *bhāva-bhakti* is the goal; *sā* – that [practice]; *sādhanā-abhidhā* – called *sādhanā-bhakti*, or devotional service in the stage of practice; *nitya-siddhasya* – which is eternally present; *bhāvasya* – of the *sthāyī-bhāva* [one of the primary *rasas*: *sānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, *mādhurya*]; *prākāṣyam* – the awakening; *hṛdi* – in the heart; *sādhyatā* – [its] potentiality.

Sādhanā-bhakti is the engagement of the mind and senses in the activities of *bhakti* for the purpose of attaining

bhāva-bhakti. This *bhāva* is a potentiality which eternally exists in the heart of the *jīva* and is manifested in the heart purified by *sādhana* [but only by the mercy of a *nitya-siddha*, a *mahā-bhāgavata guru* who can transmit *śuddha-sattva* into the heart of a qualified disciple].

Kṛṣṇa-prema is a potentiality in the heart, but can be awakened only by the mercy of a *nitya-siddha guru*

**nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhya' kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.107)

nitya-siddha – eternally established [as a potentiality in the heart of conditioned souls, and as a fully-fledged reality in the heart of the *nitya-siddha guru*]; *kṛṣṇa-prema* – love of Kṛṣṇa; *sādhya* – to be attained through the practice of *sādhana*; *kabhu* – at any time; *naya* – not; *śravaṇa-ādi* – by hearing, etc.; *śuddha* – purified; *citte* – in the heart; *karaye udaya* – it is aroused.

Kṛṣṇa-prema is a potentiality which eternally exists in the hearts of the living entities; it is not brought about by *sādhana*. It manifests itself [by the mercy of a *nitya-siddha guru*] in the heart purified by *sādhana* – the performance of the various limbs of *bhakti* such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*.

The definition of bhāva-bhakti

**śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā prema-sūryāṁśu-sāmya-bhāk
rucibhiś citta-masṛṇya-kṛt asau bhāva ucyate**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.3.1),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

śuddha-sattva – pure goodness; *viśeṣa* – distinguished; *ātmā* – whose nature; *prema* – of love of God; *sūrya* – like the sun; *āṁśu* – a ray; *sāmya-bhāk* – which is similar to; *rucibhiḥ* – by different tastes; *citta* – of the heart; *masṛṇya* – softness; *kṛt* – which causes; *asau* – that state; *bhāvaḥ* – emotion; *ucyate* – is called.

That state which is uniquely constituted of purified goodness (*śuddha-sattva*), which is like a ray of the sun of *prema* and which softens one’s heart by means of various tastes is known as *bhāva*.

Bhakti is the only cause of bhakti

bhaktiyā sañjātayā bhaktiyā

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.3.31)

Bhakti arises only from *bhakti* [from one who has pure *bhakti*, not from any other cause]. From the heart of a pure devotee, a living *sad-guru*, it is inspired into the heart of a surrendered *sādhaka*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: “The potency, or *śakti*, of pure devotion (*śuddha-sattva*) is a blend of *hlādinī* (the pleasure-

giving potency, or Śrīmatī Rādhikā) and *samvit* (the knowledge-giving potency, or Śrī Kṛṣṇa) on the basis of *sandhinī* (the existential potency, or Bāladeva, *guru-tattva*). *Bhakti* reposes in the heart of the *maha-bhāgavata* pure devotee, *śrī guru*. When a *jīva* becomes free from envy and inclined to devotional service, the *bhakti* potency (*śuddha-sattva*) is transferred from the pure devotee's heart into the qualified *sādhaka's* heart, whereupon it takes shelter of his soul and ultimately awards him perfection. This is a great mystery” (*Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, Chapter 4).

Give up the desire for knowledge and replace it with bhakti

**jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva
jīvanti san-mukharitām bhavadīya-vārtām
sthāne sthitāḥ śruti-gatām tanu-vāñ-manobhir
ye prāyaśo 'jita jito 'py asi tais tri-lokyām**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.3)

jñāne – for knowledge; *prayāsam* – the endeavour; *udapāsyā* – giving up; *namantaḥ* – offering obeisances; *eva* – exclusively; *jīvanti* – they maintain their lives; *sat-mukharitām* – uttered by the pure devotees; *bhavadīya-vārtām* – topics related to You; *sthāne sthitāḥ* – remaining in their position; *śruti-gatām* – received by hearing; *tanu* – with their body; *vāñ* – words; *manobhir* – and mind; *ye* – who; *prāyaśaḥ* – endeavor; *ajita* – O unconquerable one; *jitaḥ* – conquered; *api* – despite; *asi* – You become; *taiḥ* – by them; *tri-lokyām* – within the three worlds.

[*Lord Brahmā said:*] “Hatefully giving up all intellectual attempts to understand the Supreme Truth, those who want to realize You should completely surrender unto You. They should hear from self-realized devotees about Your holy name and transcendental pastimes. Whatever situation they may find themselves in, they should progress by fully dedicating their mind, body and words to You. In this way the infinite, who is never conquered by anyone, becomes conquered through love.” **

O mind! Give up all pride and just develop transcendental affection for śrī guru, Vraja and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

**gurai goṣṭhe goṣṭhālayiṣu
sujane bhūsuragaṇe
sva-mantre śrī-nāmnī vraja-
nava-yuva-dvandva-śaraṇe
sadā dambhaṁ hitvā kuru
ratim apūrvām atitarāṁ
aye svāntar bhrātaś caṭubhir
abhiyāce dhṛta-padaḥ**

Manaḥ-śikṣā (1),

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

gurai – for *śrī guru*; *goṣṭhe* – for Śrī Vraja-dhāma; *goṣṭhālayiṣu* – for the Vrajavāsīs; *sujane* – for the Vaiṣṇavas; *bhūsuragaṇe* – for the *brāhmaṇas*; *sva-mantre* – for one’s own *dikṣā-mantras*; *śrī-nāmnī* – for *śrī harināma*; *vraja* – of Vraja; *nava* – ever-new;

yuva – youthful; *dvandva* – of the Divine Couple; *śaraṇe* – for the shelter; *sadā* – always; *dambham* – pride; *bitvā* – giving up; *kuru* – adopt; *ratim* – attachment; *apūrvām* – unprecedented; *atitarām* – exceedingly; *aye* – O; *sva-antar bhrātaḥ* – brother mind; *caṭubhiḥ* – with sweet words; *abhiyāce* – I am begging; *dhṛta-padaḥ* – holding tightly to your feet.

O my dear brother, my foolish mind! Taking hold of your feet, I humbly pray to you with sweet words. Please give up all pride and develop sublime and incessant *rati* for *śrī gurudeva*, Śrī Vraja-dhāma, the residents of Vraja, the Vaiṣṇavas, the *brāhmaṇas*, your *dīkṣā-mantras*, the holy name and the shelter of Kīśora-Kīśorī, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the eternally youthful divine couple of Vraja.

Steadiness in bhajana is described by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

**na dharmaṁ nādharmaṁ śruti-
gaṇa-niruktaṁ kila kuru
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pracura-
paricaryām iha tanu
śacī-sūnuṁ nandīśvara-pati-
sutatve guru-varaṁ
mukunda-preṣṭhatve smara
param ajasraṁ nanu manaḥ**

*Manaḥ-śikṣā (2),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī*

na – not; *dharmam* – piety; *na* – not; *adharmam* – impiety; *śruti-gaṇa* – in the Vedas; *niruktam* – described; *kila* – indeed; *kuru* – do; *vraje* – in Vraja; *rādhā-kṛṣṇa* – for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *pracura* – profuse; *paricaryām* – service; *iba* – here; *tanu* – just perform; *śacī-sūnum* – the son of Śacī; *nandīśvara-pati-sutatve* – as the son of King Nanda; *guru varam* – the best of *gurus* [refers to both *śrī guru* and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the universal *śikṣā-guru*]; *mukunda-preṣṭhatve* – most dear to Lord Mukunda; *smara* – remember; *param ajasram* – always, incessantly; *nanu* – indeed; *manaḥ* – O mind.

O my dear mind, please do not perform either *dharma* [which brings pious benefits such as high birth, wealth, etc.], or *adharma* [which awards disease, poverty, etc.] which are mentioned in the Śrutis. Rather, render profuse loving service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala, who the Śrutis have ascertained to be the supreme object of worship and the topmost Truth. Always remember Śacīnandana Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is endowed with the sentiments and bodily lustre of Śrī Rādhā, knowing Him to be none other than Śrī Nanda-nandana; and always remember *śrī guru* [who is the representative and maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā] as most dear to Śrī Mukunda.

Guru-tattva

For the *śloka*s: *tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta, yasya deve parā bhaktir, bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād, vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam* and *tad viddhi praṇipātena*, see *Essential Śloka*s.

**ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ**

Prema-bhakti-candrikā,
Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

ajñāna – of ignorance; *timira* – by the darkness; *andhasya* – of one who was blinded; *jñāna-añjana* – by the ointment of spiritual knowledge; *śalākayā* – by a medical instrument used in treating cataracts; *cakṣuḥ* – eyes; *unmīlitaṁ* – were opened; *yena* – by whom; *tasmai* – unto him; *śrī-gurave* – unto my spiritual master; *namaḥ* – obeisances.

O Gurudeva, I offer my humble obeisances unto you and I pray that, with the torchlight of divine knowledge, you open my eyes which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

**yaṁ pravrajantam anupetam apeta-kṛtyaṁ
dvaipāyano viraha-kātara ājuhāva**

**putreti tan-mayatayā taravo 'bhinedus
tam sarva-bhūta-hṛdayam munim ānato 'smi**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.2)

yam – whom; *pravrajantam* – while setting forth; *anupetam* – without being reformed by purificatory processes; *apeta-kṛtyam* – not performing prescribed duties; *dvaipāyanaḥ* – Vyāsadeva who was born on a *dvīpa* (island); *viraha* – by separation; *kātarah* – being afflicted; *ājuhāva* – exclaimed; *putra* – O my son; *iti* – thus; *tat* – in that; *mayatayā* – being absorbed; *taravaḥ* – the trees; *abhineduḥ* – echoed; *tam* – unto him; *sarva-bhūta* – of all living entities; *hṛdayam* – [in] the heart; *munim* – sage; *ānataḥ* – bowed down; *asmi* – I am.

I offer *praṇāma* to Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who can enter within the hearts of all beings. When he left home without undergoing the purificatory processes such as accepting the sacred thread, or performing prescribed duties such as serving his parents, his father Vyāsa cried out, “O my son!” As if they were absorbed in that same feeling of separation, the trees echoed in response to his call.

Kṛṣṇa tells *Uddhava* that *śrī guru* is non-different from *Him*

**ācāryam mām vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.17.27)

ācāryam – one who teaches by example; *mām* – Myself [My expansion]; *vijānīyāt* – one should know fully well; *na-*

avamanyeta – one should not disrespect; *karhicit* – at any time; *na* – never; *martya-buddhyā* – by considering him an ordinary mortal; *asūyeta* – should be envious; *sarva-deva* – of all the demigods; *mayah* – having the potencies; *guruh* – the *guru*.

One should understand fully well the *ācārya* to be as good as Myself. He is My very *svarūpa* (My expansion). At no time should one, out of envy, neglect or disrespect the *guru* as an ordinary mortal, nor should he be considered to have any faults, because *śrī guru* has the potency of all the demigods.

One must only accept a guru who has fully realized both śāstra and Kṛṣṇa

**tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet
samt-pāṇiḥ śrotriyam brahma-niṣṭham**

Muṇḍaka Upanisad (1.2.12)

tat-vijñāna-artham – to learn the transcendental subject matter of that [Personality of Godhead]; *saḥ* – one; *gurum* – a spiritual master; *eva* – certainly; *abhigacchet* – should approach; *samt-pāṇiḥ* – carrying the firewood [of sublime faith]; *śrotriyam* – expert in understanding the Vedic conclusions; *brahma-niṣṭham* – has fully connected with the Supreme Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

One should approach a *guru* with the purpose of acquiring transcendental knowledge as well as the process for realizing that knowledge. *Śrī guru's* qualifications are that

he has complete knowledge of the import of the Vedic *śāstras* and he is himself fixed in devotion to Parabrahma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One should offer him the firewood of sublime faith for the performance of *yajña* [i.e. the *yajña* of service to Śrī Hari; of assisting *śrī guru* in the *saṅkīrtana yajña* of turning the conditioned souls into lovers of God].

If one knows Kṛṣṇa in truth, he should be accepted as guru

**kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (8.128)

kibā – whether; *vipra* – a *brāhmaṇa*; *kibā* – whether; *nyāsī* – a *sannyāsī*; *śūdra* – a *śūdra*; *kene* – why; *naya* – not; *yei* – anyone who; *kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā* – a knower of the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; *sei* – that person; *guru* – the spiritual master; *haya* – is.

Whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī*, or even a *śūdra*, if he is fully conversant with the science of realizing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he should be understood to be a *guru*.

Kṛṣṇa must be worshipped through śrī guru

**prathamam tu gurum pūjyām
tataś caiva mamārcanam**

**kurvan siddhim avāpnoti hy
anyathā niṣphalaṁ bhavet**

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (4.344),
Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

prathamam – firstly; *tu* – indeed; *gurum* – śrī guru; *pūjyām* – should be worshipped; *tataḥ* – thereafter; *ca eva* – and certainly; *mama arcanam* – My worship; *kurvan* – so doing; *siddhim* – perfection; *avāpnoti* – one attains; *hi* – certainly; *anyathā* – otherwise; *niṣphalaṁ* – fruitless; *bhavet* – it should be understood.

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:] “One must always worship one’s guru first and only then worship Me. If one follows this process properly, one will naturally attain all perfection, but if one neglects this process everything will be fruitless.”

Mahāprabhu manifests in the form of both *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā-gurus*

**vande gurūn īśa-bhaktān
īśam īśāvatārakān
tat-prakāśāṁś ca tac-chaktīḥ
kṛṣṇa caitanya saṁjñakam**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.1)

vande – I offer respectful obeisances; *gurūn* – unto the spiritual masters; *īśa-bhaktān* – unto the devotees of the Supreme Lord; *īśam* – unto the Supreme Lord; *īśa-avatārakān* – unto the incarnations of the Supreme Lord; *tat* – of the Supreme Lord; *prakāśān* – unto the manifestations; *ca* – and; *tat* – of the

Supreme Lord; *śaktiḥ* – unto the potencies; *kṛṣṇa-caitanya* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya; *saṁjñakam* – named.

I worship the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who appears in six features, as the instructing (*śikṣā*) and initiating (*dīkṣā*) *gurus*; the Lord's devotees, beginning with Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura; His *avatāras* such as Advaita Ācārya; His *prakāśa*, or expansion, headed by Nityānanda Prabhu; and His *śaktis*, headed by Gadādhara Paṇḍita.

The dīkṣā-guru is kṛṣṇa-rūpa (the form of Kṛṣṇa)

**guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstrera pramāṇe
guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakta-gaṇe**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.45)

guru – the *guru*; *kṛṣṇa-rūpa* – is Kṛṣṇa's form; *hana* – is; *śāstrera* – of revealed scriptures; *pramāṇe* – by the evidence; *guru-rūpe* – in the form of the *guru*; *kṛṣṇa* – Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *kṛpā* – mercy; *karena* – distributes; *bhakta-gaṇe* – unto His devotees.

According to *śāstra* the *dīkṣā-guru* is *kṛṣṇa-rūpa* (the form of Kṛṣṇa), because it is in the form of *guru* that Kṛṣṇa bestows His mercy on the devotees.

The śikṣā-guru is kṛṣṇa-svarūpa (the personality of Kṛṣṇa)

**śikṣā-guruke ta' jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa
antaryāmī, bhakta-śreṣṭha, ei dui rūpa**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.47)

śikṣā-guruke – the spiritual master who instructs; *ta'* – indeed; *jāni* – I know; *kṛṣṇera* – of Kṛṣṇa; *sva-rūpa* – own nature, personality; *antaryāmī* – the indwelling Supersoul; *bhakta-śreṣṭha* – the best devotee, the *mahā-bhāgavata*; *ei* – these; *dui* – two; *rūpa* – forms.

One should know the *śikṣā-guru* to be Kṛṣṇa's personality. In the form of the Supersoul [the *guru* in the heart, *caitya-guru*], Kṛṣṇa gives encouragement and as the topmost devotee [*bhakta-śreṣṭha*, *āśraya-bhagavān*] He gives association and instructions (*śikṣā*).

*The jīva cannot directly see the Supersoul, therefore
Kṛṣṇa manifests as śikṣā-guru*

**jīve sākṣāt nāhi tāte guru caitya-rūpe
śikṣā-guru haya kṛṣṇa-mahānta-svarūpe**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.58)

jīve – by the living entity; *sākṣāt* – direct experience; *nāhi* – there is not; *tāte* – therefore; *guru* – the *guru*; *caitya-rūpe* – in the form of the Supersoul; *śikṣā-guru* – the spiritual master who instructs; *haya* – appears; *kṛṣṇa* – Kṛṣṇa; *mahānta* – the topmost devotee, the *ācārya*; *sva-rūpe* – in His own form.

Since a conditioned soul cannot directly experience the presence of the Supersoul (*caitya-guru*), He appears before the *jīva* as the *śikṣā-guru*, the instructing spiritual master. Such an exalted devotee is non-different from Kṛṣṇa Himself.

*The first and foremost of the sixty-four limbs of bhakti
is to take shelter of śrī guru*

**guru-pādāśraya, dīkṣā, gurur sevana
sad-dharma-śikṣā-ṣṛcchā, sādhu-mārgānugamana**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.115)

guru-pāda-āśraya – shelter at the feet of a bona fide spiritual master; *dīkṣā* – initiation by the spiritual master; *gurura sevana* – service to the spiritual master; *sat-dharma-śikṣā* – instruction in the transcendental process of devotional service; *ṣṛcchā* – and inquiry; *sādhu-mārga* – the path of transcendental devotional service; *anugamana* – following strictly.

On the path of regulative devotional service, one must observe the following items: (1) One must accept a bona fide spiritual master; (2) one must accept initiation from him; (3) one must serve him; (4) one must receive instructions from the spiritual master and make inquiries in order to learn devotional service; (5) one must follow in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas* and follow the directions given by the spiritual master.*

Śrī guru is the mercy manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this world

**brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (19.151)

brahmāṇḍa bhramite – wandering in this universe; *kona* – some; *bhāgyavān* – most fortunate; *jīva* – living being; *guru* – of the spiritual master; *kṛṣṇa* – of Kṛṣṇa; *prasāde* – by the mercy; *pāya* – gets; *bhakti-latā* – of the creeper of devotional service; *bīja* – the seed.

According to their *karma*, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.*

One must accept śrī guru and serve him with faith and devotion

**guru-śuśrūṣayā bhaktyā sarva-labdharpaṇena ca
saṅgena sādhu-bhaktānām īśvarārādhanena ca
śraddhayā tat-kathāyām ca kīrtanair guṇa-karmaṇām
tat-pādambu-ruha-dhyānāt tal-liṅgekṣarhaṇādibhiḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.7.30–31)

guru-śuśrūṣayā – through service and eagerly hearing the teachings of *śrī guru*; *bhaktyā* – with faith and devotion; *sarva* – all; *labdha* – material gains; *arpaṇena* – by offering [to *śrī guru*, or to Kṛṣṇa through the *guru*]; *ca* – and; *saṅgena* –

by the association; *sādhu-bhaktānām* – of devotees and saintly persons; *īśvara* – of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *ārādhana* – by the worship; *ca* – and; *śraddhayā* – with great faith; *tat-kathāyām* – in discourses about the Lord; *ca* – and; *kīrtanaiḥ* – by glorifications; *guṇa-karmaṇām* – of the transcendental qualities and activities of the Lord; *tat* – His; *pāda-amburūpa* – on the lotus feet; *dhyānāt* – by meditation; *tat* – His; *liṅga* – form [Deity]; *īkṣa* – observing; *arhaṇa-ādibhiḥ* – and by worshipping.

One must accept the bona fide spiritual master and render service unto him with great devotion and faith. Whatever one has in one's possession should be offered to the spiritual master, and in the association of saintly persons and devotees one should worship the Lord, hear the glories of the Lord with faith, glorify the transcendental qualities and activities of the Lord, always meditate on the Lord's lotus feet and worship the Deity of the Lord strictly according to the injunctions of the *śāstra* and *guru*.*

Faithful service to one's guru pleases Kṛṣṇa the most

**nāham iyyā-prajātibhyām tapasopaśamena vā
tuṣyeyam sarva-bhūtātmā guru-śuśrūṣayā yathā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.80.34)

na – not; *aham* – I; *iyyā* – *brahmacārī-dharma*; *prajātibhyām* – *gr̥hastha-dharma*; *tapasā* – *vānaprastha-dharma*; *upaśamena* –

sannyāsa-dharma; *vā* – or; *tuṣyeyam* – can be satisfied; *sarva* – of all; *bhūta* – beings; *ātmā* – the Soul; *guru* – to one’s *guru*; *śuśrūṣayā* – by faithful service; *yathā* – as.

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:] “I, the Soul of all beings, am not as satisfied by *brahmacārī-dharma*, *gṛhastha-dharma*, *vānaprastha-dharma* or *sannyāsa-dharma* as I am by faithful service rendered to one’s *guru*.”

Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself only to whom He chooses

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

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.23)

na – not; *ayam* – this; *ātmā* – the Supreme Self; *pravacanena* – by discussing [the conclusions of *śāstra*]; *labhyaḥ* – obtainable; *na* – not; *medhayā* – by mental power; *na* – not; *bahunā* – much; *śrutena* – by learning; *yam* – [he] whom; *eva* – only; *eṣaḥ* – this Supreme Soul; *vṛṇute* – chooses; *tena* – by him; *labhyaḥ* – [He is] obtainable; *tasya* – for him; *eṣaḥ* – this; *ātmā* – the Supreme Soul; *vivṛṇute* – reveals; *tanūm* – form; *svām* – own.

The Supreme Soul can not be realized by discussing the conclusions of the Vedic scriptures, nor can He be known by great intelligence or learning. Only he whom

the Supreme Soul favours can realize Him. Unto him the Lord reveals His personal form.

One who does not seek sādhu-saṅga – or guru-saṅga – is no better than a foolish ass

**yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.84.13)

yasya – whose; *ātma* – as his self; *buddhiḥ* – consciousness; *kuṇape* – in a bag-like body; *tri-dhātuke* – made of the three basic elements, *kapha*, *pitta* and *vāta*; *sva* – as his self; *dhīḥ* – consciousness; *kalatra-ādiṣu* – in wife and so forth; *bhauma* – earth [stone, jewels, etc.]; *ijya* – his worshipable Deity; *dhīḥ* – whose consciousness; *yat* – whose; *tīrtha* – of a place of pilgrimage; *buddhiḥ* – conception; *salile* – [of a place to take bath] in water; *na karhicit* – never; *janeṣu* – in men; *abhijñeṣu* – conversant; *saḥ* – he; *eva* – indeed; *gaḥ* – a cow; *kharaḥ* – [or] an ass [a symbol of ignorance and stupidity].

One who considers this corpse-like body, comprised of the three elements *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*, to be his real self; who regards his wife, children and others as his very own; who considers mundane forms made of material elements to be worshipable; and who considers that merely by bathing in the water of a holy river he has completed his

pilgrimage – but who does not consider the *bhagavad-bhakta*, or *śrī guru*, to be more dear than his very self, to be his very own, to be worshipable and to be a place of pilgrimage personified – such a person, though human, is no better than a foolish ass.

Śrī guru may manifest in various forms

**cintāmaṇiḥ jayati somagirir gurur me
śikṣā-guruś ca bhagavān śikhi-piñcha-mauliḥ
yat-pāda-kalpataru-pallava-śekhareṣu
lilā-svayaṁvara-rasam labhate jayaśrīḥ**

Kṛṣṇa-karnāmṛta,
Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura

cintāmaṇiḥ jayati – all glory to Cintāmaṇi; *soma-giriḥ* – Somagiri; *guruḥ* – spiritual master; *me* – my; *śikṣā-guruḥ* – instructing spiritual master; *ca* – and; *bhagavān* – the Supreme Lord; *śikhi-piñcha* – with peacock feathers; *mauliḥ* – whose head; *yat* – whose; *pāda* – of the lotus feet; *kalpa-taru* – like desire trees; *pallava* – like delicate budding flowers; *śekhareṣu* – at His most beautiful; *lilā-svayam* – Her spontaneous pastimes; *vara-rasam* – of topmost conjugal mellows; *labhate* – obtains; *jaya-śrīḥ* – the victorious Śrīmatī Rādhīka.

All glories to Cintāmaṇi, who as a *guru* directed me to the path of *rāga-bhakti*, and to my initiating *guru*, Somagiri. All glories to my instructing *guru*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who wears a crown of peacock feathers. Under the shade

of His lotus feet, which are delicate like budding flowers and which yield all benedictions like desire trees, the victorious Śrīmatī Rādhikā spontaneously enjoys the most excellent conjugal mellow of Her pleasure-pastimes.

Who is ineligible to be a guru?

**gurur na sa syāt sva-jano na sa syāt
pitā na sa syāj jananī na sā syāt
daivam na saḥ syān na patiś ca sa syān
na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.5.18)

guruḥ – a spiritual master; *na* – not; *saḥ* – he; *syāt* – should become; *sva-janaḥ* – a relative; *na* – not; *saḥ* – he; *syāt* – should become; *pitā* – a father; *na* – not; *saḥ* – he; *syāt* – should become; *jananī* – a mother; *na* – not; *sā* – she; *syāt* – should become; *daivam* – the worshipable Deity; *na* – not; *saḥ* – that; *syāt* – should become; *na* – not; *patiḥ* – a husband; *ca* – also; *saḥ* – he; *syāt* – should become; *na* – not; *mocayet* – can deliver; *yaḥ* – who; *samupeta-mṛtyum* – one who is in *samsāra*, the cycle of birth and death.

One should not accept the responsibility of being a *guru*, a relative, a father, a mother, a worshipable Deity or a husband, if one cannot deliver one's dependent from the impending cycle of birth and death.

The śāstras enjoin to abandon a bogus guru

**guror apy avaliptasya
kāryākāryam ajānataḥ
utpatha-pratipannasya
parityāgo vidhīyate**

Mahābhārata, Udyoga Parva (179.25)

guroḥ – of a *guru*; *api* – even; *avaliptasya* – who is attached to sense gratification; *kārya-akāryam* – of what should and should not be done; *ajānataḥ* – who is unaware; *utpatha-pratipannasya* – who has taken to a wrong path, deviating from pure *bhakti*; *parityāgaḥ* – abandonment; *vidhīyate* – is enjoined.

The Vedic *śāstras* enjoin that one should give up a *guru* who is attached to sense gratification, who does not know what should and should not be done, and who has taken a wrong path.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī: “A *guru* who is envious of pure devotees, who blasphemes them or behaves maliciously towards them, should certainly be abandoned, remembering the verse *guror api avaliptasya*” (*Bhakti-sandarbhā* 238).

Śrī-guru-vandanā

**nāma-śreṣṭhaṁ manum api
śacī-pūtram atra svarūpaṁ**

**rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-pūriṁ
 māthurīṁ goṣṭhavāṭīm
 rādhā-kunḍaṁ giri-varam aho!
 rādhikā-mādhavāśāṁ
 prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā
 śrī-guruṁ taṁ nato 'smi**

Śrī Mukta-carita,

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

nāma-śreṣṭham – the most exalted of names, *śrī nāma*; *manum* – *śrī gopāla-mantra*; *api* – also; *śacī-pūtram* – the son of Śacī-mātā; *atra* – in this world; *svarūpam* – Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī; *rūpam* – Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī; *tasya* – his; *agra-jam* – elder brother [Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī]; *uru-purīm* – the vast spiritual stronghold; *māthurīm* – of Mathurā-maṇḍala [Vraja]; *goṣṭhavāṭīm* – which is ornamented by many dwellings for the cows and cowherds; *rādhā-kunḍam* – the bathing pond of Śrī Rādhā; *girivaram* – the best of hills Śrī Giri-Govardhana; *aho!* – exultation; *rādhikā-mādhava* – for the service to the feet of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava; *āśāṁ* – hope; *prāptaḥ* – obtained; *yasya* – whose; *prathita-kṛpayā* – by whose far-flung mercy; *śrī-guruṁ* – [the glorious remover of my ignorance] *śrī guru*; *taṁ* – that; *nataḥ* – bowed down; *asmi* – I am.

I am fully indebted to Śrī Gurudeva. Why? He has given me so many things: the highest conception of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, the highest form of sound which contains the highest form of thought, aspiration, ideal,

everything. And he has given me the service of our great saviour, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and His dearest assistant, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara. He has brought me in connection with Śrī Rūpa, who was ordered to distribute the heart's innermost dealings, the highest devotional love, *rāgānugā-bhakti*. Gurudeva has given me Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who gives *sambandha-jñāna*, a proper understanding of our relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and he has given me Mathurā-maṇḍala, which will help me in my remembrance of Rādhā and Govinda wherever I shall cast my glance. By his grace, Gurudeva has revealed the superexcellent position of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the favourite place of Rādhā and Govinda for Their pastimes and this Girirāja Govardhāna. Lastly, he has given me the hope that one day I can obtain the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava. I have been given all these assurances by my *gurudeva*, so I bow my head with all my respects to his lotus feet.

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī vandanā

**vairāgya-yug bhakti-rasaṁ prayatnair
apāyayan mām anabhīpsuṁ andham
kṛpāmbudhir yaḥ para-duḥkha-duḥkhī
sanātanām taṁ prabhum āśrayāmi**

*Vilāpa-kusumāñjaliḥ (6),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī*

vairāgya – renunciation; *yug* – endowed with, connected; *bhakti-rasam* – the mellows of *bhakti*; *prayatnaiḥ* – with great efforts; *apāyayan* – made to drink; *mām* – me; *anabhīpsum* – unwilling; *andham* – blind; *krpā* – of mercy; *ambudhiḥ* – an ocean; *yaḥ* – who; *para* – of others; *duḥkha* – by the unhappiness; *duḥkhī* – unhappy; *sanātanam* – Sanātana Gosvāmī; *tam* – of him; *prabhum* – the master; *āśrayāmi* – I take shelter.

I was unwilling to drink the nectar of *bhakti-rasa* endowed with renunciation, but Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, being an ocean of mercy who cannot tolerate the sufferings of others, diligently induced me to drink it. Therefore, I take shelter of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī as my *śikṣa-guru*.

A prayer to Gurudeva to bestow rādhā-dāsyam

**tvam gopikā vṛṣa-raves tanayāntike 'si
sevādhikāriṇi guro nija-pāda-padme
dāsyam pradāya kuru mām vraja-kānane śrī-
rādhānghri-sevana-rase sukhinīm sukhābdhau**

Śrī Stava Kalpadruma,

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

tvam – you; *gopikā* – a young *gopī*; *vṛṣa-raveḥ* – of King Vṛṣabhānu; *tanayā* – the daughter; *antike* – nearby; *asi* – you are; *sevā-adhikāriṇi* – you are encharged with Her service; *guro* – O Śrī Guru; *nija-pāda-padme* – at your own lotus feet; *dāsyam* – service; *pradāya* – bestowing; *kuru* – make; *mām* – me; *vraja-kānane* – in the forest of Vraja; *śrī-rādhā-*

aṅghri – Śrī-Rādhā's lotus feet; *sevana-rase* – of the *rasa* of service to Her; *sukhinīm* – blissful; *sukhābdhau* – in the ocean of ecstatic bliss.

O Gurudeva! You are a *gopī* in the company of the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja and can bestow Her service. Bestowing upon me the shelter of your lotus feet, kindly make me happily engaged within the ocean of the blissful mellows of service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā's lotus feet in the *kuñjas* of Vraja.

Dīkṣā – Divine Knowledge

The definition śloka of dīkṣā

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

*Viṣṇu-yāmala; Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (2.9),
Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī*

divyam – divine; *jñānam* – knowledge; *yataḥ* – because; *dadyāt* – it can give; *kuryāt* – can cause; *pāpasya* – of sin; *saṅkṣayam* – utter annihilation; *tasmāt* – therefore; *dīkṣā* – *dīkṣā*; *iti* – as; *sā* – it; *proktā* – is proclaimed; *deśikaiḥ* – by guides [*gurus*]; *tattva-kovidaiḥ* – who are learned in the science of transcendental truths.

Because the process of initiation into *viṣṇu-mantra* bestows *divya-jñāna*, or transcendental knowledge, its first syllable is *dī*; and because it causes *kṣaya*, or destruction of the seeds of sinful desire for sense gratification, its second syllable is *kṣā*. Therefore those learned in spiritual science have described it by the name *dīkṣā*.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary on the above śloka

**divyaṁ jñānaṁ hy atra mantre bhagavat-svarūpa
jñānam tena bhagavatā sambandha-viśeṣa-jñānaṁ ca**

*Bhakti-sandarbhā (Anuccheda 283),
Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī*

divyam – divine; *jñānam* – knowledge; *hi* – indeed; *atra* – here; *mantra* – by the *mantra*; *bhagavat-svarūpa* – the Lord’s transcendental form; *jñānam* – knowledge; *tena* – by that; *bhagavatā sambandha* – relationship with the Lord; *viśeṣa* – manifests; *jñānam* – knowledge; *ca* – and.

The words *divyam jñānam* here refers to knowledge of the Lord’s transcendental form as well as knowledge of one’s specific relationship with Kṛṣṇa [given in a seed form within the *dīkṣā-mantras*]. Chanting the *dīkṣā-mantras* establishes a relationship (*sambandha*) with Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura: “The relationship between Bhagavān and the *jīva* is that of servant and served. Bhagavān is the served (*sevya*) and the *jīva* is the servant (*sevaka*) – this is only a general relationship. In the advanced stage, this same relationship manifests in one particular form from various moods of *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* or *mādhurya*. Śrī gurudeva, knowing the *svarūpa-gata-bhāva*, or in other words the natural, inherent disposition of the *sādhaka* [the *sādhaka’s svarūpa*], gives nourishment to that particular mood within his heart in order to bring it clearly into view” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindhu*, commentary on the above *śloka*).

The mantra is non-different from śrī guru and śrī guru is non-different from Kṛṣṇa

**yo mantrah sa guruḥ sākṣāt
yo guruḥ sa hariḥ svayam**

**gurur yasya bhavet tuṣṭas
tasya tuṣṭo hariḥ svayam**

Vāmana-kalpa; Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (4.353),
Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

yaḥ – he who; *mantraḥ* – the transcendental sound vibration; *saḥ* – that; *guruḥ* – he who dispels ignorance; *sākṣāt* – directly; *yaḥ* – that; *guruḥ* – śrī guru; *saḥ* – is; *hariḥ* – the Supreme Lord, Śrī Hari; *svayam* – Himself; *guruḥ* – śrī guru; *yasya* – with whom; *bhavet* – he may be; *tuṣṭas* – pleased; *tasya* – of him; *tuṣṭaḥ* – the pleasure; *hariḥ* – Śrī Hari; *svayam* – Himself.

The *mantra* [received from *śrī guru*] is non-different from the *guru* himself, and *śrī guru* is directly the Supreme Lord Hari. He with whom *śrī guru* is pleased, also obtains the pleasure of Śrī Hari Himself.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “*Śrī guru’s* internal, spiritual mood of service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is conveyed to the disciple through the medium of a *mantra*. Everything is given in seed form within the *mantra*. At first the disciple will not be able to understand, but by performing *sādhana* and *bhajana* under the guidance of *śrī gurudeva* and by meditating on the *mantra* given by him, gradually everything will be revealed. Therefore it is said here that the *mantra* is the direct representative of *śrī gurudeva*” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindhu*, commentary on the above *śloka*).

Through dīkṣā, the sādḥaka's body is transformed into spiritual substance

**prabhu kahe,—vaiṣṇava-deha 'prākṛta' kabhu naya
'aprākṛta' deha bhaktera 'cid-ānanda-maya'**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (4.191)

prabhu kabe – Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said; *vaiṣṇava deha* – the body of a Vaiṣṇava; *prākṛta* – material; *kabhu naya* – is never; *aprākṛta* – transcendental; *deha* – body; *bhaktera* – of a devotee; *cid-ānanda-maya* – full of transcendental bliss.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “The body of a pure devotee is never material. It is considered to be transcendental, full of spiritual bliss.”*

**dīkṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa
sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama**

**sei deha kare tāra cid-ānanda-maya
aprākṛta-dehe tānra caraṇa bhajaya**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (4.192–193)

dīkṣā-kāle – at the time of initiation; *bhakta* – the devotee; *kare* – does; *ātma-samarpaṇa* – full self-dedication; *sei-kāle* – at that time; *kṛṣṇa* – Lord Kṛṣṇa; *tāre* – him; *kare* – He makes; *ātma-sama* – as spiritual as Himself.

sei deha – that body; *kare* – makes; *tāra* – his; *cid-ānandamaya* – full of transcendental bliss; *aprākṛta-dehe* – in that transcendental body; *tānra* – His; *caraṇa* – feet; *bhajaya* – worships.

When the *bhakta* fully dedicates himself at the time of receiving *dīkṣā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes him as spiritual as Himself, permeating the *bhakta*'s body with transcendence and bliss. With his spiritual body, the *bhakta* then worships Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja: “When the living being who has taken to the devotional path first surrenders himself to the lotus feet of his spiritual master, then Kṛṣṇa accepts him as one of His very own. He frees him from the bondage of bodily identity and gives him an experience of his eternal spiritual nature (*svarūpa*). With this divine knowledge, the devotee takes a spiritual body appropriate for the transcendental service of the Lord. This is the inner mystery of *dīkṣā*” (*Art of Sādhana*, Chapter 7).

Dīkṣā turns one into a brāhmaṇa as bell metal is turned into gold

**yathā kāñcanatām yāti kāṁsyam rasa-vidhānataḥ
tathā dīkṣā-vidhānena dvijatvaṁ jāyate nṛṇām**

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (2.12),

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

yathā – as; *kāñcanatām* – golden; *yāti* – becomes; *kāṁsyam* – [from] bell-metal; *rasa* – [by] quicksilver, or mercury; *vidhānataḥ* – by the alchemical process; *tathā* – in the same way; *dīkṣā-vidhānena* – by the process of initiation; *dvijatvaṁ* – the brahminical quality; *jāyate* – becomes manifest; *nṛṇām* – for a person.

Just as bell metal is turned to gold by a particular Vedic alchemical process, a person can attain to the state of *dvi-ja* (second birth) by the process of *vaiṣṇava-dīkṣā*.

Dīkṣā is absolutely necessary

**guru-dīkṣā vihinasya na ca siddhim na sad-gatim
tasmāt sarva-prayatnena guruṇā dīkṣitam bhavet**

Purāṇa vākya

guru-dīkṣā – *dīkṣā* initiation from *śrī guru*; *vihinasya* – lacking; *na* – no; *ca* – and; *siddhim* – perfection; *na* – no; *sad-gatim* – supreme, transcendental destination; *tasmāt* – therefore; *sarva-prayatnena* – very carefully; *guruṇā* – by *śrī guru*; *dīkṣitam* – *dīkṣā* initiation; *bhavet* – one should accept.

Without proper *dīkṣā* from *śrī guru*, no one can attain perfection or the transcendental destination. Therefore, with utmost care and attention one should accept *dīkṣā* initiation from *śrī guru*.

Without dīkṣā, harināma only gives sukṛti to come to śrī guru and receive dīkṣā

**kṛṣṇa-mantra haite habe saṁsāra-mocana
kṛṣṇa-nāma haite pābe kṛṣṇera caraṇa**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (7. 73)

kṛṣṇa-mantra – [the chanting of] the *mantras* received at the time of *dīkṣā*-initiation; *haite* – from; *habe* – it will be; *saṁsāra* –

material existence; *mocana* – deliverance; *kṛṣṇa-nāma* – [the chanting of] the name of Kṛṣṇa; *haite* – from; *pābe* – one obtains; *kṛṣṇera* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *caraṇa* – lotus feet.

The *kṛṣṇa-gāyatrī-mantra* liberates one from repeated birth and death in this world; the holy name of Kṛṣṇa gives one shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.**

Dikṣā-mantra received from an unqualified guru is useless

**sampradāya-vihinā ye mantrās te niṣphalāḥ matāḥ
śrī-brahmā-rudra-sanakā vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti-pāvanāḥ**

Padma Purāṇa; Prameya-ratnavalī (1.5)

sampradāya-vihināḥ – without being connected with a bona fide *sampradāya*, or *guru-varga* [through bona fide *dikṣā* by a manifest *sad-guru*]; *ye* – which; *mantrāḥ* – *mantras*; *te* – those; *niṣphalāḥ* – fruitless, useless; *matāḥ* – are considered; *śrī-brahmā-rudra-sanakā vaiṣṇavāḥ* – the four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*, originating from Goddess Lakṣmī, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva and the four Kumārās, headed by Sanaka Ṛṣi; *kṣiti-pāvanāḥ* – purify the earth.

Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in the four authorized disciplic successions, namely Śrī Ramānujācārya in the Śrī *sampradāya*, Śrī Madhvācārya in the Brahma *sampradāya*, Viṣṇuvāmī in the Rudra *sampradāya* and Nimbāditya in the Catuḥsana (four Kumārās) *sampradāya*, purify the whole universe. It is considered that *dikṣā-mantras* not received from a bona fide *guru* in one of these four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* do not award any spiritual benefit.

Vaiṣṇava-tattva

Definition of a Vaiṣṇava

**gr̥hīta-viṣṇu-dīkṣāko viṣṇu-pūjā-paro naraḥ
vaiṣṇavo 'bhihito 'bhijñair itaro 'smād avaiṣṇavaḥ**

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (1.55),

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

gr̥hīta-viṣṇu – by accepting a *viṣṇu-mantra*; *dīkṣākaḥ* – by initiated; *viṣṇu-pūjā-paraḥ* – dedicated to the worship of Śrī Viṣṇu; *naraḥ* – a person; *vaiṣṇavaḥ abhītaḥ* – is called a Vaiṣṇava; *abhijñaiḥ* – by the wise; *itaraḥ asmād* – other than him; *avaiṣṇavaḥ* – a non-Vaiṣṇava.

Learned scholars have determined that a Vaiṣṇava is one who is initiated into a *viṣṇu-mantra* in accordance with the regulations of *śāstra* and who is dedicated to the worship of Śrī Viṣṇu. All others are non-Vaiṣṇavas.

Kṛṣṇa says, “Worshipping My devotees is superior to worshipping Me directly”

mad-bhakta-pūjābhyadhikā mayi sañjāyate bhaktiḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.19.21)

mad-bhakta – of My devotees; *pūjā* – worship; *abhyadhikā* – better; *mayi* – to Me; *sañjāyate* – arises; *bhaktiḥ* – loving devotion.

Worshipping my devotees is better than worshipping Me for by this, devotion to Me naturally arises.

Kṛṣṇa is controlled by the love of His bhaktas and sits within their hearts

**aham bhakta-parādhīno hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.4.63)

aham – I; *bhakta-parādhīnaḥ* – am dependent on the will of My devotees; *hi* – indeed; *asvatantraḥ* – am not independent; *iva* – exactly like that; *dvija* – O *brāhmaṇa*; *sādhubhiḥ* – by pure devotees, completely free from all material desires; *grasta-hṛdayaḥ* – My heart is controlled; *bhaktaiḥ* – because they are devotees; *bhakta-jana-priyaḥ* – I am dependent not only on My devotee but also on My devotee’s devotee [the devotee’s devotee is extremely dear to Me].

[*Śrī Bhagavān said to Durvāsā Muni:*] “I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all independent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of material desires, I sit only within the cores of their hearts. What to speak of My devotee, even those who are devotees of My devotee are very dear to Me.”*

Kṛṣṇa says, “Pure devotees are My very heart”

**sādhavo hṛdayam mahyam
sādhūnām hṛdayam tv aham
mad-anyat te na jānanti
nāham tebhyo manāg api**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.4.68)

sādhavaḥ – pure devotees; *hṛdayam* – in the core of the heart; *mahyam* – of Me; *sādhūnām* – of the pure devotees; *hṛdayam* – in the core of the heart; *tu* – indeed; *aham* – I am; *mat-anything* – anything else but me; *te* – they; *na* – not; *jānanti* – know; *na* – not; *aham* – I; *tebhyaḥ* – than them; *manāk api* – even by a little fraction.

The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them. *

Worship of Kṛṣṇa's devotees is higher than direct worship of Kṛṣṇa

ārādhānānām sarveṣām viṣṇor ārādhanaṁ param tasmāt parataram devi tadīyānām samarcanam

Padma Purāṇa

ārādhānānām – of varieties of worship; *sarveṣām* – of all; *viṣṇoḥ* – of Lord Viṣṇu; *ārādhanaṁ* – worship; *param* – the most exalted; *tasmāt* – than that; *parataram* – greater; *devi* – O goddess; *tadīyānām* – related to Viṣṇu [i.e. the devotees]; *samarcanam* – perfect worship.

[*Lord Śiva told goddess Durgā*:] “My dear Devī, although the Vedas mention worship of demigods, the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is topmost and is ultimately recommended. However, above the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is the worship of [or rendering of service to] His devotees, who are the object of the Lord’s love.”

The pure devotee's mercy is even more powerful than Kṛṣṇa's

**aho ananta-dāsānām mahattvaṁ dṛṣṭam adya me
kṛtāgaso 'pi yad rājan maṅgalāni samihase**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (9.4.68)

aho – alas; *ananta-dāsānām* – of the servants of the Unlimited [Supreme Personality of Godhead]; *mahattvam* – greatness; *dṛṣṭam* – has been seen; *adya* – today; *me* – by me; *kṛtāgasah api* – although I am an offender; *yat* – still; *rājan* – O King; *maṅgalāni* – [for my] good fortune; *samihase* – you are endeavouring [praying].

[*Durvāsā Muni said to Ambariśa Mahārāja:*] “My dear King, today I have experienced the greatness of a Vaiṣṇava, for although I have committed an offence [by trying to kill you], you have prayed for my good fortune.”*

*“I do not dwell in Vaikuṅṭha nor in the hearts of the yogīs.
I reside only where My devotees glorify Me”*

**nāhaṁ vasāmi vaikuṅṭhe yoginām hṛdayena ca
mad-bhaktā yatra gāyanti tatra tiṣṭhāmi nārada**

Padma Purāṇa

na – not; *aham* – I; *vasāmi* – reside; *vaikuṅṭhe* – in Vaikuṅṭha; *yoginām* – of the yogīs; *hṛdayena* – in the hearts; *ca* – but; *mat-bhaktāḥ* – My devotees; *yatra* – where; *gāyanti* – they sing about Me; *tatra* – there; *tiṣṭhāmi* – I reside; *nārada* – O Nārada.

O Nārada, I do not dwell in Vaikuṅṭha nor am I in the hearts of the *yogīs*. I reside where My devotees glorify My name, form, qualities and transcendental pastimes.

Kṛṣṇa says, “The servant of My servants is My real devotee”

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

Ādi Purana

ye – those who; *me* – My; *bhakta-janāḥ* – devotees; *pārtha* – O Pārtha; *na* – not; *me* – My; *bhaktāḥ* – devotees; *ca* – but; *te* – those; *janāḥ* – persons; *mat-bhaktānām* – of My devotees; *ca* – certainly; *ye* – those who; *bhaktāḥ* – devotees; *te* – such persons; *me* – My; *bhaktatamāḥ* – most advanced devotees; *matāḥ* – that is My opinion.

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna:] “Those who consider themselves My direct devotees are actually not My devotees, but those who see themselves as the devotees of My associates are factually My devotees. That is My opinion.”

Kṛṣṇa tells Uddhava: “You are dearer to Me than My own self”

**na tathā me priyatama ātma-yonir na śaṅkaraḥ
na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr naivātmā ca yathā bhavān**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.15)

na – not; *tathā* – in the same way; *me* – to Me; *priya-tamaḥ* – most dear; *ātma-yoniḥ* – the self-born Lord Brahmā; *na* – nor; *śaṅkaraḥ* – Lord Śiva; *na* – nor; *ca* – also; *saṅkarṣaṇaḥ* – Balarāma; *na* – nor; *śrīḥ* – the goddess of fortune; *na* – nor; *eva* – certainly; *ātmā* – My own self; *ca* – also; *yathā* – as much as; *bhavān* – you.

My dear Uddhava! You are My very closest friend. No one is as close to me as you are, not even the self-born Brahmā, Śaṅkara, My brother Balarāma, or the other half of My body Lakṣmī. Indeed, not even My own self is as dear to Me as you are.

Devarṣi Nārada glorifies Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira

**yūyaṁ nṛ-loke bata bhūri-bhāgā
lokam punānā munayo 'bhiyānti
yeṣāṁ grhān āvasatīti sākṣād
gūḍham param brahma manuṣya-liṅgam**

Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛtam (1.5.7),

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

yūyam – all of you [the Pāṇḍavas]; *nṛ-loke* – within this world of men; *bata* – O how wonderful!; *bhūri-bhāgāḥ* – extremely fortunate; *lokam* – all the planets; *punānāḥ* – who can purify; *munayaḥ* – saintly persons; *abhiyānti* – almost always come to visit; *yeṣāṁ* – of whom; *grhān* – the houses; *āvasati* – resides in; *iti* – thus; *sākṣāt* – directly; *gūḍham* – very confidential; *param*

brahma – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *manuṣya-līṅgam* – appearing just like a human being.

[Śrī Nārada Muni said:] “O Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira! How astonishing! Your good fortune excels that of everyone else’s in this world of men, for the great sages who purify the entire universe have come to your home because the Supreme Brahma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa resides there just like a human being.”

The pure devotees are holy places personified

**bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās
tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayaṁ vibho
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni
svāntaḥ-sṭhena gadābhṛtā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.13.10)

bhavad – your good self; *vidhāḥ* – like; *bhāgavatāḥ* – pure devotees; *tīrtha* – holy places of pilgrimage; *bhūtāḥ* – personified; *svayam* – personally; *vibho* – O powerful one; *tīrthī-kurvanti* – they make the holy places of pilgrimage; *tīrthāni* – the holy places; *sva-antaḥ-sṭhena* – because He is situated in your heart; *gadā-bhṛtā* – who carries a club [Bhagavān].

[Yudhiṣṭhira said to Vidura:] “My lord, pure devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry Śrī Bhagavān within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage.”*

The pure devotee selflessly preaches out of compassion

**mahad-vicalanam nṛṇām gr̥hiṇām dīna-cetasām
niḥśreyasāya bhagavan kalpate nānyathā kvacit**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.8.4)

mahad-vicalanam – the wandering of saintly persons; *nṛṇām* – of human beings; *gr̥hiṇām* – who are householders; *dīna-cetasām* – low-minded; *niḥśreyasāya* – for the ultimate benefit; *bhagavan* – O my lord; *kalpate* – one considers; *na anyathā* – not any other purpose; *kvacit* – at any time.

[*Nanda Mahārāja said to Gargamuni:*] “O lord, great saintly persons like you visit the homes of lowly-minded householders like me for no other purpose than to bestow auspiciousness on them.”

Equal Vision

**vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini
śuni caiva śva-pāke ca paṇḍitāḥ sama-darśinaḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (5.18)

vidyā-vinaya-sampanne – equipped with knowledge and gentle qualities; *brāhmaṇe* – within a *brāhmaṇa*; *gavi* – in a cow; *hastini* – in an elephant; *śuni* – in a dog; *ca* – and; *eva* – indeed; *śva-pāke* – in a dog-eater; *ca* – and; *paṇḍitāḥ* – the enlightened (*jñānīs*); *sama-darśinaḥ* – have equal vision of the soul.

Enlightened persons (*jñānīs*) perceive with equal vision a gentle and learned *brāhmaṇa*, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog eater.

Vaiṣṇavas who know Kṛṣṇa in truth are very rare.

**bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate
vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (7.19)

bahūnām – of many; *janmanām* – births; *ante* – at the end; *jñānavān* – one who has knowledge; *mām* – of Me; *prapadyate* – takes shelter; *vāsudevaḥ* – Vāsudeva; *sarvam* – is everything; *iti* – that; *saḥ* – that; *mahā-ātmā* – great soul; *sudurlabhaḥ* – extremely rare.

After many births, the *jñānī* who is endowed with the knowledge that everything, both conscious and inert, is related to Vāsudeva fully takes shelter of Me. Such a great soul is extremely rare.

Except for the Vaiṣṇavas, no one knows Śrī Kṛṣṇa in truth

**manuṣyāṇām sahasreṣu kaścīd yatati siddhaye
yatatām api siddhānām kaścīn mām vetti tattvataḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (7.3)

manuṣyāṇām – of men; *sahasreṣu* – among thousands; *kaścīd* – someone; *yatati* – endeavours; *siddhaye* – for perfection; *yatatām* – of those who endeavour; *api* – yet even; *siddhānām* – of those who attain perfection; *kaścīd* – some person; *mām* – Me; *vetti* – knows; *tattvataḥ* – [as I am] in truth.

Among thousands of men, one may endeavour for perfection. And among those who attain perfection, it is rare for even one to know My *svarūpa* in truth.

A pure devotee is extremely rare

**muktānām api siddhānām nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭīṣu api mahā-mune**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.14.5)

muktānām – of persons liberated or freed from the bondage of ignorance; *api* – even; *siddhānām* – of persons who have achieved perfection; *nārāyaṇa* – Śrī Nārāyaṇa; *parāyaṇaḥ* – the pure devotee; *su-durlabhaḥ* – very rare; *praśānta-ātmā* – completely satisfied, desireless; *koṭīṣu* – among many millions; *api* – certainly; *mahā-mune* – O great sage.

O great sage, out of many millions of people who have attained liberation and freedom from ignorance, or even out of many millions of *siddhas* who have nearly attained perfection, there is hardly one pure devotee of Nārāyaṇa. Only such a devotee is actually completely satisfied and peaceful.

To see a Vaiṣṇava is the perfection of the eyes

**akṣṇoḥ phalaṁ tvādr̥śa-darśanam hi
tanoḥ phalaṁ tvādr̥śa-gātra-saṅgaḥ
jihvā-phalaṁ tvādr̥śa-kīrtanam hi
su-durlabhā bhāgavatā hi loke**

Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (13.2)

akṣṇoḥ – of the eyes; *phalam* – the perfect result of the action; *tvādr̥śa* – a person like you; *darśanam* – to see; *hi* – certainly;

tanoh – of the body; *phalam* – the perfection of activities; *tvādrśa* – of a person like you; *gātra-saṅgaḥ* – touching the body; *jihvā-phalam* – the perfection of the tongue; *tvādrśa* – a person like you; *kīrtanam* – glorifying; *hi* – certainly; *su-durlabhāḥ* – very rare; *bhāgavatāḥ* – pure devotees of the Lord; *hi* – certainly; *loke* – in this world.

O Vaiṣṇava! To see a person like you is the real perfection of having eyes. To touch the body of a person like you is the real benefit of having a body. To glorify a person such as yourself is the purpose of having a tongue, for in this world association with an *uttama-bhāgavata* is extremely rare.

A Vaiṣṇava is never alone because he sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere

**yo mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ ca mayi paśyati
tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca me na praṇaśyati**

Bhagavad-gītā (6.30)

yaḥ – who; *mām* – Me; *paśyati* – sees; *sarvatra* – everywhere (in all living entities); *sarvaṁ* – everything; *ca* – and; *mayi* – in Me; *paśyati* – sees; *tasya* – for him; *aham* – I; *na praṇaśyāmi* – am never out of his sight; *saḥ* – he; *ca* – and; *me* – to Me; *na praṇaśyati* – he is never out of My sight.

For a person who sees Me in all beings and sees all beings in Me, I am never out of his vision and he is never out of Mine.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pure devotees derive great satisfaction from always conversing about Him

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

Bhagavad-gītā (10.9)

mat-cittāḥ – those whose hearts are offered to Me; *mat-gata-prāṇāḥ* – whose every life breath is dedicated to Me; *bodhayantaḥ* – enlightening; *parasparam* – each other; *kathayantaḥ* – chanting My names, forms, etc.; *ca* – and; *mām* – My *tattva*; *nityam* – continuously; *tuṣyanti* – they always experience satisfaction; *ca* – and; *ramanti* – take delight; *ca* – also.

Those whose minds are absorbed in Me, and whose lives are wholeheartedly devoted to My service derive great satisfaction and bliss from constantly enlightening one another with the fundamental truth about Me and performing *kīrtana* of My name, form, qualities and pastimes.

He reveals Himself to those who serve Him with love

**teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te**

Bhagavad-gītā (10.10)

teṣāṁ – for those; *satata-yuktānām* – who always hanker for My eternal association; *bhajatām* – who worship Me; *prīti-pūrvakam* – with love; *dadāmi* – I bestow; *buddhi-yogaṁ* –

transcendental knowledge; *tam* – that; *yena* – by which; *mām* – Me; *upayānti* – approach; *te* – they.

To those who worship Me with love and yearn for My eternal association, I give that transcendental knowledge by which they attain Me.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa destroys the darkness of ignorance in their hearts

**teṣāṃ evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jaṃ tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā**

Bhagavad-gītā (10.11)

teṣāṃ – for them; *eva* – only; *anukamṣa-artham* – out of compassion; *aham* – I; *ajñāna-jaṃ* – born of ignorance; *tamaḥ* – darkness [in the form of material existence]; *nāśayāmi* – I destroy; *ātma-bhāva-sthaḥ* – situated within the intelligence [of the *jīvātmā*]; *jñāna-dīpena* – with the lamp of transcendental knowledge; *bhāsvatā* – with the blazing.

Only out of compassion for devotees who are exclusively devoted to Me do I, dwelling within their intelligence, destroy with the blazing lamp of transcendental knowledge the darkness of material existence, which is born of ignorance.

Three powerful substances of the pure devotee

**bhakta-pada-dhūli āra bhakta-pada-jala
bhakta-bhukta-avaśeṣa—ei tina mahā-bala**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (16.60)

bhakta-pada-dhūli – the dust of the lotus feet of a devotee; *āra* – and; *bhakta-pada-jala* – the water that washed the feet of a devotee; *bhakta-bhukta-avaśeṣa* – and the remnants of food eaten by a devotee; *tina* – three; *mahā-bala* – very powerful.

The dust of the lotus feet of pure devotees, the water that washes their feet and their *mahā-mahā prasādam* remnants [both *hari-kathā* and *prasādam*] – these three are very powerful.

Even Kṛṣṇa desires to purify Himself with the footdust of His pure devotees

**nirapekṣam munim śāntam
nirvairam sama-darśanam
anuvrajāmy aham nityam
pūyety aṅghri-reṇubhiḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.16)

nirapekṣam – without personal desire; *munim* – always inspired [by My form, qualities and pastimes]; *śāntam* – peaceful; *nirvairam* – not inimical, non-envious; *sama-darśanam* – endowed with equal vision, equally disposed towards all; *anuvrajāmi* – follow; *aham* – I; *nityam* – always; *pūyeya* – that I may be purified; *iti* – thus; *aṅghri* – their lotus feet; *reṇubhiḥ* – by the dust of.

My pure devotees are free from any personal desire, always rapt in thoughts of My pastimes, peaceful, devoid of

enmity, non-envious and equally disposed towards all. I therefore always follow in their footsteps because I desire to purify Myself with the dust of their lotus feet.

Respect offered by the madhyama devotee to the three kinds of devotees

**kr̥ṣṇeti yasya giri tam manasādriyeta
dīkṣāsti cet praṇatibhiś ca bhajantam īsam
śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya
nindādi-śūnya-hṛdam īpsita-saṅga-labdhyā**

Upadeśāmṛta (5), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

kr̥ṣṇa – Kṛṣṇa; *iti* – thus; *yasya* – in whose; *giri* – speech; *tam* – that person [a neophyte devotee]; *manasā* – within the mind; *ādriyeta* – one should respect; *dīkṣā* – accepted initiation from a qualified *guru*; *asti* – there is; *cet* – if; *praṇatibhiḥ* – by offering obeisances; *ca* – also; *bhajantam* – engaged in *bhajana* [an intermediate devotee]; *īsam* – unto Bhagavān; *śuśrūṣayā* – having an intense eagerness to hear from realized devotees; *bhajana-vijñam* – one fully conversant in the *bhajana* [of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's eightfold daily pastimes]; *ananyam* – an unalloyed devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *anya-nindā-ādi* – of faults such as the tendency to criticize others; *śūnya-hṛdam* – whose heart is devoid; *īpsita-saṅga* – the desirable association; *labdhyā* – having obtained.

One who takes *kr̥ṣṇa-nāma* just once by calling out “O Kṛṣṇa!” is a neophyte devotee (*kaniṣṭha-adbhikāri*). One

should consider him to be his family member and silently respect him.

One who, fully understanding the principle of *dīkṣā*, has accepted initiation from a qualified *guru* and performs *bhajana* of Bhagavān in accordance with Vaiṣṇava conventions is an intermediate devotee (*madhyama-adhikāri*). One should respect such a devotee who is endowed with the correct understanding of reality and illusion by offering *praṇāma* unto him and so forth.

One who is conversant with the science of *bhajana* as described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vaiṣṇava scriptures and who performs exclusive *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee. Due to his undeviating absorption in Kṛṣṇa, the pure heart of such a devotee is free from faults such as the tendency to criticize others. He is expert in *bhajana*, meaning that he mentally renders service (*mānasa-sevā*) to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes that take place during the eight segments of the day (*aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*). Knowing him to be a topmost devotee whose heart is established in the particular mood of service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for which one aspires and who is also affectionately disposed towards oneself, one should honour him by offering *daṇḍavat-praṇāma* (*praṇipāta*), making relevant inquiry (*paripraśna*) and rendering service (*sevā*) with great love.

Uttama-adbhikārī

**sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavaty ātmany eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.45)

sarva-bhūteṣu – within all beings; *yaḥ* – who; *paśyet* – can perceive; *bhagavad-bhāvam* – ecstatic mood, or *bhāva*, towards Bhagavān; *ātmanaḥ* – his own; *bhūtāni* – and all beings; *bhagavati ātmani* – within Bhagavān; *eṣaḥ* – that person; *bhāgavata-uttamaḥ* – is the *uttama-bhāgavata*.

One who perceives [just like the *gopīs*] his own *bhagavad-bhāva*, ecstatic mood of attraction towards Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, in the hearts of all *jīvas* and sees all beings within Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra is an *uttama-bhāgavata*.

Excerpt from *Jaiva-dharma*, Chapter 8: “An *uttama* Vaiṣṇava perceives that all living beings love Bhagavān with the same particular feeling of transcendental love that he himself cherishes towards his *iṣṭadeva*. He also perceives that Bhagavān feels a reciprocal attitude of love towards all living beings. An *uttama* Vaiṣṇava has no disposition other than this.”

Madhyama-adbhikārī

**īsvare tad-adhīneṣu bālīeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.46)

īsvare – for Bhagavān; *tad-adhīneṣu* – for Bhagavān’s subordinates [the devotees]; *bālīṣeṣu* – towards the innocent; *dviṣatsu* – to the envious; *ca* – and; *prema* – love and affection; *maitrī* – friendship; *kṛpā* – mercy; *upekṣā* – neglect; *yaḥ* – who; *karoti* – has; *saḥ* – he; *madhyamaḥ* – [is] a middle-class devotee.

A *madhyama-bhāgavata* is one who has love for Īśvara and His pure devotees, friendship towards His *bhaktas*, shows mercy towards those who are innocent [in regard to *bhakti*] and neglects those who are inimical to Īśvara or His *bhaktas*.

Kaniṣṭha-adbhikārī

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.47)

arcāyām – in the ritualistic process of worship; *eva* – certainly; *haraye* – unto Śrī Hari; *pūjām* – offering worship; *yaḥ* – who; *śraddhayā* – with faith; *ihate* – endeavours; *na* – not; *tad-bhakteṣu* – to Śrī Hari’s devotees; *ca* – yet; *anyeṣu* – to other beings; *saḥ* – he; *bhaktaḥ* – devotee; *prākṛtaḥ* – a material; *smṛtaḥ* – considered.

A person who endeavors whole heartedly in the ritualistic worship of the Deity form of Śrī Hari according to worldly faith yet does not worship the devotees of Śrī Hari whose bodies are also temples of Śrī Hari, nor offer

respect to other living entities, is known as a materialistic, or *kaniṣṭha*, devotee.

It is forbidden to judge a Vaiṣṇava from a material viewpoint

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

Upadeśāmṛta (6), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

dr̥ṣṭaiḥ – by observing; *svabhāva-janitaiḥ* – according to the nature born; *vapuṣaḥ* – from the body; *ca* – and; *doṣaiḥ* – with the faults; *na* – not; *prākṛtatvam* – the material quality; *iha* – on this path [of *bhakti*]; *bhakta-janasya* – of the pure devotee; *na paśyēt* – one should not see; *gaṅgā-ambhasām* – of the water of the Ganges; *na* – not; *khalu* – indeed; *apagacchati* – is diminished; *budbuda-phena-pankaiḥ* – by bubbles, foam and mud; *brahma-dravatvam* – the nature of liquified transcendence; *nīra-dharmaiḥ* – because of the peculiar condition of the water.

Devotees situated in this material world should not be viewed with material vision; in other words, one should not consider them to be ordinary conditioned souls. The imperfections visible in their natures, such as birth in a low caste, harshness, lethargy and so forth, and the imperfections visible in their bodies such as ugly features,

disease, deformities and so forth, are precisely like the appearance of bubbles, foam and mud in the Gaṅgā. Despite such apparent pollution in the water of the Gaṅgā, she retains her nature as liquified transcendence. Similarly, the self-realized Vaiṣṇavas always exist on the transcendental plane and one should not attribute material defects to them.

A Vaiṣṇava's birth, family, social position and nation should be considered insignificant

**viprād dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutād aravinda-nābha-
pādāravinda-vimukhāt śvapacām variṣṭham
manye tad-arpita-mano-vacanehitārtha-
prāṇam punāti sa kulam na tu bhūrimānaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.9.10)

viprāt – than a *brāhmaṇa*; *dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutāt* – endowed with the twelve qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*; *aravinda-nābha* – Lord Viṣṇu, who has a lotus growing from His navel; *pāda aravinda* – to the lotus feet of the Lord; *vimukhāt* – averse to *bhakti*; *śva-pacam* – a dog-eater, or one born in a low family; *variṣṭham* – more glorious; *manye* – I consider; *tad-arpita* – surrendered unto the lotus feet of the Lord; *manaḥ* – his mind; *vacana* – words; *ībita* – every endeavour; *artha* – wealth; *prāṇam* – and life; *punāti* – purifies; *saḥ* – he [the devotee]; *kulam* – his family; *na* – not; *tu* – but; *bhūrimānaḥ* – one who falsely thinks himself to be in a prestigious position.

A *bhakta* who has taken birth in a family of dog-eaters, but who has dedicated his mind, words, activities and wealth to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is superior to a *brāhmaṇa* endowed with all the twelve brahminical qualities, but who has no *bhakti* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such a *bhakta*, although of lowly birth, can purify himself and his whole family, whereas the *brāhmaṇa*, who is filled with pride due to his superior social position, cannot even purify himself.

Caṇḍālās and brāhmaṇas

**viṣṇu-bhakti-vihīnā ye caṇḍālāḥ parikīrtitāḥ
caṇḍālā api vai śreṣṭhā hari-bhakti-parāyaṇāḥ**

Brhan-nāradīya;

Nārada Pañcaratra (1.37.12)

viṣṇu-bhakti-vihīnāḥ – bereft of devotion to Viṣṇu; *ye* – those [*brāhmaṇas*]; *caṇḍālāḥ* – dog-eaters; *parikīrtitāḥ* – are said to be; *caṇḍālāḥ* – dog-eaters; *api* – however; *vai* – certainly; *śreṣṭhāḥ* – most exalted; *hari-bhakti-parāyaṇāḥ* – who are dedicated to *hari-bhakti*.

Persons born as *brāhmaṇas* yet without devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa become more degraded than dog-eaters (*caṇḍālas*), whereas those born as *caṇḍālas* but who are devoted to Kṛṣṇa, become most exalted.

Even if born as an outcast, a devotee is as worshipable as Kṛṣṇa

**na me 'bhaktaś caturvedī
mad-bhaktaḥ śvapacaḥ priyaḥ
tasmai deyaṁ tato grāhyaṁ
sa ca pūjyo yathā hy aham**

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (10.127),

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

na – not; *me* – My; *abhaktaḥ* – devoid of pure devotional service; *catur-vedī* – a scholar in the four Vedas; *mat-bhaktaḥ* – My devotee; *śva-pacaḥ* – even from a family of dog-eaters; *priyaḥ* – very dear; *tasmai* – to him; *deyam* – should be given; *tataḥ* – from him; *grāhyam* – should be accepted; *saḥ* – that person; *ca* – also; *pūjyaḥ* – worshipable; *yathā* – as much as; *hi* – certainly; *aham* – I.

A non-devotee *brāhmaṇa* who knows the four Vedas is not actually dear to Me but a devotee, though born in a family of outcastes (*caṇḍālas*) is certainly very dear to Me. Everything should be offered to him and whatever he offers should be accepted, for he is as worshipable as Myself.

Even if accidentally committing a sin, a devotee who has firm faith should be considered a sādhu

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

kṣīpram bhavati dharmātmā śāśvac-chāntim nigacchati kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇśyati

Bhagavad-gītā (9.30–31)

api – even; *cet* – if; *su-durācārah* – a person of very bad character; *bhajate* – worships; *mām* – Me; *ananya-bhāk* – exclusively devoted; *sādhuh* – a virtuous person; *eva* – certainly; *sah* – he; *mantavyah* – should be considered; *samyak* – rightly; *vyavasitah* – because of being situated [in intelligence]; *hi* – indeed; *sah* – he.

kṣīpram – quickly; *bhavati* – he becomes; *dharmātmā* – a virtuous soul; *śāśvat* – lasting; *śāntim* – peace; *nigacchati* – attains; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *pratijānīhi* – you should proclaim; *na* – never; *me* – My; *bhaktaḥ* – devotee; *praṇśyati* – perishes.

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

Six kinds of vaiṣṇava-aparādha (offences to pure devotees)

hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati krudhyate yāti no harṣaṁ darśane patanāni śaṭ

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (10.312),

Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

hanti – kills or beats; *nindati* – criticizes; *vai* – certainly; *dveṣṭi* – envies; *vaiṣṇavān* – unto all the Vaiṣṇavas; *na* – never; *abhinandati* – welcome; *krudhyate* – becoming angry; *yāti* – attains; *no* – no; *harṣam* – happiness; *darśane* – in seeing; *pātanāni* – causes of falldown [from *bhakti*]; *ṣaṭ* – six.

To kill or beat a Vaiṣṇava, to slander him, to bear malice or envy towards him, to fail to welcome or please him, to become angry at him and to not feel pleasure upon seeing him – by these six types of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, one falls down to a degraded position.

All good qualities automatically manifest in one who renders unflinching devotional service

**yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.18.12)

yasya – of whom; *asti* – there is; *bhaktiḥ* – pure devotional service; *bhagavati* – unto Śrī Bhagavān; *akiñcanā* – without material desires; *sarvaiḥ* – all; *guṇaiḥ* – with good qualities; *tatra* – there; *samāsate* – live; *surāḥ* – the demigods or saintly devotees; *harau* – unto the Lord; *abhaktasya* – of the non-devotee; *kutaḥ* – where?; *mahat-guṇāḥ* – the high qualities; *manah-rathena* – by mental concoction; *asati* – to temporary material happiness; *dhāvataḥ* – running; *bahiḥ* – externally.

For one who renders pure, unflinching devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, which is free from material attachments, Kṛṣṇa and all the saintly devotees enter his heart accompanied by their exalted qualities. However, he who has no devotion to Śrī Bhagavān, is certainly devoid of good qualities because he is engaged by mental concoction in the service of *māyā*, which is the external feature of the Lord.

Devotees are always tolerant, forbearing and merciful

**titikṣavaḥ kārūṇikāḥ
suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ
sādhavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.21)

titikṣavaḥ – very forbearing; *kārūṇikāḥ* – merciful; *suhṛdaḥ* – who are well-wishers; *sarva-dehinām* – to all living entities; *ajāta-śatravaḥ* – without enemies; *śāntāḥ* – peaceful; *sādhavaḥ* – following the injunctions of the *śāstra*; *sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ* – who are decorated with good character.

Devotees are always tolerant, forbearing and very merciful. They are the well-wishers of every living entity. They follow the scriptural injunctions, and because they have no enemies, they are very peaceful. These are the decorations of devotees.

*Both experience day and night, but while one sees
darkness the other sees light*

**yā niśā sarva-bhūtānām
tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni
sā niśā paśyato muneḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (2.69)

yā – which [spiritual intelligence]; *niśā* – like night; *sarva-bhūtānām* – for all beings; *tasyām* – in that [night]; *jāgarti* – is awake; *saṁyamī* – a self-controlled man [of fixed intelligence]; *yasyām* – in which [state which is directed to the search for sense objects]; *jāgrati* – remains awake; *bhūtāni* – ordinary beings; *sā* – that [material intelligence]; *niśā* – night; *paśyatoḥ* – for the enlightened; *muneḥ* – thinker.

Spiritual intelligence, which is directed toward the soul, is like night for materialistic common people, who are enchanted by the material energy. One who is *stitha-prajña* (of undisturbed intelligence), however, remains awake in that intelligence. And when intelligence is absorbed in sense objects, the common person remains awake. For the sage who perceives transcendental Reality, that consciousness is the darkest night. In other words, such a person accepts sense objects in an appropriate way, without being attached to them.

“The great souls of this world take shelter of My divine potency”

**mahātmānas tu mām pārtha
daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ
bhajanty ananya-manaso
jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.13)

mahā-ātmānaḥ – the great souls; *tu* – however; *mām* – Me; *pārtha* – O son of Pṛthā; *daivīm* – of the divine; *prakṛtim* – nature; *āśritāḥ* – taking shelter; *bhajanti* – worship; *ananya-manasaḥ* – with undeviating minds; *jñātvā* – knowing; *bhūtā-ādim* – cause of all beings; *avyayam* – the imperishable.

O Pārtha, the great souls, however, having taken shelter of My divine nature, know Me to be the original and imperishable cause of all beings. They constantly engage in worship of Me with their minds fixed exclusively on Me.

Vaiṣṇavas who constantly engage in bhajana are never separated from Kṛṣṇa

**satataṁ kīrtayanto mām
yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca mām bhaktyā
nitya-yuktā upāsate**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.14)

satatam – constantly; *kīrtayantaḥ* – chanting; *mām* – Me; *yatantaḥ* – endeavouring; *ca* – and; *dr̥ḍha-vratāḥ* – with determined vows; *namas-yantaḥ* – bowing down; *ca* – and; *mām* – before Me; *bhaktyā* – with devotion; *nitya-yuktāḥ* – they with a mood of eternal union; *upāsate* – worship.

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

One should follow the path of the Mahājanas

**tarko 'pratiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnā
nāsāv ṛṣir yasya matam na bhinnam
dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ
mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ**

Mahābhārata, Vāna parva (313.117)

tarkaḥ – argument; *apraṭiṣṭhaḥ* – not substantial; *śrutayaḥ* – Vedas; *vibhinnāḥ* – various conclusions; *na* – not; *asau* – that; *ṛṣiḥ* – a sage; *yasya* – whose; *matam* – opinion; *na* – not; *bhinnam* – separate; *dharmasya* – of religious principles; *tattvam* – truth; *nihitam* – situated; *guhāyāṁ* – hidden in the heart of; *mahā-janaḥ* – the great saintly devotees of the past; *yena* – by which way; *gataḥ* – traversed; *saḥ* – that; *panthāḥ* – the path.

Dry arguments are inconclusive and the Vedas give varying, often contradictory conclusions. One is not considered a *ṛṣi* unless one's philosophical conception is different from others. Consequently, the confidential truth of *dharmā* cannot be gleaned from the Vedas or the *ṛṣis* but lies hidden in the heart of pure devotees. Therefore one should accept only the path of pure *bhakti* as advocated by those pure devotees, the *mahājanas*, and be always under their guidance.

Sādhu-saṅga

For the *śloka*: sādhu-saṅga sādhu-saṅga sarva-śāstre kaya, kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla, satām prasaṅgān, bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā, see *Essential Ślokas*.

How to associate with pure devotees (the six kinds of loving exchanges)

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

Upadeśāmṛta (4), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

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

Offering pure devotees items in accordance with their requirements, accepting remnant items given by pure devotees, revealing to pure devotees one’s confidential realizations concerning *bhajana*, inquiring from them about their confidential realizations, eating with great

love the *prasādam* remnants tasted by *śuddha-bhaktas* and lovingly feeding them *prasādam* – these are the six symptoms of loving association with pure devotees.

Bhakti is awakened by sādhu-saṅga

**bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-
saṅgena pariḷāyate
sat-saṅgaḥ prāpyate puṁbhiḥ
sukṛtaiḥ pūrva-saṅcitaiḥ**

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (10.279),
Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

bhaktiḥ – devotional service; *tu* – indeed; *bhagavat-bhakta* – of the devotees of Bhagavān; *saṅgena* – by association; *pariḷāyate* – awakened; *sat-saṅgaḥ* – association with saints; *prāpyate* – attained; *puṁbhiḥ* – by persons; *sukṛtaiḥ* – through transcendental pious activities [*bhakti-unmukhī sukṛti*, knowingly or unknowingly associating with and rendering service to a pure devotee, observing the holy days of the Lord and His devotees, honoring Tulāsī-devī and any of the nine kinds of *svarūpa-siddhā bhakti* beginning with *śravaṇam*, if performed under guidance]; *pūrvasaṅcitaiḥ* – by previous accumulation over many lifetimes.

Bhakti is awakened when one associates with pure devotees of Śrī Bhagavān. Association with *śuddha-bhaktas* is attained only by the accumulation of transcendental pious activities performed over many lifetimes.

Even a moment's association with a pure devotee is invaluable

**tulayāma lavenāpi na svargaṁ nāpunar-bhavam
bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.18.13; 4.30.34)

tulayāma – to be balanced with; *lavena* – by a moment; *api* – even; *na* – never; *svargaṁ* – heavenly planets; *na* – nor; *apunar-bhavam* – liberation from matter; *bhagavat-saṅgi* – devotee of the Lord; *saṅgasya* – of the association; *martyānām* – those who are meant for death; *kim* – what is there; *uta* – to speak of; *āśiṣaḥ* – worldly benediction.

The value of a moment's association with the devotee of the Lord cannot even be compared to the attainment of heavenly planets or liberation from matter, and what to speak of worldly benedictions in the form of material prosperity, which are for those who are meant for death.*

Mahat-saṅga is extremely miraculous and beyond logic

**mahat-saṅgama-māhātmyam
evaitat paramādbhutam
kṛtārtho yena vipro 'sau
'sadyo 'bhūt tat-svarūpavat**

Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛtam (2.7.14),
Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī

mahat – of the great souls; *saṅgama* – of the association; *māhātmyam* – the glory; *eva* – indeed; *etat* – this; *parama-*

adbhutam – very wonderful; *kṛta-arthah* – successful; *yena* – by which; *vīpraḥ* – *brāhmaṇa*; *asau* – that; *sadyaḥ* – at once; *abbūt* – became; *tat-svarūpavat* – like that Śrī Svarūpa.

The glory of *mahat-saṅga*, the association of a *mahā-bhāgavata*, is extremely miraculous. By the effect of such *saṅga*, the *brāhmaṇa* Janasarma immediately became perfect like his *gurudeva* Śrī Svarūpa (Gopa Kumāra).

*The footdust of the pure devotee is the only means
to attain kṛṣṇa-bhakti*

**naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghrim
sprṣaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthah
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.32)

na – not; *eṣāṁ* – for such [materialists]; *matih* – consciousness; *tāvat* – until; *urukrama-aṅghrim* – the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is famous for performing great activities; *sprṣati* – can not touch; *anartha* – of unwanted material qualities; *apagamaḥ* – the disappearance; *yat* – by which; *arthah* – the motivation; *mahīyasāṁ* – of great souls; *pāda-rajah* – the dust of the feet; *abhiṣekam* – a holy bath; *niṣkiñcanānām* – of those who are detached from this material world; *na vṛṇīta* – he does not accept; *yāvat* – for that long.

For persons who are absorbed in bodily identification, who fail to understand the necessity to free themselves from

materialistic habits and who do not smear themselves with the holy footdust of great devotees who are fully detached from mundane sense objects, it is impossible for their consciousness to touch the glories of Śrī Urukrama-kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

*Smearing oneself with the footdust of a pure devotee
is the only way to attain Bhagavān*

**rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
na cejyayā nirvapaṇād grhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.12.12)

rahūgaṇa – O King Rahūgaṇa; *etat* – this [knowledge]; *tapasā* – by severe austerities; *na yāti* – does not become [revealed]; *na* – nor by; *ca* – also; *ijyayā* – by worship; *nirvapaṇāt* – by finishing all material duties [and accepting *sannyāsa*]; *grhāt* – by ideal householder life; *vā* – or; *na* – nor; *chandasā* – by reciting Vedic hymns; *na eva* – nor indeed; *jala-agni-sūryaiḥ* – by severe austerities such remaining submerged in water [in the winter], remaining surrounded by fire with the sun above [in summer]; *vinā* – without; *mahat* – of the great devotees; *pādarajaḥ* – in the dust of the lotus feet; *abhiṣekam* – take a holy bath.

O Rahūgaṇa, the Absolute Truth cannot be known by austerities, nor by worship, nor by giving up one's home,

nor indeed by living in one's home. He cannot be known by reciting the Vedas nor by worshipping the gods of the water, sun or fire. As long as one does not smear oneself with the footdust of the *mahat*, great saintly devotees, one cannot achieve any result from all these other activities.

Sādhu-saṅga is the most valuable treasure for any jīva

**ata ātyantikam kṣemam
 pṛcchāmo bhavato 'naghāḥ
 saṁsāre 'smin kṣaṇārdho 'pi
 sat-saṅgaḥ śevadhīr nṛṇām**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.30)

ataḥ – therefore; *ātyantikam* – supreme; *kṣemam* – welfare, benefit; *pṛcchāmaḥ* – I am asking; *bhavataḥ* – from you; *anaghāḥ* – O sinless ones; *saṁsāre* – in the material world; *asmin* – this; *kṣaṇa-ardhaḥ* – lasting only half of one moment; *api* – even; *sat-saṅgaḥ* – the association of a *śuddha-bhakta* (pure devotee) of the Lord; *śevadhīḥ* – a great treasure; *nṛṇām* – for human beings.

Therefore, O sinless ones, we are inquiring from you about the supreme benefit. In this material world, even half a moment's association with a *śuddha-bhakta* is the greatest wealth for human beings.

Bhakti is obtained only by the mercy of the pure devotee

**mahat-kṛpā vinā kona karme 'bhakti' naya
kṛṣṇa-bhakti dūre rahu, saṁsāra nahe kṣaya**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.51)

mahat-kṛpā – the mercy of great [pure] devotees; *vinā* – without; *kona karme* – in any activity; *bhakti naya* – there is no *bhakti*; *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* – loving devotional service to Kṛṣṇa; *dūre rahu* – leaving aside; *saṁsāra* – material existence, the endless cycle of birth and death; *nahe* – there is not; *kṣaya* – diminution.

Unless a person is blessed by an exalted saint, none of the activities he performs can be considered to be *bhakti*. What to say of attaining *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, it is impossible for him even to extricate himself from material existence.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Māharāja: “The purport is that one cannot even become free from *anarthas* without the mercy of *śrī guru*, what to speak of attaining *guru-niṣṭha*, *ruci*, *āsakti* or *bhāva*.”

Like a crystal, one takes on the qualities of those he associates with

**yasya yat-saṅgatiḥ puṁso
mañivat syāt sa tad-guṇaḥ
sva-kulaṛddhyai tato dhīmān
sva-yūthān eva saṁśrayet**

*Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (8.51);
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.229),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

yasya – whose; *yat-saṅgatiḥ* – on account of whatever association; *puṁsaḥ* – of a person; *maṇivat* – as a jewel; *syāt* – one becomes; *saḥ* – that person; *tad-guṇaḥ* – its qualities; *svakulaṛddhyai* – for the well-being of one’s spiritual life; *tataḥ* – then; *dhīmān* – an intelligent person; *sva-yūthān* – own *sampradāya*, or devotional family; *eva* – certainly; *samśrayet* – should take shelter.

As a crystal reflects the colour of nearby objects, so also does a person imbibe the qualities of those with whom he associates. Therefore an intelligent person should associate with like-minded, respectable individuals, and thereby maintain the prestige of his *sampradāya*.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Māharāja: “The purport of this verse is that the contamination of the heart cannot be eradicated by *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, *yoga* or *tapasyā*. It is only by the influence of association with Vaiṣṇavas who are free from all pride, and upon receiving their mercy, that the heart very easily becomes cleansed of all misgivings (*anarthas*).”

By associating with sādhus, one’s love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is awakened

**sādhu-saṅge kṛṣṇa-bhaktye śraddhā yadi haya
bhakti-phala ‘prema’ haya, saṁsāra yāya kṣaya**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.49)

sādhu-saṅge – by the association of devotees; *kṛṣṇa-bhaktye* – in discharging devotional service to Kṛṣṇa; *śraddhā* – faith; *yadi* – if; *haya* – there is; *bhakti-phala* – the result of devotional service

to Kṛṣṇa; *prema* – ecstatic transcendental love of God; *haya* – awakens; *saṁsāra* – the conditioned life in material existence; *yāya kṣaya* – becomes vanquished.

When a *sādhaka-bhakta* obtains [*paramārbhika*] faith in the association of *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas [who are more advanced than himself], he very quickly obtains the fruit of *bhakti*, which is *prema* and his material entanglement is easily dissipated.

One should hear hari-kathā from a rasika Vaiṣṇava

**śrīmad-bhāgavatārthānām āsvādo rasikaiḥ saha
sajātīyāśaye snigdhe sādhou saṅgaḥ svato vare**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.91),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

śrīmad-bhāgavata – of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *arthānām* – of the meanings; *āsvādaḥ* – relishing; *rasikaiḥ saha* – with *rasika* devotees; *sa-jātīya* – similar, like one's own; *āśaye* – endowed with a mood; *snigdhe* – affectionate; *sādhou* – [in the association of] a devotee; *saṅgaḥ* – association; *svataḥ* – than one's self; *vare* – far better.

One should taste the meaning of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the association of *rasika* Vaiṣṇavas, one should associate with devotees who are more advanced than oneself, who possess similar sentiments for Bhagavān and who are affectionately disposed towards oneself.

*Giving up bad association is an essential aspect
of Vaiṣṇava conduct*

**asat-saṅga-tyāga, ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
'strī-saṅgī' eka asādhu, 'kṛṣṇābhakta' āra**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.87)

asat-saṅga-tyāga – rejection of the association of non-devotees;
ei – this; *vaiṣṇava-ācāra* – the behaviour of a Vaiṣṇava; *strī-
saṅgī* – who associates with women for sense gratification;
eka – one; *asādhu* – unsaintly person; *kṛṣṇa abhakta* – who is
not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa; *āra* – another.

To abandon the company of those whose association diminishes one's resolve in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* is truly the natural conduct of a Vaiṣṇava. And the most detrimental is the association of those who enjoy the company of women [or men] and of non-devotees (i.e. materialists, impersonalists, atheists, etc.).

*Better embrace a snake or a tiger than to associate
with materialists*

**āliṅganam varam manye
vyāla-vyāghra-jalaukasām
na saṅgaḥ śalya-yuktānām
nānā-devaika-sevinām**

*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.112),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

ālīnganam – embracing; *varam* – better; *manyē* – I consider; *vyāla-vyāghra-jala-okasām* – of snakes, tigers or crocodiles; *na saṅgaḥ* – without association; *śalya-yuktānām* – those whose hearts are pierced with the arrows [of lusty desires]; *nānā-deva* – of the many demigods; *eka sevinām* – and those who are devoted to service.

It is better to live with or embrace a snake, a tiger or a crocodile than to associate with those whose hearts are pierced with the arrows of material desires and who worship various demigods.

Better be in a cage of burning fire than to associate with those averse to Kṛṣṇa

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

Kātyāyana-saṁhitā;
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.51),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

varam – better; *huta-vaha-jvālā* – of blazing fire; *pañjarāntar* – within a cage; *vyavasthitih* – being situated; *na* – rather than; *śauri-cintā* – mindful of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *vimukha-jana* – with persons inimical [to Kṛṣṇa]; *saṁvāsa* – of intimate association; *vaiśasam* – the calamity.

It is better to be in a cage of blazing fire than experience the calamity of intimate association with persons averse to Kṛṣṇa.

*One should kick out bad company and take up
saintly association*

**tato duḥsaṅgam utsrjya satsu sajjeta buddhimān
santa evāsyā chindanti mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.26.26)

tataḥ – therefore; *duḥsaṅgam* – bad association; *utsrjya* – giving up; *satsu* – to saintly devotees; *sajjeta* – one should become attached; *buddhimān* – one who is intelligent; *santaḥ* – saintly persons; *eva* – only; *asya* – his; *chindanti* – cut off; *manaḥ* – of the mind [or heart]; *vyāsaṅgam* – material attachments, opposed to devotional service; *uktibhiḥ* – by their words.

For all these reasons, an intelligent person rejects detrimental association and associates instead with saintly persons. This is because only saintly personalities, with their powerful and virtuous instructions, can cut his unholy, material attachments from the heart.

What is the best activity for the jīva?

**śreyo-madhye kona śreyaḥ jīvera haya sāra?
kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅga vinā śreyaḥ nāhi āra**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (8.251)

śreyaḥ-madhye – among beneficial activities; *kona* – which; *śreyaḥ* – beneficial function; *jīvera* – of the *jīva*; *haya* – is; *sāra* – the essence; *kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅga* – association with the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *vinā* – except; *śreyaḥ* – beneficial activity; *nāhi* – there is not; *āra* – another.

[Śrīman Mahāprabhu asked:] “Out of all beneficial activities, which is the most favorable for the living entities?”
 [Rāmānanda Rāya replied:] “There is no pursuit more auspicious than to associate with Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s devotees.”

When the time for a jīva’s release from saṁsāra approaches, the jīva attains sat-saṅga

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.51.53)

bhava – material existence; *apavargaḥ* – cessation of, liberation from *saṁsāra*; *bhramataḥ* – wandering; *yadā* – when; *bhavet* – it may occur; *janasya* – for a person; *tarhi* – at that time; *acyuta* – O infallible Lord; *sat* – of saintly devotees; *samāgamaḥ* – the association; *sat-saṅgamaḥ* – saintly association; *yarhi* – when; *tadā* – then; *eva* – only; *sat* – of the saintly; *gatau* – who is the goal; *para-avara* – of superior and inferior energies; *iṣe* – for the Supreme Lord; *tvayi* – Yourself; *jāyate* – is born; *ratiḥ* – devotion.

He Acyuta! O Infallible one! When the time for the *jīva*’s release from wondering in the cycle of *saṁsāra* approaches, he attains *sat-saṅga*, the association of a *sādhū*. From that moment he becomes firmly attached to You, who are the controller of both spiritual and material energies, and the supreme objective for the *sādhū*s.

Bhāgavata-tattva

*Satyam param dhīmahi – Let us meditate on
the Absolute Truth*

**janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś
cārtheṣv abhijñāḥ svarāt
tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye
muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ
tejo-vāri-mṛdām yathā vinimayo
yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakaṁ
satyam param dhīmahi**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.1)

janma-ādi – creation, sustenance and destruction; *asya* – of the manifested universes; *yataḥ* – from whom; *anvayāt* – directly; *itarataḥ* – indirectly; *ca* – and; *artheṣu* – purposes; *abhijñāḥ* – fully cognizant; *sva-rāt* – fully independent; *tene* – imparted; *brahma* – the Vedic knowledge; *hṛdā* – consciousness of the heart; *yaḥ* – one who; *ādi-kavaye* – unto the original created being; *muhyanti* – are illusioned; *yat* – about whom; *sūrayaḥ* – great sages and demigods; *tejaḥ* – fire; *vāri* – water; *mṛdām* – earth; *yathā* – as much as; *vinimayaḥ* – action and reaction; *yatra* – whereupon; *tri-sargaḥ* – three modes of creation, creative faculties; *amṛṣā* – almost factual; *dhāmnā* – along with all transcendental paraphernalia; *svena* – self-sufficiently; *sadā* – always; *nirasta* – negation by absence;

kubakam – illusion; *satyam* – truth; *param* – absolute; *dhīmahi* – I do meditate upon.

O my Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmājī, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal. I therefore meditate upon Him, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the Absolute Truth.*

*Bhāgavatam: reality distinguished from illusion
for the welfare of all*

**dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo
nirmatsarāṇām satām**

**vedyam vāstavam atra vastu śivadam
 tāpa-trayonmūlanam
 śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte
 kim vā parair īśvaraḥ
 sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ
 śuśrūsubhis tat-kṣaṇāt**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.2)

dharmah – religiosity; *projjhita* – completely rejected; *kaitavaḥ* – cheating, covered by fruitive intention; *atra* – herein; *paramaḥ* – the highest; *nirmatsarāṇām* – of the non-envious, pure-hearted; *satām* – pure devotees; *vedyam* – to be understood; *vāstavam* – factual reality; *atra* – herein; *vastu* – the real substance [Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa]; *śiva-dam* – bestowing auspiciousness; *tāpa-traya* – of the threefold miseries; *unmūlanam* – causing uprooting; *śrīmat* – beautiful; *bhāgavate* – this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*; *mahā-muni* – by the great sage [Vyāsadeva]; *kṛte* – compiled; *kim* – what; *vā* – indeed; *paraiḥ* – with others; *īśvaraḥ* – the Supreme Lord; *sadyaḥ* – at once; *hṛdi* – within the heart; *avarudhyate* – become captive; *atra* – herein; *kṛtibhiḥ* – by accomplished devotees; *śuśrūsubhiḥ* – by those who are eager to hear; *tat-kṣaṇāt* – at once.

This perfect scripture, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, compiled by the great sage Śrīla Vyāsadeva from four original verses, describes the most elevated and kind-hearted devotees and completely rejects the cheating ways of materially motivated religiosity [*dharmā*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*]. It propounds the highest truth: reality distinguished from

illusion for the spiritual welfare of all. It teaches pure *bhakti*, the highest principle of eternal religion, and it uproots the threefold miseries of the conditioned *jīvas*, awarding them *kṛṣṇa-prema*, the ultimate benediction of pure love of God. Those eager to hear this beautiful *Bhāgavatam* under the guidance of the person *bhāgavata*, in a submissive attitude of service, can at once capture Śrī Kṛṣṇa in their hearts. Therefore there is no need for any scripture other than *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Bhāgavatam is the essence and explanation of all Vedic literature and it is full of rasa

**nigama-kalpa-taror galitaṁ phalaṁ
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-samyutam
pibata bhāgavatam rasam ālayam
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.3)

nigama – of the Vedic literatures; *kalpa-taroḥ* – of the desire tree; *galitam* – fully matured; *phalam* – fruit; *śuka* – Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī; *mukhāt* – from the lips of; *amṛta* – nectar; *drava* – soft and therefore easily swallowable; *samyutam* – containing; *pibata* – just drink; *bhāgavatam* – this book instructing us about our eternal relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *rasam* – juice [that which is relishable]; *ālayam* – by liberated souls; *muhur* – repeatedly; *aho* – O; *rasikāḥ* – those expert in relishing *rasa*; *bhuvī* – on the earth; *bhāvukāḥ* – those expert in relishing *bhāva*.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the mature, succulent fruit of the wish-fulfilling tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī and, through the disciplic succession of bona fide *gurus*, it has willingly descended upon this earth in its entirety. It is saturated with the supremely pleasing ambrosial nectar of transcendental emotion (*rasa*). Having no skin, hard seed, fibres or other discardable parts, it is fit for drinking because it is completely liquid. O great devotees – you who are *bhāvuka*, well acquainted with the transcendental nectarean emotions of divine love, and who are *rasika*, expert in relishing all the specific forms of the liquefied, ambrosia of transcendental emotion – even in the liberated stage, you should repeatedly drink the sweet nectar of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Indeed, the supremely liberated souls perpetually relish the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

This Bhāgavatam dispels the darkness of Kali-yuga

**kr̥ṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharmajñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa purāṇārko ’dhunoditaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.43)

kr̥ṣṇe – in Kṛṣṇa’s; *sva-dhāma* – own abode; *upagate* – having returned; *dharmajñāna* – religion; *ādibhiḥ* – combined together; *saha* – along with; *kalau* – in the Kali-yuga; *naṣṭa-dṛśām* – of persons who have lost their sight; *eṣaḥ* – all these; *purāṇa-arkaḥ* – the *Purāṇa* which is brilliant like the sun; *adhunā* – just now; *uditāḥ* – has arisen.

This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāṇa*.*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the natural commentary on Vedānta, Mahābhārata and gāyatrī

**artho 'yaṁ brahma-sūtrāṇāṁ bhāratārtha-vinirṇayaḥ
gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpo 'sau vedārtha-paribr̥mhitāḥ**

Garuḍa Purāṇa;
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (25.143)

arthaḥ ayam – this is the meaning; *brahma-sūtrāṇāṁ* – of the aphorisms of the *Vedānta-sūtra*; *bhārata-artha-vinirṇayaḥ* – the highest ascertainment of the *Mahābhārata*; *gāyatrī-bhāṣya-rūpaḥ* – the embodiment of the purport on *brahma-gāyatrī*; *asau* – that; *veda-artha-paribr̥mhitāḥ* – the elaborate explanation of the Vedic principles.

The meanings of the *Vedānta-sūtra* are present in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as are the highest philosophical ascertainments of the *Mahābhārata*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the embodiment of the commentary upon the *brahma-gāyatrī*, and gives an elaborate explanation of the meanings of the Vedas.

bhāṣyaṁ brahma-sūtrānām

Tattva-sandarbhā (21)

bhāṣyam – commentary; *brahma-sūtrānām* – on *Vedānta-sūtra*.
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the [actual] commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the essence of all *Vedānta*

**sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ hi śrīmad-bhāgavatam iṣyate
 tad-rasāmṛta-tr̥ptasya nānyatra syād ratiḥ kvacit**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.13.15)

sarva-vedānta-sāraṁ – the essence of all the codes of *Vedānta*; *hi* – certainly; *śrīmad-bhāgavatam* – the glorious literature about *Bhagavān*; *iṣyate* – is accepted; *tad-rasa-amṛta* – by the immortal mellow of that great literature; *tr̥ptasya* – for one who is satisfied; *na* – never; *anyatra* – anywhere else; *syāt* – there can be; *ratiḥ* – attraction; *kvacit* – at any time.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is accepted as the essence of all *Vedānta*. Whoever has been satisfied by the transcendental mellow (the *bhakti-rasa*) of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is never attracted to any other literature.

Only killers of the self will not hear the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

**nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād
 bhavauśadhāc chrotra-mano-'bhirāmāt**

**ka uttama-śloka-guṇānuvādāt
pumān virajyeta vinā paśughnāt**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.1.4)

nivṛtta – released from; *tarṣaiḥ* – lust or material activities; *upaḡīyamānāt* – which is described or sung; *bhava-auśadbāt* – which is the right medicine for the material disease; *śrotra* – the process of aural reception; *manaḥ* – the subject matter of thought for the mind; *abhirāmāt* – from the pleasing vibrations from such glorification; *kaḥ* – who; *uttamaśloka* – of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *guṇa-anuvādāt* – from describing such activities; *pumān* – a person; *virajyeta* – can keep himself aloof; *vinā* – except; *paśu-ghnāt* – either a butcher or one who is killing his own personal existence.

Glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is performed in the *paramparā* system; that is, it is conveyed from spiritual master to disciple. Such glorification is relished by those who are no longer interested in the false, temporary glorification of this cosmic manifestation. Descriptions of the Lord are the right medicine for the conditioned soul undergoing repeated birth and death. Therefore, who will cease hearing such glorification of the Lord except a butcher or one who is killing his own self?*

Vyāsadeva compiled this Bhāgavatam to mitigate all suffering

**anarthopaśamaṁ sākṣād bhakti-yogam adhokṣaje
lokasyājānato vidvānś cakre sātвата-saṁhitām**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.7.6)

anartha – unwanted material desires; *upaśamam* – mitigates; *sākṣāt* – directly; *bhakti-yogam* – the linking process of devotional service; *adhokṣaje* – unto the Transcendence; *lokasya* – of the general mass of men; *ajānataḥ* – those who are unaware of; *vidvān* – the supremely learned; *cakre* – compiled; *sātvata* – in relation with the Supreme Truth; *sambhitām* – Vedic literature.

The material desires of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the process of connecting with the Lord through devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyāsadeva compiled this Vedic literature, which is in relation to the Supreme Truth.*

*Simply by giving aural reception to the Bhāgavatam,
bhakti sprouts in the heart*

**yasyām vai śrūyamāṇāyām kṛṣṇe parama-pūruṣe
bhaktir utpadyate puṁsaḥ śoka-moha-bhayāpahā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.7.7)

yasyām – [this Vedic literature, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*] of which; *vai* – just; *śrūyamāṇāyām* – by hearing; *kṛṣṇe* – unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *parama-pūruṣe* – Supreme Enjoyer; *bhaktiḥ* – devotion; *utpadyate* – manifests; *puṁsaḥ* – of the living being; *śoka* – lamentation; *moha* – delusion; *bhaya* – fear; *āpahā* – that which dispels.

Just by hearing and following this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, devotion to the Supreme Enjoyer Vrajendra-nandana Śrī

Kṛṣṇa manifests in the heart of the living entity, dispelling lamentation, delusion and fear.

Narrations which describe Kṛṣṇa's pastimes create a spiritual revolution

**tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ñkitāni yat
śṛṇvanti gāyanti grṇanti sādhaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.5.11)

tat – that; *vāk* – vocabulary; *visargaḥ* – creation; *janatā* – the people in general; *agha* – sins; *viplavaḥ* – revolutionary; *yasmin* – in which; *prati-ślokaṁ* – each and every stanza; *abaddhavaty* – irregularly composed; *api* – in spite of; *nāmāni* – transcendental names, etc.; *anantasya* – of the unlimited Lord; *yaśaḥ* – glories; *añkitāni* – depicted; *yat* – what; *śṛṇvanti* – do hear; *gāyanti* – do sing; *grṇanti* – do accept; *sādhaḥ* – the purified men who are honest.

On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms and pastimes of the unlimited Supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.*

*One must offer praṇāma to the person Bhāgavata
before reciting the book Bhāgavata*

**nārāyaṇam namaskṛtya naram caiva narottamam
devīm sarasvatīm vyāsam tato jayam udīrayet**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.4)

nārāyaṇam – the Personality of Godhead; *namaḥ-kṛtya* – after offering respectful obeisances; *naram ca eva* – and Nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi; *nara-uttamam* – the supermost human being; *devīm* – the goddess; *sarasvatīm* – the mistress of learning; *vyāsam* – Vyāsadeva; *tataḥ* – thereafter; *jayam* – all that is meant for conquering; *udīrayet* – be announced.

Before reciting this *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the very means of conquest, one should offer respectful obeisances unto the Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, unto Nara-nārāyaṇa Ṛṣi, the supermost human being, unto mother Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning, and unto Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the author.*

*The results of hearing Bhāgavatam and rendering
service to the pure devotee*

**naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu nityam bhāgavata-sevayā
bhagavaty uttama-śloke bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.18)

naṣṭa – destroyed; *prāyeṣu* – almost to nil; *abhadreṣu* – all that is inauspicious; *nityam* – regularly; *bhāgavata* – *Śrīmad-*

Bhāgavatam or the pure devotee; *sevayā* – by serving; *bhagavati* – unto the Personality of Godhead; *uttama* – transcendental; *śloke* – prayers; *bhaktiḥ* – loving service; *bhavati* – comes into being; *naiṣṭhikī* – irrevocable.

By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.*

The book Bhāgavata and the devotee Bhāgavata

**eka bhāgavata baḍa bhāgavata-śāstra
āra bhāgavata bhakta bhakti-rasa-pātra**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.99)

eka – one; *bhāgavata* – in relation to the Supreme Lord; *baḍa* – great; *bhāgavata-śāstra* – Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam; *āra* – the other; *bhāgavata* – in relation to the Supreme Lord; *bhakta* – pure devotee; *bhakti-rasa* – of the mellow of devotion; *pātra* – the recipient.

One of the *bhāgavatas* is the great scripture Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and the other is the pure devotee absorbed in the mellows of loving devotion.*

Through these two Bhāgavatas, Kṛṣṇa instills bhakti-rasa in the sādhaka's heart

**dui bhāgavata dvārā diyā bhakti-rasa
tānhāra hṛdaye tānre preme haya vaśa**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.100)

dui – two; *bhāgavata* – the *bhāgavatas*; *dvārā* – by; *diyā* – giving; *bhakti-rasa* – devotional inspiration; *tāhāra* – of His devotee; *hṛdaye* – in the heart; *tāre* – his; *preme* – by the love; *haya* – becomes; *vaśa* – under control.

Through the actions of these two *bhāgavatas* the Lord instills the mellows of *bhakti-rasa* (the mellows of transcendental loving service) into the heart of a *sādhaka* and thus the Lord comes under the control of His devotee's love.*

One should not hear Bhāgavatam from a non-Vaiṣṇava

**avaīṣṇava-mukhodgīrṇam
pūtam hari-kathāmṛtam
śravaṇam naiva kartavyam
sarpocchiṣṭam yathā payah**

Padma Purāṇa

avaīṣṇava – of a non-devotee; *mukha-udgīrṇam* – coming out of the mouth; *pūtam* – the pure; *hari* – of Hari; *kathā-mṛtam* – the nectarean topics; *śravaṇam* – hearing; *na* – not;

eva – certainly; *kartavyam* – to be done; *sarpa* – of a snake; *ucchiṣṭam* – the remnants; *yathā* – as; *payāḥ* – milk.

The nectarean topics of Śrī Hari are always purifying, but if they emanate from the mouth of a non-Vaiṣṇava, it is prohibited to hear them, for they become as poisonous as the milk touched by the lips of a serpent.

The Bhāgavatam must be heard from a fully-realized Vaiṣṇava

**yāha bhāgavata paḍa vaiṣṇavera sthāne
ekānta āśraya kara caitanya-carāṇe**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (5.131)

yāha – just go; *bhāgavata* – *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *paḍa* – read, study; *vaiṣṇavera sthāne* – in the presence of a self-realized Vaiṣṇava; *ekānta āśraya kara* – take exclusive shelter; *caitanya-carāṇe* – at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

You must study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the presence of a self-realized Vaiṣṇava and take exclusive shelter at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Or: Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara’s highest instruction to all the *jīvas* is: “If you want to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you must approach a *paramahansa* Vaiṣṇava who is exclusively surrendered at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanyacandra. The sole asset of such Vaiṣṇavas is the import of the *Bhāgavatam* as presented by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

Vyāsadeva may or may not know the essence of Bhāgavatam

**ahaṁ vedmi śuko vetti
vyāso vetti na vetti vā
bhaktyā bhāgavataṁ grāhyam
na buddhyā na ca ṭikayā**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (24.313)

aham – I [Lord Śiva]; *vedmi* – know; *śukaḥ* – Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī; *vetti* – knows; *vyāsaḥ* – Vyāsadeva; *vetti* – knows; *na vetti vā* – or may not know; *bhaktyā* – by devotional service; *bhāgavatam* – *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *grāhyam* – to be accepted; *na* – not; *buddhyā* – by intelligence; *na* – nor; *ca* – also; *ṭikayā* – by imaginary commentary.

[*Lord Śiva said:*] “I know and Śukadeva knows the meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, whereas Vyāsadeva may or may not know it. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* can only be known through *bhakti*, not by mundane intelligence or by reading many commentaries.”**

Vedānta-sūtra aphorisms

athāto brahma-jijñāsā

Vedānta-sūtra (1.1.1)

atha – now; *ataḥ* – therefore; *brahma-jijñāsā* – inquire about the Absolute Truth.

Now [that you have a human body] you should inquire into Brahma, the Supreme Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

janmādy asya yataḥ

Vedānta-sūtra (1.1.2);

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.1)

janma – birth or manifestation; *ādi* – beginning with; [*janma-ādi* – creation, maintenance and destruction]; *asya* – of that [all universes, the material world]; *yataḥ* – from whom.

The Absolute Truth is He from whom everything – the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes – emanates. He is the origin of all *rasa*.

śāstra-yonitvāt

Vedānta-sūtra (1.1.3)

śāstra – the scriptures; *yonitvāt* – because of being the origin of all knowledge.

[*The speculations of the logicians are unable to teach us about the Supreme Personality of Godhead:*]

He can only be known by the revelation of the Vedic scriptures.

Or: Because that Supreme is the author of all the scriptures.

ānanda-mayo 'bhyāsāt

Vedānta-sūtra (1.1.12)

ānandamaya – consisting of bliss; *abhyāsāt* – by nature.

By nature, the Supreme Lord is full of unlimited, transcendental bliss. [The bliss of the Lord is due to His pleasure-giving potency.]

tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt

Vedānta-sūtra (2.1.11)

The Absolute Truth can never be established through argument, and logic is not the basis for understanding anything transcendental.

jagad-vyāpāra-varjyam prakaraṇād asannihitavāt

Vedānta-sūtra (4.4.17)

jagat – of the material universe; *vyāpāra* – creation; *varjyam* – except for; *prakaraṇāt* – because of the context; *asannihitavāt* – because he [the *jīva*] is not near to it.

Śāstra states that it is only Bhagavān and not any liberated *jīva* who can perform the activities of creation, maintenance and annihilation. [This establishes the eternal difference between the *jīva* and Īśvara Kṛṣṇa.]

The final aphorism of Vedānta-sūtra

anāvṛttiḥ śabdād anāvṛttiḥ śabdāt

Vedānta-sūtra (4.4.22)

an – without; *āvṛttiḥ* – return; *śabdāt* – because of the scriptures or *hari-kathā*.

By spiritual sound one attains the spiritual world, from which one never returns.

Or: Revelation tells us that we never come back.

Gaura-tattva

For the *śloka*s: *ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas, anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatiṛṇaḥ kalau* and *āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim*, see *Essential Śloka*s.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya praṇāma

**namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (19.53)

namaḥ – obeisances; *mahā-vādanyāya* – unto He who is most munificent; *kṛṣṇa-prema* – ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa; *pradāya* – who bestows; *te* – unto You; *kṛṣṇāya* – unto Kṛṣṇa; *kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne* – named Kṛṣṇa Caitanya; *gaura-tviṣe* – who has the golden lustre [of Śrīmatī Rādhikā]; *namaḥ* – obeisances.

[*His nature is that He is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. His name is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. His form is golden. His quality is that He is the most magnanimous. His pastime is to distribute the highest form of kṛṣṇa-prema, vraja-prema, especially mañjarī-bhāva:*] I offer *praṇāma* unto the most munificent Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Having assumed the golden lustre of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, He is munificently bestowing the rare gift of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari is Kṛṣṇa Himself adorned with the bhāva and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā

**rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir
hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā
deha-bhedam gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakāṣam adhunā
tat-dvayam caikyam āptam
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitam
naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.5)

rādhā – Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *kṛṣṇa* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *praṇaya* – of love; *vikṛtiḥ* – the transformation; *hlādinī-śaktiḥ* – pleasure potency; *asmāt* – from this; *eka-ātmānau* – both the same in identity; *api* – although; *bhuvī* – on earth; *purā* – from beginningless time; *deha-bhedam* – separate forms; *gatau* – obtained; *tau* – those two; *caitanya-ākhyam* – known as Śrī Caitanya; *prakāṣam* – manifest; *adhunā* – now; *tat-dvayam* – the two of Them; *ca* – and; *aikyam* – unity; *āptam* – obtained; *rādhā* – of Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *bhāva* – mood; *dyuti* – the lustre; *su-valitam* – who is adorned with; *naumi* – I offer my obeisances; *kṛṣṇa-svarūpam* – to Him who is identical with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Kṛṣṇa's *hlādinī-śakti* (pleasure giving potency) and the embodiment of the transformation of His *praṇaya* (intimate love). Since They are *eka-ātmāsvarūpa* (one soul), She is intrinsically non-different

from Kṛṣṇa and one in identity with Him. However, to enjoy the transcendental pleasure of Their loving pastimes, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa have eternally manifested Themselves in these two apparently separate forms. Now these two transcendental identities, *sevya* and *sevaka*, *viṣaya-tattva* and *āśraya-tattva*, have manifested in one *svarūpa* as Śrī Caitanya *tattva*. I repeatedly bow down to Śācīnandana, who is the *svarūpa* of Kṛṣṇa and who has appeared with the *bhāva* and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

mahāprabhu śrī-caitanya, rādhā-kṛṣṇa nahe anya

Śrī Guru-paramparā (6),

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

mahāprabhu śrī-caitanya – Caitanya Mahāprabhu; *rādhā-kṛṣṇa* – he combined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; *nahe anya* – none other.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is none other than the combined form of Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The internal and external reasons for Mahāprabhu's appearance

**prema-rasa-niryāsa karite āsvādana
rāga-mārga bhakti loka karite pracāraṇa
rasika-śekhara kṛṣṇa parama-karuṇa
ei dui hetu haite icchāra udgama**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.15–16)

prema-rasa – of the mellow of love of God; *niryāsa* – the essence; *karite* – to do; *āsvādana* – relishing; *rāga-mārga* – the path of spontaneous attraction; *bhakti* – devotional service; *loke* – in the world; *karite* – to do; *pracāraṇa* – propagation. *rasika-śekhara* – the supreme enjoyer of *rasa*; *kṛṣṇa* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *parama-karuṇa* – the supremely merciful; *ei* – these; *dui* – two; *betu* – reasons; *haite* – from; *icchāra* – of desire; *udgama* – the birth.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's desire to appear was born from two reasons: He wanted to relish the sweet essence of *prema-rasa*, and He wanted to propagate devotional service in the world on the platform of spontaneous attraction, *rāga-bhakti*. Thus He is known as the topmost relisher of *rasa* and as supremely merciful.*

*The three internal reasons for Śrī Śacīnandana
Gaurahari's appearance*

**śrī-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā
kīḍṛśo vānayaivā
svādyo yenādbhuta-madhurimā
kīḍṛśo vā maḍīyaḥ
saukhyam cāsyā mad-anubhavataḥ
kīḍṛśam veti lobhāt
tad-bhāvāḍhyaḥ samajani śacī-
garbha-sindhau harīnduḥ**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.6)

śrī-rādhāyāḥ – of Śrī Rādhā; *praṇaya-mahimā* – the greatness of Her love [Her *prema-vaicittya*]; *kīdrśaḥ* – of what kind?; *vā* – or; *anayā* – by this one [Rādhā]; *eva* – alone; *āsvādyāḥ* – to be relished; *yena* – by that love; *adbhuta-madburimā* – the wonderful sweetness; *kīdrśaḥ* – of what kind?; *vā* – or; *madīyāḥ* – My; *saukhyam* – the happiness; *ca* – and; *asyāḥ* – of Her; *mat-anubhavataḥ* – from realization of My [sweetness]; *kīdrśam* – of what kind?; *vā* – or; *iti* – thus; *lobhāt* – because of the greed; *tat* – of Her; *bhāva-ādhyāḥ* – richly endowed with emotions; *samajani* – took birth; *śacī-garbha* – of the womb of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī; *sindhau* – in the ocean; *hari* – Śrī Hari; *induḥ* – the moon.

Desiring to understand the glory of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's love (*praṇaya-mahimā*), the wonderful sweetness in Him that She alone relishes through Her love (*adbhuta-madburimā*), and the happiness (*saukhyam*) She feels when She realizes the sweetness of His love, the Supreme Lord Hari, richly endowed with Her emotions, appeared from the womb of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī, as the moon appears from the ocean.*

Kṛṣṇa appears as Mahāprabhu and performs saṅkīrtana

**kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākṛṣṇam
sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair
yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ
(or) bhajāmi kali-pāvanam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.32)

kṛṣṇa-varṇam – uttering the syllables *kṛṣ-ṇa*; *tviṣā* – with a lustre; *akṛṣṇam* – not black [golden]; *sa-aṅga* – along with associates; *upa-aṅga* – servitors; *astra* – weapons; *pārṣadam* – confidential companions; *yajñaiḥ* – by sacrifice; *saṅkīrtana-prāyaiḥ* – consisting chiefly of congregational chanting; *yajanti* – they worship; *hi* – certainly; *su-medhasaḥ* – intelligent persons.

Or: *bhajami* – I worship; *kali-pāvanam* – He who delivers the *jīvas* of Kali-yuga.

In the age of Kali, Kṛṣṇa appears with a golden complexion (*akṛṣṇa*). He is constantly singing the two syllables *kṛṣ* and *ṇa*, and He is accompanied by His associates, servitors, weapons and confidential companions. Intelligent people worship Him by performing *saṅkīrtana-yajña*.

Or: I worship Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva, who delivers the living entities of Kali-yuga (*kali-pāvanam*) through the congregational chanting of the holy names (*śrī-nāma-saṅkīrtana-yajña*). He describes the name, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; He performs *kīrtana* of the two syllables *kṛṣ* and *ṇa*; His complexion is fair; He is surrounded by His *aṅgas* (associates, like Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Prabhu), *upāṅgas* (servitors, like Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita and other pure devotees) and *pārṣadas* (confidential companions, like Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita and the Six Gosvāmīs); and He is endowed with His weapon (*astra*) of *harināma*, which destroys ignorance.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is outwardly *Gaura*, inwardly *Kṛṣṇa*

**antaḥ kṛṣṇam bahir gauram darśitāṅgādi-vaibhavam
kalau saṅkīrtanādyaiḥ sma kṛṣṇa-caitanyam āśritāḥ**

Tattva-sandarbha (2),

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī

antaḥ – internally; *kṛṣṇam* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *bahiḥ* – externally; *gauram* – fair-coloured; *darśita* – displayed; *aṅga* – limbs; *ādi* – beginning with; *vaibhavam* – expansions; *kalau* – in the Age of Kali; *saṅkīrtana-ādyaiḥ* – by congregational chanting, etc.; *sma* – certainly; *kṛṣṇa-caitanyam* – unto Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; *āśritāḥ* – sheltered.

I take shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is outwardly *gaura*, of fair complexion, but is inwardly Kṛṣṇa Himself. In this Age of Kali He displays His expansions [His associates, servitors and confidential companions, of whom He is the shelter] while performing *saṅkīrtana*.*

**sei rādhāra bhāva lañā caitanyāvatāra
yuga-dharma nāma-prema kaila paracāra**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.220)

sei – that; *rādhāra* – of Śrī Rādhā; *bhāva* – the emotion; *lañā* – taking; *caitanya* – of Lord Caitanya; *avatāra* – the incarnation; *yuga-dharma* – the religion of the age; *nāma-prema* – the holy name and love of Godhead; *kaila* – did; *paracāra* – preaching.

Lord Caitanya appeared with the sentiment of Rādhā. He preached the *dharma* of this age – the chanting of the holy name and pure love of God.

He wove a garland of the holy name and prema, with which He garlanded all jīvas

**sei dvāre ācaṇḍāle kīrtana sañcāre
nāma-prema-mālā gānthi' parāila saṁsāra**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.40)

sei dvāre – by that; *ā-caṇḍāle* – even among the dog-eaters; *kīrtana* – the chanting of the holy names; *sañcāre* – He infuses; *nāma* – of the holy names; *prema* – and of love of God; *mālā* – a garland; *gānthi'* – stringing together; *parāila* – He put it on; *saṁsāre* – the material world.

Thus He spread *kīrtana* among all people, high and low. He strung a garland of *śrī-nāma* and *prema*, with which He garlanded all the *jīvas* of the material world.

Through nāma-saṅkīrtana He distributed the love and affection of the gopīs

**cirād adattaṁ nija-gupta-vittam
sva-prema-nāmāmṛtam aty-udāraḥ
ā-pāmaram yo vitatāra gauraḥ
kṛṣṇo janebhyas tam aham prapadye**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (23.1)

cirāt – for a long time; *adattam* – not given; *nija-gupta-vittam* – His own personal confidential property; *sva-prema* – of love for Him; *nāma* – of the holy name; *amṛtam* – the ambrosia; *ati-udāraḥ* – most munificent; *ā-pāmaram* – even down to the lowest of men; *yaḥ* – one who; *vitatāra* – distributed; *gaurāḥ* – Śrī Gaurasundara; *kṛṣṇaḥ* – Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself; *janebhyāḥ* – to the people in general; *tam* – to Him; *aham* – I; *prapadye* – offer obeisances.

This *prema*, which is the most secret and hidden asset of Goloka Vṛndāvana, had never been given before. Now Kṛṣṇa, in the form of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, distributes this *prema* through the chanting of His holy names to all people, even to the most fallen. Such a wonderfully magnificent, merciful and magnanimous incarnation is Gaura-Kṛṣṇa. I completely surrender unto Him. ***

*One who worships Mahāprabhu automatically worships
Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa*

**ārādhitaṁ nava-vanaṁ vraja-kānanaṁ te
nārādhitaṁ nava-vanaṁ vraja eva dūre
ārādhito dvija-suto vraja-nāgaras te
nārādhito dvija-suto na taveha kṛṣṇaḥ**

*Navadvīpa Śataka (78),
Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī*

ārādhitam – worshipped; *nava-vanam* – Navadvīpa; *vraja-kānanam* – the forest of Vraja; *te* – by you; *na* – not; *ārādhitam* – worshipped; *nava-vanam* – Navadvīpa; *vrajaḥ* – Vraja; *eva* – indeed; *dūre* – far away; *ārādhiṭaḥ* – worshipped; *dvijasutāḥ* – the brāhmaṇa’s son [Lord Caitanya]; *vraja-nāgaraḥ* – the hero of Vraja [Kṛṣṇa]; *te* – by you; *na* – not; *ārādhiṭaḥ* – worshipped; *dvija-sutaḥ* – Lord Caitanya; *na* – not; *tava* – by you; *iha* – here; *kṛṣṇaḥ* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

If you worship Navadvīpa, then you also worship the forest of Vraja. If you don’t worship Navadvīpa, then the forest of Vraja is far away. If you worship Lord Caitanya, then you also worship Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. If you don’t worship Lord Caitanya, then you cannot worship Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Devotion to Gaurāṅga bestows devotion to Śrī Rādhā

**yathā yathā gaura-padāravinde
vindeta bhaktim kṛta-puṇya-rāśiḥ
tathā tathotsarpati hṛdy akasmād
rādhā-padāmbhoja-sudhāmbu-rāśiḥ**

Caitanya-candrāmṛta (88),
Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī

yathā yathā – to the extent; *gaura* – of the golden Lord; *padāravinde* – to the lotus feet; *vindeta* – one experiences; *bhaktim* – devotion; *kṛta-puṇya-rāśiḥ* – having performed heaps of pious deeds; *tathā tathā* – to the same extent; *utsarpati* – arises; *hṛdi* –

in his heart; *akasmād* – causelessly; *rādhā-pada-ambhoja* – of the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *sudhā-ambu-rāśiḥ* – the ocean of nectar.

To the extent that a pious soul attains pure devotion to Gaurāṅga and becomes absorbed in rendering service to His lotus feet, to that extent the nectar ocean of devotional ecstasy flowing from the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhikā gradually arises without any material cause and floods his heart. **

Bhāgavatam identifies Mahāprabhu as Kṛṣṇa Himself

**dhyeyaṁ sadā paribhava-ghnam abhīṣṭa-dohaṁ
tīrthāspadaṁ śiva-viriñci-nutaṁ śaraṇyam
bhṛtyārṭi-haṁ praṇata-pāla bhavābdhi-potaṁ
vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.33)

dhyeyam – to be meditated upon; *sadā* – always; *paribhava-ghnam* – which destroy the humiliation of material existence; *abhīṣṭa-doham* – which amply reward the true desire of the soul; *tīrthāspadam* – the abode of the holy places; *śiva-viriñci-nutam* – which are praised by Śiva and Brahmā; *śaraṇyam* – worthy of taking shelter of; *bhṛtya* – of Your servants; *ārṭi-han* – which destroys the distress; *praṇata-pāla* – O protector of all who bow to you; *bhava-abdhi* – the ocean of birth and death; *potam* – the boat; *vande* – I offer homage; *mahā-puruṣa* – O Lord Mahāprabhu; *te* – to Your; *carāṇa-aravindam* – lotus feet.

O Mahāprabhu! You alone are the Supreme Reality to be constantly meditated upon. O nullifier of the distress of material existence, You fulfil the dearest desires of one's heart. You are the shelter of all holy places and are worshipped by Śiva and Brahmā [Sadāśiva in the form of Śrī Advaita Ācārya and Brahmā in the form of Hāridāsa Ṭhākura]. You are worthy of awarding shelter, You dispell the sufferings of Your devotee, protect all those who bow to You, and Your feet are the boat for crossing the ocean of birth and death. Therefore I worship Your holy lotus feet.

*Renouncing that which was most difficult to give up,
Mahāprabhu accepted sannyāsa in order to benefit all
conditioned souls by freely distributing kṛṣṇa-prema*

**tyaktvā su-dustyaja-surepsita-rājya-lakṣmīm
dharmiṣṭha ārya-vacasā yad agād aranyam
māyā-mṛgaṁ dayitayepsitam anvadhāvad
vande mahā-puruṣa te caraṇāravindam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.34)

tyaktvā – abandoning; *su-dustyaja* – most difficult to give up; *sura-īpsita* – anxiously desired by the demigods; *rājya-lakṣmīm* – the goddess of fortune [Viṣṇupriyā-devī]; *dharmiṣṭhaḥ* – most perfectly fixed in spiritual principles; *yat* – because; *ārya-vacasā* – because of a *brāhmaṇa's* curse [to be deprived of family happiness]; *agāt* – He went; *aranyam* – to the forest [accepted

sannyāsa]; *māyā-mṛgam* – the conditioned soul, who is always searching after illusory enjoyment; *dayitayā* – out of mercy; *īpsitam* – His desired object; *anvadhāvat* – He ran after; *vande* – I offer my homage; *mahā-puruṣa* – O Lord Mahāprabhu; *te* – to Your; *caraṇa-aravindam* – lotus feet.

I worship the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who appeared as a *mahā-puruṣa* (an exalted devotee). In order to keep true the curse of a *brāhmaṇa*, He retired to the forest [accepted *sannyāsa*], and renounced His very life and soul, Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā-devī, who is the manifestation of Śrī Lakṣmī, after whom even great demigods hanker. His compassion has no limit. Bestowing His mercy freely on the fallen souls who are deeply entangled in hankering after the illusory enjoyment of *māyā* [in the form of women, children and wealth], He immerses them in the ocean of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and at the same time He is searching after His own desired object [the *prema* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā].

Evidence from Mahābhārata predicting the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

**suvarṇa-varṇo hemāṅgo varāṅgaś candanāṅgadī
sannyāsa-kṛc chamaḥ śānto niṣṭhā-śānti-parāyaṇaḥ**

Mahābhārata;
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (3.49)

suvarṇa – of gold; *varṇaḥ* – having the colour; *hema-aṅgaḥ* – whose body was like molten gold; *vara-aṅgaḥ* – having a most

beautiful body; *candana-aṅgadī* – whose body was smeared with sandalwood; *sannyāsa-kṛt* – practising the renounced order of life; *śamaḥ* – equipoised; *śāntaḥ* – peaceful; *niṣṭhā* – fixed [in His mission of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*]; *śānti* – and of peace; *parāyaṇaḥ* – the highest resort.

Kṛṣṇa first appears as a *gr̥hastha* with a golden complexion. His limbs are the colour of molten gold, His body is extremely beautiful, He is decorated with sandalwood pulp, and He continuously chants “Kṛṣṇa”. Then He accepts *sannyāsa* and is always equipoised. He is firmly fixed in His mission of propagating *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, He defeats the impersonalist philosophers, who are opposed to *bhakti*, and He is the highest abode of peace and devotion.

Śrī Caitanya-candra praṇāma

**ānanda-līlā-maya-igrahāya
hemābha-divyac-chavi-sundarāya
tasmai mahā-prema-rasa-pradāya
caitanya-candrāya namo namas te**

Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya-khaṇḍa (28.200)

ānanda-līlā-maya – is imbued with blissful pastimes; *igrahāya* – unto He whose form; *hema-abha* – who has a golden complexion; *divyat* – divine; *chavi-sundarāya* – to Him who is sublimely beautiful; *tasmai* – unto Him; *mahāprema-rasa* –

the [munificent] mellows of immense *prema*; *pradāya* – who bestows; *caitanya-candrāya* – unto the moon of Śrī Caitanya-candra; *namaḥ namaḥ* – repeated obeisances; *te* – unto You.

I offer obeisances again and again unto the moon of Śrī Caitanya, whose form is the embodiment of pastimes of bliss, who has a divine golden complexion, who is sublimely beautiful and who munificently bestows the mellows of immense *prema*.

*Mahāprabhu descended to teach the supreme bhakti,
laced with renunciation*

**vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yoga-
śikṣārtham ekaḥ puruṣaḥ purānaḥ
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-śarīra-dhārī
kṛpāmbudhir yas tam ahaṁ prapadye**

Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka (6.74),

Kavi Karṇapūra;

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (6.254)

vairāgya – detachment from everything that does not help develop Kṛṣṇa consciousness; *vidyā* – knowledge; *nija* – own; *bhakti-yoga* – devotional service; *śikṣā-artham* – just to instruct; *ekaḥ* – the single person; *puruṣaḥ* – the Supreme Person; *purānaḥ* – very old, or eternal; *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya* – of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu; *śarīra-dhārī* – accepting the body; *kṛpā-ambudhiḥ* – the ocean of transcendental mercy; *yaḥ* – who; *tam* – unto Him; *ahaṁ* – I; *prapadye* – surrender.

Let me take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who has descended in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach us real knowledge, His devotional service and detachment from whatever does not foster Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He has descended because He is an ocean of transcendental mercy. Let me surrender unto His lotus feet.*

Vijñapti

**saṁsāra-duḥkha-jaladhau patitasya kāma-
krodhādi-nakra-makaraiḥ kavalī-kṛtasya
durvāsanā-nigaḍitasya nirāśrayasya
caitanya-candra mama dehi padāvalambam**

Caitanya-candrāmṛta (54),
Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī

saṁsāra – of repeated birth and death; *duḥkha* – of the sufferings; *jaladhau* – in the ocean; *patitasya* – fallen; *kāma* – lust; *krodha* – and anger; *ādi* – beginning; *nakra* – crocodiles; *makaraiḥ* – and sharks; *kavalī* – a mouthful; *kṛtasya* – being made; *durvāsanā* – by wicked desires; *nigaḍitasya* – chained; *nirāśrayasya* – without any shelter; *caitanya-candra* – of the moon-like Śrī Caitanya; *mama* – to me; *dehi* – please give; *padā* – of Your feet; *avalambam* – the shelter.

O Caitanya-candra, I have fallen into an ocean of misery where I have been made a mouthful for the crocodiles and sharks

of lust, anger and so forth. Kindly give this destitute person, chained to wicked desires, the shelter of Your lotus feet.

“O Caitanya-candra, make this unfortunate person drink the nectar emanating from Your feet”

**caitanya-candra mama hṛt-kumudaṁ vikāśya
hṛdyam vidhehi nija-cintana-bhṛṅga-raṅgaiḥ
kiñcāparādha-timiram niviḍam vidhūya
pādāmṛtam sadaya pāyaya durgataṁ me**

*Stavāvalī, Abhīṣṭa-sūcanam (11),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī*

caitanya-candra – O moon of Lord Caitanya; *mama* – of me; *hṛt* – of the heart; *kumudam* – the lotus; *vikāśya* – causing to blossom; *hṛdyam* – charming; *vidhehi* – please place; *nija* – own; *cintana* – thoughts; *bhṛṅga* – of the bumblebee; *raṅgaiḥ* – with the delight; *kiñca* – furthermore; *aparādha* – of offences; *timiram* – the darkness; *niviḍam* – thick; *vidhūya* – cleansing away; *pāda* – of the feet; *amṛtam* – the nectar; *sa* – with; *dayā* – kindness; *pāyaya* – please cause to drink; *durgatam* – impious; *me* – me.

O Caitanya-candra, please make the charming lotus flower of my heart bloom by delightful bee-like thoughts of Yourself, thus cleansing away the dense darkness of my offences. Mercifully make this unfortunate person drink the nectar emanating from Your feet.

Kṛṣṇa-tattva

For the *śloka*: **vadanti tat tattva-vidas**, see *Essential Ślokas*.

Only Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān – The Supreme Truth

ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.28)

ete – all these; *ca* – and; *aṁśa* – plenary portions; *kalāḥ* – portions of the plenary portions; *puṁsaḥ* – of the Supreme Person; *kṛṣṇaḥ* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *tu* – but; *bhagavān* – [is] the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *svayam* – Himself, in person.

All *avatāras* such as Śrī Rāmacandra and Nṛsiṁhadeva are the plenary portions, or expansions of the plenary portions, of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. However, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Svayam Bhagavān, the embodiment of six opulences and the original fountainhead of everything.

The one Absolute Truth manifests Himself in three features

advaya-jñāna tattva-vastu kṛṣṇera svarūpa

brahma, ātmā, bhagavān—tina tānra rūpa

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (2.65)

advaya-jñāna – knowledge without duality; *tattva-vastu* – the Absolute Truth; *kṛṣṇera* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *sva-rūpa* – own

nature; *brahma* – *brahma*; *ātmā* – Paramātmā; *bhagavān* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *tina* – three; *tānra* – of Him; *rūpa* – forms.

Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself is the one undivided Absolute Truth, the Ultimate Reality. He manifests Himself in three features – as *brahma*, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the origin of all and the cause of all causes

**īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam**

Brahma-saṁhitā (5.1)

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ – the Supreme Controller, the Controller of all controllers; *kṛṣṇaḥ* – Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa; *sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ* – His form is composed of eternal existence, cognizans and bliss (*sandhinī*, *saṁvit* and *blādinī*); *anādir* – He has no beginning; *ādir* – the origin of all else; *go-vindaḥ* – He gives delight to the cows, the land and the senses, and He is the presiding Deity of the functional process of devotional service (*abhidheya-tattva*); *sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam* – the primary cause of all causes.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, is the embodiment of eternity, knowledge and bliss. He is the Supreme Controller. He has no origin, though He is the origin of all and the cause of all causes.

The definition of Bhagavān

**aiśvaryasya samagrasya vīryasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ
jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva ṣaṅṅām bhagam itīṅgaṇā**

Viṣṇu Purana (6.5.47)

aiśvaryasya – of opulence or wealth; *samagrasya* – in full; *vīryasya* – of strength or potency; *yaśasaḥ* – of fame; *śriyaḥ* – of beauty; *jñāna* – of knowledge; *vairāgyayoḥ* – and of renunciation; *ca* – and; *eva* – certainly; *ṣaṅṅām* – of the six; *bhagam* – opulences (or *prema*); *iti* – thus; *iṅgaṇā* – divided.

Bhagavān is defined as He who possesses all opulences in full: complete beauty, fame, wealth, strength, knowledge and renunciation – all these qualities are manifested in Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the fullest, unlimited extent.

Svayam Bhagavān is Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa

**haris tv ekam tattvam vidhi-śiva-sureśa-praṇamitaḥ
yad evedam brahma prakṛti-rahitam tat tv anumahaḥ
parātmā tasyāmśo jagad-aṅu-gato viśva-janakah
sa vai rādhā-kānto nava-jalada-kāntiś cid-udayaḥ**

Daśa-mūla-tattva (2),

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

hariḥ – He who takes away; *tu* – and; *ekam* – only; *tattvam* – truth; *vidhi* – by Lord Brahmā; *śiva* – by Lord Śiva; *sura-īśa* – by Lord Indra, the king of the demigods; *praṇamitaḥ* – offered obeisances; *yat* – who; *eva* – certainly; *idam* – this; *brahma* –

Supreme Brahma; *prakṛti* – of potency; *rabitam* – devoid; *tat* – that; *tv* – but; *anumahaḥ* – the splendour; *para-ātmā* – the Supersoul; *tasya* – of Him; *amśaḥ* – a plenary portion; *jagat* – of the universe; *aṅu-gataḥ* – entered within each atom; *viśva* – of the universe; *janakaḥ* – the father; *saḥ* – He; *vai* – certainly; *rādhā* – of Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *kāntaḥ* – the lover; *nava* – fresh; *jalada* – of a raincloud; *kāntiḥ* – splendour; *cid-udayaḥ* – a spiritual manifestation.

Indeed Śrī Hari, to whom Brahmā, Śiva, Indra and other demigods continuously offer *praṇāma*, is the only Supreme Absolute Truth. *Nirviśeṣa-brahma* (*brahma*) that is devoid of *śakti* is Śrī Hari's bodily effulgence. Mahā-Viṣṇu, who has created the universe and who has entered into it as the indwelling Supersoul of all (Paramātmā), is simply His partial manifestation. That Śrī Hari alone, the very form of transcendental reality [*cit-svarūpa*], whose complexion is the colour of a freshly formed thunder cloud, is Śrī Rādhā-kānta, the lover of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

*Nothing is superior to Kṛṣṇa, everything is dependent
on Him like pearls on a thread*

**mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcid asti dhanañjaya
mayi sarvam idaṁ protaṁ sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva**

Bhagavad-gītā (7.7)

mattaḥ – than Me; *parataram* – greater; *na* – not; *anyat* – else; *kiñcit* – anything; *asti* – exists; *dhanañjaya* – O winner of wealth [Arjuna]; *mayi* – on Me; *sarvam* – all; *idaṁ* – this

material creation; *protam* – is dependent; *sūtre* – on a thread; *maṇi-gaṇāḥ* – jewels; *iva* – as.

O conqueror of riches, Dhanañjaya, there is nothing superior to Me. This whole creation is dependent on Me, like jewels strung on a thread.

Kṛṣṇa is the source of all spiritual and material worlds

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

Bhagavad-gītā (10.8)

aham – I; *sarvasya* – of all creation; *prabhavaḥ* – the source of creation; *mattaḥ* – from Me; *sarvaṁ* – everything; *pravartate* – emanates; *iti* – thus; *matvā* – having comprehended; *bhajante* – worship; *mām* – Me; *budhāḥ* – learned persons; *bhāva-samanvitāḥ* – endowed with transcendental emotion.

I am the source of both mundane and spiritual worlds. Everything emanates from Me. The wise who know this well engage in *bhajana* of Me, with transcendental emotion in their hearts.

Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Master – all others are His servants

**ekale īśvara kṛṣṇa, āra saba bhṛtya
yāre yaiche nācāya, se taiche kare nṛtya**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi-līlā (5.142)

ekale – alone; *īśvara* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *kṛṣṇa* – Kṛṣṇa; *āra* – others; *saba* – all; *bhṛtya* – servants; *yāre* – unto whom; *yaiche* – as; *nācāya* – He causes to dance; *se* – He; *taiche* – in that way; *kare nṛtya* – dances.

Lord Kṛṣṇa alone is the Supreme Controller and all others are His servants. They dance as He makes them do so.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme enjoyer, controller and well-wisher of everyone

**bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām jñātvā mām śāntim ṛchati**

Bhagavad-gītā (5.29)

bhoktāraṁ – the enjoyer; *yajña-tapasām* – of sacrifices and austerities; *sarva-loka* – of all worlds; *mahā-īśvaram* – the Supreme Controller; *suhṛdam* – the friend; *sarva-bhūtānām* – of all living beings; *jñātvā* – having understood; *mām* – Me; *śāntim* – peace [through liberation]; *ṛchati* – attains.

He who knows Me to be the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Controller of all planets and the well-wishing friend of all living entities, attains liberation from bondage to material identification.

Kṛṣṇa is the only enjoyer and master

**aham hi sarva-yajñānām
bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca**

**na tu mām abhijānanti
tattvenātaś cyavanti te**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.24)

abam – I; *hi* – because; *sarva-yajñānām* – of all sacrifices; *bhoktā* – the enjoyer; *ca* – and; *prabhuḥ* – the master; *eva* – indeed; *ca* – and; *na* – do not; *tu* – but; *mām* – Me; *abhijānanti* – recognize; *tattvena* – as I am, in My *svarūpa*; *ataḥ* – therefore; *cyavanti* – they fall down from the path of attaining Me or they wander in the cycle of *saṁsāra*; *te* – they.

I am the only master and enjoyer of all sacrifices, but those who do not recognize My transcendental body fall down and repeatedly wander in the cycle of birth and death.

Kṛṣṇa's birth and activities are transcendental

**janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna**

Bhagavad-gītā (4.9)

janma – birth; *karma* – activities; *ca* – and; *me* – My; *divyam* – transcendental; *evam* – thus; *yaḥ* – who; *vetti* – knows; *tattvataḥ* – in truth; *tyaktvā* – having given up; *deham* – the present body; *punaḥ* – again; *janma* – birth; *na eti* – does not accept; *mām* – Me; *eti* – attains; *saḥ* – he; *arjuna* – O Arjuna.

O Arjuna, My birth and activities are transcendental. One who knows this in truth does not take another birth after giving up the present body; rather he assuredly attains Me.

Kṛṣṇa is everyone's maintainer and provider

**nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān**

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.2.13)

nityaḥ – the singular eternal; *nityānām* – of the plural eternal; *cetanaḥ* – the singular conscious being; *cetanānām* – of the plural conscious beings; *ekaḥ* – that one; *bahūnām* – of the many; *yaḥ* – He who; *vidadhāti* – supplies; *kāmān* – all desires or necessities of life.

He is the chief eternal Being among all eternal beings and the Supreme conscious Being among all conscious beings. That one Supreme fulfils the desires of all the others and provides them with everything they need.

Kṛṣṇa is the source of all knowledge and the only object of spiritual knowledge

**sarvasya cāham ḥṛdi sanniviṣṭo
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanañ ca
vedaīś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo
vedānta-kṛd veda-vid eva cāham**

Bhagavad-gītā (15.15)

sarvasya – of all [living beings]; *ca* – and; *aham* – I; *hṛdi* – in the hearts; *sanniviṣṭaḥ* – [situated] as the indwelling witness; *mattaḥ* – from Me; *smṛtiḥ* – remembrance; *jñānam* – knowledge; *apohanam* – forgetfulness, the destroyer [of the other two]; *ca* – and; *vedaibḥ* – by the Vedas; *ca* – and; *sarvaiḥ* – by all; *aham* – I; *eva* – only; *vedyaḥ* – am to be known; *vedānta-kr̥t* – the compiler of the Vedānta; *veda-vit* – one who knows the Vedas; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *aham* – I.

I am situated as the indwelling Supersoul in the hearts of all living entities. From Me come remembrance, knowledge and the destruction of both. By all the Vedas I alone am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of Vedānta and the knower of the Vedas.

Kṛṣṇa is the source of the impersonal brahma

**brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham amṛtasyāvyayasya ca
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya sukhasyaikāntikasya ca**

Bhagavad-gītā (14.27)

brahmaṇaḥ – of that *nirviṣeṣa-brahma*; *hi* – because; *pratiṣṭhā* – the shelter; *aham* – I am; *amṛtasya* – of liberation; *avyayasya* – of the everlasting; *ca* – and; *śāśvatasya* – of the eternal; *ca* – and; *dharmasya* – of *sanātana-dharma*, the eternal spiritual nature; *sukhasya* – of the happiness of *prema*; *eka-antikasya* – of exclusive, one-pointed devotion to Me; *ca* – and.

I alone am the basis of that undifferentiated, impersonal *brahma* and the sole refuge of everlasting immortality,

eternal *dharmā* and the transcendental bliss of *prema* arising from one-pointed, pure devotion.

Brahmā offers Kṛṣṇa the following glorification

**naumīḍya te 'bhra-vapuṣe taḍid-ambarāya
guñjāvataṁsa-paripiccha-lasan-mukhāya
vanya-sraje kavala-vetra-viṣāṇa-veṇu
lakṣma-śriye mṛdu-pade paśupāṅgajāya**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.1)

naumi – I offer praise; *īḍya* – O most worshipable one, my Iṣṭadeva; *te* – unto You; *abhra* – like a dark cloud; *vapuṣe* – whose body; *taḍit* – like lightning; *ambarāya* – whose garment; *guñjā* – made of small *guñjā* berries [*guñjā* berries indicate Rādhikā]; *avataṁsa* – with ornaments [for the ears]; *paripiccha* – and peacock feathers; *lasat* – resplendent; *mukhāya* – whose face; *vanya-sraje* – wearing garlands of forest flowers; *kavala* – a morsel of food; *vetra* – a stick; *viṣāṇa* – a buffalo horn; *veṇu* – and a flute; *lakṣma* – markings; *śriye* – beauty; *mṛdu* – soft; *pade* – whose feet; *paśu-pa* – of the cowherd; *aṅga-jāya* – unto the son.

O Master, in the entire universe, only You are worthy of being praised. O Vrajendra-nandana, son of the King of Vraja, Your body, appearing like a fresh rain-cloud, is adorned with a yellow cloth that glistens like lightening and appears amazingly brilliant. Because You are wearing *makara* [dolphin]-shaped earrings and a peacock feather

on Your head, Your lotus face radiates an uncommon splendour. Around Your neck is a garland made of innumerable kinds of forest flowers and leaves. Tucked under Your arm are a herding stick and a buffalo horn. Your flute, which is tied by Your waist-belt, looks very beautiful. In Your lovely, soft hands is a morsel of yoghurt and rice. Even You are attracted by this cowherd boy attire of Yours. I simply fall to the ground like a stick again and again at Your feet, which are softer than lotuses and which are marked with all the auspicious signs.

The Dvija-patnīs of Mathurā describe Kṛṣṇa's beauty

**śyāmaṁ hiranya-paridhiṁ vanamālya-barha
dhātu-pravāla-naṭa-veṣam anuvratāmse
vinyasta-hastam itareṇa dhunānam abjaṁ
karṇotpalālaka-kapola-mukhābja-hāsam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.23.22)

śyāmam – dark blue in complexion; *hiranya* – golden; *paridhiṁ* – whose garment; *vana-mālya* – with a forest garland; *barha* – peacock feather; *dhātu* – coloured minerals; *pravāla* – and sprigs of buds; *naṭa* – like a dancer upon the stage; *veṣam* – dressed; *anuvrata* – of a friend; *amse* – upon the shoulder; *vinyasta* – placed; *hastam* – His hand; *itareṇa* – with the other; *dhunānam* – twirling; *abjam* – a lotus; *karṇa* – upon His ears; *utpala* – lilies; *alaka-kapola* – with black hair extending over His cheeks; *mukha-abja* – upon His lotus-like face; *hāsam* – having a smile.

Kṛṣṇa's complexion is a blackish-blue hue like a waterladen raincloud, and His splendid cloth appears like a flash of lightning. Cresting His head is a peacock feather, and each limb of His body is decorated with exquisite patterns of paint made from coloured forest minerals. Sprigs of new leaves and blossoms adorn His body and upon His neck an enchanting forest-flower garland of five colours hangs. Attired in this way like a dramatic dancer, He rests one hand on His friend's shoulder, and with the other twirls a pastime lotus. Lilies grace His ears, curly locks of hair splash against His cheeks and His lotus face blossoms with a gentle smile.

Seeing Kṛṣṇa with the eyes of love, the gopīs describe His beauty

**barhāpīḍam̐ naṭa-vara-vapuḥ
 karṇayoḥ karṇikāram̐
 bibhrad vāsaḥ kanaka-kapiśam̐
 vajjayantīm̐ ca mālām̐
 randhrān veṇor adhara-sudhayā-
 pūrayan gopa-vṛndair
 vṛndāraṇyam̐ sva-pada ramaṇam̐
 prāviśad gīta-kīrtiḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.5) (Veṇu-gīta 5)

barha – a peacock feather; *āpīḍam* – wearing a flower crown; *naṭa-vara* – askillful dancer; *vapuḥ* – the body; *karṇayoḥ* – on

the ears; *karṇikāram* – yellow kanera flower; *bibhrat* – wearing; *vāsaḥ* – garments; *kanaka-kapiśam* – gold-yellow; *vaijayantīm* – a victory garland [made with five kinds of forest flowers, extending down to the knees]; *ca* – and; *mālām* – the garland; *randhrān* – the holes; *veṇoḥ* – of the flute; *adhara* – of His lips; *sudhaya* – with the nectar; *āpūrayan* – filling up; *gopavṛndaiḥ* – with the cowherd boys; *vṛndā-aranyam* – the forest of Vṛndāvana [presided over by Vṛndā-devī]; *sva-pada* – by the touch of His lotus feet; *ramaṇam* – enchanted; *prāviśat* – He entered; *gīta* – singing; *kīrtiḥ* – His glories.

Śyāmasundara is entering the forest of Vṛndāvana accompanied by His cowherd boyfriends. He wears a peacock feather in His turban, a yellow *karṇikāra* flower on His ears, a yellow-gold garment and a victory garland strung with five kinds of fragrant forest flowers. Thus He displays His form as the greatest of dancers. The nectar of His lips flows through the holes of the flute [and thus the glorious vibrations of His flute-song echo throughout the forest groves]. Singing His glories, the cowherd boys follow from behind. In this way, Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma [which is more charming than Vaikuṅṭha], becomes delighted by the touch of His lotus feet.

Kṛṣṇa's beauty is the sweetest when He is together with the gopīs, appearing as the Cupid of all cupids

**tāsām āvirabhūc chauriḥ
smayamāna-mukhāmbujaḥ**

pītāmbara-dharaḥ sragvī
sākṣān manmatha-manmathaḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.2)

tāsām – before them; *āvirabhūt* – He appeared; *śauriḥ* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the hero; *smayamāna* – smiling; *mukha* – His face; *ambujaḥ* – lotus-like; *pīta* – yellow; *ambara* – a garment; *dharaḥ* – wearing; *sragvī* – wearing a flower garland; *sākṣāt* – directly; *man-matha* – of Cupid, who bewilders the mind; *man* – of the mind; *mathaḥ* – the bewilderer.

Just then, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the crest-jewel of the Śūra dynasty, appeared before the weeping *vraja-devīs*. A gentle smile blossomed on His face. He had adorned His neck with a forest garland and His body with a yellow garment. The beauty of such a form bewilders the mind of even Cupid himself, who agitates the minds of all beings.

Kṛṣṇa is so merciful that He awards a divine destination even to His enemies

aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭam
jighāmsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatiṁ dhātry-ucitām tato 'nyam
kaṁ vā dayālurṁ śaraṇam vrajema

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.2.23)

aho – how wonderful; *bakī* – Pūtānā, the sister of Bakāsura; *yaṁ* – whom; *stana* – on the two breasts; *kāla-kūṭam* – the

deadly poison; *jīghāmsayā* – with a desire to kill; *apāyayat* – forced to drink; *api* – although; *asādhvī* – evil woman; *lebhe* – achieved; *gatim* – the destination; *dhātrī* – for a nurse; *ucitām* – suitable; *tataḥ* – than Him; *anyam* – other; *kam* – to whom; *vā* – or; *dayālum* – merciful; *śaraṇam* – shelter; *vrajema* – I shall take.

How astonishing! When Pūtana, the wicked sister of Bakāsura, tried to kill child Kṛṣṇa by offering Him deadly poison on her breast, He bestowed upon her the position of His nursemaid. Could I ever have as merciful a shelter as that of Lord Kṛṣṇa? **

The Vrajavāsīs are so fortunate that the Absolute Truth has become their friend

**aho bhāgyam aho bhāgyam
nanda-gopa-vrajaukasām
yan-mitram paramānandam
pūrṇam brahma sanātanam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.32)

aho – what great; *bhāgyam* – fortune; *aho* – what great; *bhāgyam* – fortune; *nanda* – of Mahārāja Nanda; *gopa* – of the other cowherd men; *vraja-okasām* – of the inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi; *yat* – of whom; *mitram* – the friend; *paramānandam* – the supreme bliss; *pūrṇam* – complete; *brahma* – the Absolute Truth; *sanātanam* – eternal.

How greatly fortunate are Nanda Mahārāja, the cowherd men and all the other inhabitants of Vrajabhūmi! There is no limit to their good fortune, because the Absolute Truth, the source of transcendental bliss, the eternal Supreme Brahma, has become their friend.

The fortune of Mother Yaśodā and Nanda Bābā

**nandaḥ kim akarot brahman
śreya evaṁ mahodayam
yaśodā ca mahā-bhāgā
papau yasyāḥ stanam hariḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.8.46)

nandaḥ – Mahārāja Nanda; *kim* – what?; *akarot* – performed; *brahman* – O learned *brāhmaṇa*; *śreyaḥ* – auspicious activities [penances and austerities]; *evaṁ* – thus; *mahā-udayam* – great display; *yaśodā* – Mother Yaśodā; *ca* – also; *mahābhāgā* – most fortunate; *papau* – sucked; *yasyāḥ* – of whose; *stanam* – breast; *hariḥ* – Śrī Hari.

What great auspicious activities did Nanda Bābā perform? And what did Yaśodā-māiyā do that Śrī Hari sucked the milk of her breasts?

Let me worship him in whose courtyard the Absolute Truth is crawling on His knees

**śrutim apare smṛtim itare
bhāratam anye bhajantu bhava-bhītāḥ**

**aham iha nandaṁ vande
yasyālinde paraṁ brahma**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (19.96)

śrutim – Vedic literature; *apare* – someone; *smṛtim* – corollary to the Vedic literature; *itare* – others; *bhāratam* – the *Mahābhārata*; *anye* – still others; *bhajantu* – let them worship; *bhava-bhītāḥ* – those who are afraid of material existence; *aham* – I; *iha* – in this world; *nandaṁ* – Mahārāja Nanda; *vande* – pray; *yasya* – whose; *alinde* – in the courtyard; *param brahma* – Parabrahma, the Supreme Absolute Truth.

[*Raghupati Upādhyāya recited:*] “In a world frightened by birth and death, some people take shelter of the *śrutis*, some of the *smṛtis* and some of the *Mahābhārata*. But I pray to Śrī Nandarāya, in whose courtyard Parabrahma is playing as a child.”

Kṛṣṇa never leaves Vṛndāvana

vṛndāvanam parityajya padam ekam na gacchati

*Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta (1.1.21),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

vṛndāvanam – Vṛndāvana; *parityajya* – giving up; *padam* – a step; *ekam* – even one; *na* – not; *gacchati* – goes.

Kṛṣṇa never takes even a step out of Vṛndāvana.

One can only understand Kṛṣṇa by His mercy

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.29)

atha – therefore; *api* – indeed; *te* – Your; *deva* – my Lord; *pada-ambuja-dvaya* – of the two lotus feet; *prasāda* – of the mercy; *leśa* – by only a trace; *anugṛhītaḥ* – favoured; *eva* – certainly; *hi* – indeed; *jānāti* – one knows; *tattvaṁ* – the truth; *bhagavat* – of the all-opulent Supreme Lord; *mahimnaḥ* – the glory; *na* – never; *ca* – and; *anyaḥ* – another; *ekaḥ* – one; *api* – although; *ciraṁ* – for a long period; *vicinvan* – speculating.

[*Lord Brahmā said:*] “Therefore, O Bhagavān, You manifest Yourself in the hearts of Your devotees, who have received merely a slight trace of the mercy of Your lotus feet. Thus they become blessed and are the only ones who can understand the *tattva* of the glory of Your transcendental form, composed of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Even after long-term enthusiastic endeavour in practices such as *jñāna* and *vairāgya* (knowledge and renunciation), a person can never actually know Your glories.”

“Fools deride Me when I descend in the human form”

**avajānanti mām mūdḥā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam
param bhāvam ajānanto mama bhūta-maheśvaram**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.11)

avajānanti – show disrespect [due to their illusioned intelligence]; *mām* – to Me; *mūdḥā* – those without discrimination; *mānuṣīm* – in a human-like; *tanum* – form; *āśritam* – who has taken shelter; *param* – supreme; *bhāvam* – nature; *ajānantaḥ* – not knowing; *mama* – of My; *bhūta* – of all beings; *mahā-īśvaram* – the great Lord.

Fools whose intelligence is bewildered by illusion disrespect Me when I appear in a human-like form, being unaware of My supreme nature as the Lord of all beings.

“I do not manifest My personal form to the foolish”

**nāham prakāśaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛtaḥ
mūdho 'yam nābhijānāti loko mām ajam avyayam**

Bhagavad-gītā (7.25)

na – not; *aham* – I; *prakāśaḥ* – revealed; *sarvasya* – to all; *yogamāyā* – by My internal potency; *samāvṛtaḥ* – covered; *mūdhaḥ* – foolish; *ayam* – these; *na abhijānāti* – do not comprehend; *lokaḥ* – people; *mām* – Me; *ajam* – the unborn; *avyayam* – and imperishable.

I am not manifest to all. To the foolish I am veiled by My *yogamāyā* potency; therefore, they do not know My unborn and imperishable *svarūpa*.

Even though Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān, He is attracted by the gopīs' love and performs the rāsa dance

**bhagavān api tā rātrīḥ śāradaṭphulla-mallikāḥ
vīkṣya rantum manaś cakre yoga-māyām upāśritaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.1)

bhagavān – Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *api* – although; *tāḥ* – those; *rātrīḥ* – nights; *śārada* – of autumn; *utphulla* – blossoming; *mallikāḥ* – the jasmine flowers; *vīkṣya* – seeing; *rantum* – to enjoy love; *manaś cakre* – He made up His mind; *yogamāyām* – His spiritual potency that makes the impossible possible; *upāśritaḥ* – resorting to.

[Śrī Bādarāyaṇi said:] “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, full in all opulences, yet upon seeing those autumn nights scented with blossoming jasmine flowers, He turned His mind toward loving affairs. To fulfill His purposes He employed His internal potency.”*

Rādhā-tattva

For the *śloka*: *rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir*, see *Gaura-tattva*.

*She is the be-all and end-all of Govinda and
the crest jewel of all His consorts*

**govindānandinī rādhā, govinda-mohinī
govinda-sarvasva, sarva-kāntā-śiromaṇi**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.82)

govindānandinī – She who gives pleasure to Govinda; *rādhā* – Śrī Rādhā; *govinda-mohinī* – She who mystifies Govinda; *govinda-sarvasva* – the be-all and end-all of Lord Govinda; *sarvakāntā* – of all the Lord’s lovers; *śiro-maṇi* – the crown jewel.

Śrī Rādhā gives pleasure to Govinda. She is His enchantress, His all-in-all and the crown jewel of all His sweethearts.

She is the Goddess of He who is the God of the entire creation

**jagat-mohana kṛṣṇa, tāñhāra mohinī
ataeva samastera parā ṭhākuraṇī**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.95)

jagat-mohana – enchanting the universe; *kṛṣṇa* – Lord Kṛṣṇa; *tāñhāra* – of Him; *mohinī* – the enchantress; *ataeva* – therefore; *samastera* – of all; *parā* – foremost; *ṭhākuraṇī* – goddess.

That very Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who attracts the entire universe with His beauty, qualities, pastimes, nature, opulence, sweetness and other aspects, is Himself attracted and rendered helpless by the unparalleled and unsurpassed love of Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is the most supremely accomplished of all in the art of love and affection, who is the embodiment of *mahābhāva* and who is extremely dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, She is the Goddess of He who is the God of the entire creation. Therefore She is all-in-all.

Śrī Rādhikā is the topmost worshipper, who completely controls Kṛṣṇa by Her love

**devī kṛṣṇa-mayī proktā rādhikā para-devatā
sarva-lakṣmīmayī sarva-kāntiḥ sammohinī parā**

*Bṛhad-gautamīya-tantra;
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.83)*

devī – self-effulgent, brilliantly shining, the pleasure abode of Kṛṣṇa’s love; *kṛṣṇa-mayī* – nondifferent from Lord Kṛṣṇa, always absorbed in Him; *proktā* – called; *rādhikā* – the best worshipper, the best in fulfilling Kṛṣṇa’s desires, whose life and soul is to give pleasure to Kṛṣṇa [*rādh* – to worship, to give pleasure; *adhika* – topmost]; *para-devatā* – Supreme Goddess [*āśraya-bhagavān*], supremely worshipable, She who manifests all of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, who is capable of completely controlling Kṛṣṇa by Her love and who protects, maintains and nourishes

Kṛṣṇa; *sarva-lakṣmīmayī* – the shelter of all the goddesses of fortune, the source of all opulences and all sweetness; *sarva-kāntiḥ* – in whom all beauty and splendour exists; *sammohinī* – who completely bewilders Kṛṣṇa and subdues Him by Her qualities and loving service; *parā* – the superior energy.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the Supreme Goddess (*para-devatā*), the exclusive abode of Kṛṣṇa's playful pastimes, the illustrious enactress of amorous *līlā* (*devī*) and the shelter of all goddesses of fortune (*Mahā-Lakṣmī*). She is superlatively beautiful. Her whole being is nothing but Kṛṣṇa, and She is incessantly absorbed in Kṛṣṇa. She is the embodiment of all splendour, and is the enchantress of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart.

The key Bhāgavatam śloka glorifying Śrīmatī Rādhikā

**anayārādhito nūnaṁ bhagavān harir īśvaraḥ
yan no vihāya govindaḥ prīto yām anayat rahaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.30.28)

anayā – by this one; *ārādhitaḥ* – worshipped; *nūnaṁ* – certainly; *bhagavān* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *hariḥ* – Lord Kṛṣṇa; *īśvaraḥ* – the Supreme Lord; *yat* – because; *naḥ* – us; *vihāya* – leaving aside; *govindaḥ* – Govinda; *prītaḥ* – pleased; *yām* – whom; *anayat* – lead; *rahaḥ* – to a lonely place.

[*The gopīs said:*] “O *sakṣīs!* Śrīmatī Rādhikā is much more fortunate than all of us! She has surely performed the highest

ārādhana of Bhagavān Śrī Hari; thus She has received the name ‘Rādhikā’. That is why, being very much pleased with Her, Govinda left us in the *rāsa-sthālī* and went off with Her to a solitary place.”

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “The hidden meaning of this verse is that Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is indicated here by the word *ārādhita*, is the topmost *gopī* beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, being the very crown jewel of devotion.”

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the topmost beloved of Kṛṣṇa

**yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇoḥ
tasyāḥ kuṇḍam priyam tathā
sarva-gopīṣu saivaikā
viṣṇor atyanta-vallabhā**

*Padma Purāṇa;
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.215)*

yathā – just as; *rādhā* – Śrī Rādhā; *priyā* – very dear; *viṣṇoḥ* – of Viṣṇu [Kṛṣṇa who expands Himself into millions of forms in the *rāsa* dance]; *tasyāḥ* – Her; *kuṇḍam* – bathing pond; *priyam* – very dear; *tathā* – so also; *sarva-gopīṣu* – among all the *gopīs*; *sā* – She; *eva* – certainly; *ekā* – alone; *viṣṇoḥ* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *atyanta-vallabhā* – most dear.

Just as Śrī Rādhā is most dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Her lake, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, is also exceedingly dear to Him. Among all the *gopīs*, Śrī Rādhā is Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra’s most dearly beloved.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā's prema is Kṛṣṇa's guru

**rādhikāra prema—guru, āmi—śiṣya naṭa
sadā āmā nānā nṛtye nācāya udbhaṭa**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.124)

rādhikāra – of Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *prema* – the love; *guru* – teacher; *āmi* – I; *śiṣya naṭa* – dancing disciple; *sadā* – always; *āmā* – Me; *nānā* – various; *nṛtye* – in dances; *nācāya* – causes to dance; *udbhaṭa* – novel.

The *prema* of Rādhikā is My *guru* and I am Her dancing pupil. Her *prema* makes Me dance various novel dances.*

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the epitome of transcendental rasa

**ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhiḥ
tābhir ya eva nija-rūpatayā kalābhiḥ
goloka eva nivasaty akhilātma-bhūto
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi**

Brahma-saṁhitā (5.37)

ānanda – with bliss; *cit* – and knowledge; *maya* – imbued; *rasa* – with Her relishable mellows; *prati* – at every second; *bhāvitābhiḥ* – who are saturated with [love for Kṛṣṇa]; *tābhiḥ* – with those; *yaḥ* – who; *eva* – certainly; *nija-rūpatayā* – with His own feminine form; *kalābhiḥ* – who are expansions of Her qualities; *goloke* – in Goloka Vṛndāvana; *eva* – certainly; *nivasati* – He resides; *akhilā-ātma* – as the soul of all; *bhūtaḥ* – who exists; *govindam* – Śrī Govinda; *ādi-puruṣam* – the original personality; *tam* – Him; *aham* – I; *bhajāmi* – worship.

Śrī Govinda resides in His Goloka-dhāma along with Śrī Rādhā, who is the embodiment of His pleasure potency and the counterpart of His own spiritual form. She is the epitome of transcendental *rasa*. They are accompanied by the *sakhīs*, who are expansions of Śrī Rādhā's own transcendental qualities and who are infused with blissful, spiritual *rasa*. I worship that original personality, Śrī Govinda.

The essence of prema is mahābhāva

**hlādinīra sāra 'prema', prema-sāra 'bhāva'
bhāvera parama-kāṣṭhā, nāma—'mahā-bhāva'**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.68)

hlādinīra – of the pleasure potency; *sāra* – the essence; *prema* – love for God; *prema-sāra* – the essence of such love; *bhāva* – emotion; *bhāvera* – of emotion; *parama-kāṣṭhā* – the highest limit; *nāma* – named; *mahā-bhāva* – *mahābhāva*.

The essence of the *hlādinī* potency is love of God, the essence of love of God is emotion [*bhāva*] and the ultimate development of emotion is *mahābhāva*.*

The embodiment of mahābhāva is ŚrīmatīRādhikā

**mahābhāva-svarūpā śrī-rādhā-ṭhākuraṇī
sarva-guṇa-khani kṛṣṇa-kāntā-śiromaṇi**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.69)

mahā-bhāva – of *mahābhāva*; *svarūpā* – the form; *śrī-rādhā-ṭhākurāṇī* – Śrī Rādhā; *sarva-guṇa* – of all good qualities; *khani* – mine; *kṛṣṇa-kāntā* – of the lovers of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *śiromaṇi* – crown jewel.

Śrī Rādhā Ṭhākurāṇī is the embodiment of *mahābhāva*. She is the repository of all good qualities and the crest jewel among all the lovely consorts of Lord Kṛṣṇa.*

Kṛṣṇa is begging for the footdust of Śrīmatī Rādhikā

**smara-garala-khaṇḍanam mama śirasi maṇḍanam
dehi pada-pallavam udāram**

Gīta-govinda (10.8)

smara – of Cupid’s [arrows]; *garala* – [caused by] the poison; *khaṇḍanam* – which will break [the fever]; *mama śirasi* – upon my head; *maṇḍanam* – the ornament; *dehi* – kindly bestow; *pada-pallavam* – blossom-soft feet; *udāram* – [which are embued with] munificence.

O Śrīmatī Rādhikā, I am burning in the fire of Cupid [amorous desire]. Please be merciful to Me and decorate My head with Your munificent lotus feet to relieve Me from this condition.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is praying, ‘Rādhā! My suffering will be vanquished only when You accept me. I am overwhelmed by a *sphūrṭi* of

Your all-conquering qualities, and I pray to You to kindly place Your feet which are soft like freshly sprouted buds upon My head. Your lotus feet are munificent. They fulfil the innermost cherished desires of those who pray to them. They are ornaments because they are red, soft and cool like new petals. If You were to place them upon My head, My head would be decorated and simultaneously the poisonous effect of *kāma* would be counteracted.”

Exclusive attachment to Śrīmatī Rādhikā

ratim gaurī-līle api tapatī saundarya-kiraṇaiḥ

**śacī-lakṣmī-satyāḥ paribhavati saubhāgya-valanaiḥ
vaśī-kāraiś candrāvalī-mukha-navīna-vraja-satīḥ**

kṣipaty ārād yā tām hari-dayita-rādhām bhaja manaḥ

Manaḥ-śikṣā (10),

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

ratim – Rati-devī, Cupid’s consort; *gaurī* – Pārvatī, the consort of Śiva; *līle* – Līlā-devī, Yogamāyā, the pastime potency of Kṛṣṇa; *api* – also; *tapatī* – inflames; *saundarya* – of Her beauty; *kiraṇaiḥ* – by the rays; *śacī* – Śacī devī, Indra’s queen; *lakṣmī* – Lakṣmī devī, consort of Nārāyaṇa; *satyāḥ* – and Satyabhāmā, one of Kṛṣṇa’s chief queens in Dvārakā; *paribhavati* – defeats; *saubhāgya* – of Her good fortune; *valanaiḥ* – by the superabundance; *vaśīkārīḥ* – by Her ability to bring Kṛṣṇa under Her control; *candrāvalī-mukha* – headed by Candrāvalī; *navīna-vraja-satīḥ* – the chaste young girls of Vraja; *kṣipati* – tosses aside; *ārāt* – far away; *yā* – who; *tām* – that; *harī-dayita-*

rādhām – Lord Hari’s beloved, Śrī Rādhā; *bhaja* – worship; *manah* – O mind.

[Without taking shelter of the Lord’s internal potency or svarūpa-śakti – Śrīmatī Rādhikā – one can never obtain the fullest aspect of the Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the possessor of that potency. Therefore, the following statement is expressed:]

O mind! Give up attachment for all others and just worship the most beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who inflames Rati, Gaurī and Līlā by the effulgent rays of Her beauty; who vanquishes Śrī Śacī, Śrī Lakṣmī and Śrī Satyabhāmā by the profusion of Her good fortune; and who dispels the pride of the chaste young girls of Vraja headed by Śrī Candrāvalī by Her ability to bring Śrī Kṛṣṇa under Her control. This Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the most beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Rādhā-dāsyam

Kṛṣṇa begs the mercy of the mañjarīs in order to meet with Śrīmatī Rādhikā

**yat-kiñkarīṣu bahuśaḥ khalu kāku-vāṇī
nityam parasya puruṣasya śikhaṇḍa-mauleḥ
tasyāḥ kadā rasa-nidher vṛṣabhānu-jāyās
tat-keli-kuñja-bhavanāṅgana-marjanī syām**

*Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhiḥ (8),
Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī*

yat-kiñkarīṣu – among whose maidservants; *bahuśaḥ* – many; *khalu* – indeed; *kāku-vāṇī* – plaintive words; *nityam* – always; *parasya* – of the supreme; *puruṣasya* – personality, enjoyer; *śikhaṇḍa-mauleḥ* – who wears a peacock-feather crown; *tasyāḥ* – of Her; *kadā* – when?; *rasa-nidheḥ* – an ocean of nectar; *vṛṣabhānu* – of King Vṛṣabhānu; *jāyāḥ* – of the daughter; *tat-keli* – confidential pastime; *kuñja* – groves; *bhavanā* – abode; *aṅgana* – courtyard; *marjanī* – cleaning; *syām* – I may be.

O Rādhikā! The Supreme Enjoyer who wears a crown of peacock feathers, falls at the feet of Your maidservants and propitiates them with many humble and grief-stricken words to be allowed entrance into Your *kuñja* [where both of You engage in playful amorous pastimes]. Let me become just one stick in the broom used by Your *sakhīs* to clean the *kuñja* of that ocean of *rasa*, the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja.

*A prayer to attain the position of a maidservant
of Śrī Rādhā, who attracts and bewilders the mind
of Śrī Kṛṣṇa*

**veṇum karān nipatitaṁ skhalitaṁ śikhaṇḍam
bhraṣṭam ca pīta-vasanam vraja-rāja-sūnoḥ
yasyāḥ kaṭākṣa-śara-ghāta-vimūrcchitasya
tām rādhikām paricarāmi kadā rasena**

*Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhiḥ (39),
Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī*

veṇum – *veṇu*, one of Kṛṣṇa's flutes; *karāt* – from His hand; *nipatitam* – falling; *skhalitam* – slipping; *śikhaṇḍam* – peacock-feather crown; *bhraṣṭam* – slips off; *ca* – and; *pīta-vasanam* – yellow cloth; *vraja-rāja-sūnoḥ* – the son of the King of Vraja; *yasyāḥ* – of whose; *kaṭa-akṣa* – sidelong glances; *śara* – of the arrows; *ghāta* – by the striking; *vimūrcchitasya* – who faints; *tām* – that; *rādhikām* – of Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *paricarāmi* – will I serve; *kadā* – when; *rasena* – with *rasa*.

When will the time come when I can continuously render service in the *rasa* [of my *svarūpa*] to Śrīmatī Kīśorījī, by whose shower of arrow-like sidelong glances Śrī Nandanandana faints, His flute tumbles from His hands, His crown of peacock feathers falls from His head and His yellow cloth slips from His hips.

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī prays to be solely attached to serving Śrī Rādhā (rādhā-dāsyam)

**pādābjayos tava vinā vara-dāsyam eva
nānyat kadāpi samaye kila devi yāce
sakhyaṅya te mama namo 'stu namo 'stu nityam
dāsyāya te mama raso 'stu raso 'stu satyam**

Vilāpa-kusumāñjaliḥ (16),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

pāda-abjayoḥ – at the lotus feet; *tava* – of You; *vinā* – except; *vara* – excellent; *dāsyam* – service; *eva* – certainly; *na* – not; *anyat* – anything else; *kadā api* – ever; *samaye* – in a solemn covenant; *kila* – certainly; *devi* – O Queen; *yāce* – I beg; *sākhyaṅya* – for friendship; *te* – of You; *mama* – of me; *namaḥ* – obeisances; *astu* – may be; *namaḥ* – obeisances; *astu* – may be; *nityam* – eternally; *dāsyāya* – for service; *te* – of You; *mama* – of me; *rasaḥ* – taste, sentiment of the heart; *astu* – let it be; *rasaḥ* – mellow; *astu* – let it be; *satyam* – in truth.

O Devī Rādhikē! My solemn vow is that I shall never beg for anything except that most exalted direct service to Your lotus feet. I offer *praṇāma* time and again to Your *sakhī*va, a position as Your *sakhī*, but the sentiment of my heart is exclusively for Your *dāsī*va, a position as Your maidservant.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “When he is praying for *dāsī*va, we should understand that this means a position as a *pālya-dāsī* of Rādhikā. It is considered

superior because from this position one can serve Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's intimate pastimes, which even the *sakhīs* cannot. This *śloka* expresses the essence of *rādhā-dāsyam*" (Lecture on *Vilāpa-kusumāñjaliḥ*, February 12, 1992).

*Touched by the breeze coming from Rādhikā, Kṛṣṇa thinks,
"My life has now returned"*

**yasyāḥ kadāpī vasanāñcala-khelanottha-
dhanyāti dhanya-pavanena kṛtārtha-mānī
yogīndra-durgama-gatir madhusūdano 'pi
tasyā namo 'stu vṛṣabhānu-bhuvo diśe 'pi**

Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhiḥ (2),
Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī

yasyāḥ – of whom; *kadāpī* – sometimes; *vasana* – of the garment; *āñcala* – the corner, or hem; *khelana* – playfully; *uttha* – raised; *dhany-ātī-dhanya* – very fortunate and glorious; *pavanena* – by the breeze; *kṛta-ārtha-mānī* – considers meaningful; *yogīndra-durgama-gatiḥ* – the rarely attained goal of even the greatest *yogīs*; *madhu-sūdanaḥ* – Kṛṣṇa, the instigator of honey-like pastimes; *api* – also; *tasyāḥ* – of Her; *namo* – obeisances; *astu* – let it be; *vṛṣabhānu-bhuvaḥ* – of the land of King Vṛṣabhānu; *diśe* – to the direction; *api* – even.

When He feels the occasional waft of the supremely glorious and playful breeze that has raised the hem of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's garment, Madhusūdana Kṛṣṇa, the instigator of honey-flavoured pastimes, whose service is

the rarely attained goal of great *yogīs*, considers that His life has become meaningful. Thus let us bow down even to the direction of the land of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja.

I meditate upon Śrīmatī's footdust; Her unlimited power instantly subdues Kṛṣṇa

**yo brahma-rudra-śuka-nārada-bhīṣma-mukhyair
ālakṣito na sahasā puruṣasya tasya
sadyo vaśī-karaṇa-cūrṇam ananta-śaktim
taṁ rādhikā-caraṇa-reṇum anusmarāmi**

*Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhiḥ (4),
Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī*

yaḥ – those; *brahma-rudra-śuka-nārada-bhīṣma-mukhyair* – headed by Brahmā, Śiva, Śuka, Nārada and Bhīṣma; *ālakṣitaḥ* – seen; *na* – not; *sahasā* – easily; *puruṣasya* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *tasya* – of Him; *sadyaḥ* – instantly; *vaśī-karaṇa* – bringing under control; *cūrṇam* – powder; *ananta-śaktim* – limitless power; *taṁ* – to that; *rādhikā-caraṇa-reṇum* – the dust of Śrī Rādhā's feet; *anusmarāmi* – I meditate.

Following in the footsteps of our previous *ācāryas*, I meditate upon the footdust of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, whose unlimited power instantly controls the Supreme Person Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is not easily seen even by great souls like Brahmā, Śiva, Śukadeva, Nārada Muni and Bhīṣma.

Kṛṣṇa cannot be attained without Śrīmatī Rādhikā's mercy

**anārādhya rādhā-padāmbhoja-reṇum
anāśritya-vṛndāṭavīm tat-padāṅkām
asambhāṣya-tad-bhāva-gambhīra-cittān
kutaḥ śyāma-sindho rasasyāvagāhaḥ**

*Sva-saṅkalpa-prakāśa-stotra (1),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī*

anārādhya – without having worshipped; *rādhā-padāmbhoja* – of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet; *reṇum* – the dust; *anāśritya* – without taking shelter; *vṛndā-āṭavīm* – of the forest of Vṛndāvana; *tat-pada-aṅkam* – which is marked by Her footprints; *asambhāṣya* – without conversing; *tad-bhāva* – into Her ecstatic mood; *gambhīra* – who have gone deeply; *cittān* – to those hearts; *kutaḥ* – how?; *śyāmasindhoḥ* – of the ocean of *śyāma-rasa*, or *mādhurya-rasa*; *rasasya* – of transcendental mellows; *avagāhaḥ* – plunging in the nectar.

How can a person become immersed in the ocean of *śyāma-rasa* [*mādhurya-rasa*] if he has never worshipped the dust of Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet; if he has never taken shelter of Her pastime-place Śrī Vṛndāvana, which is marked with the impressions of Her lotus feet; and if he has never associated with and served the devotees whose hearts are submerged in the ocean of Her profound sentiments? It will never be possible.

*Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī prays for the remnants
of Rūpa Mañjarī's service*

**śrī-rūpa-mañjari-karārcita-pāda-padma
goṣṭhendra-nandana-bhujārpita-mastakāyāḥ
hā modataḥ kanaka-gauri-padāravinda
samvāhanāni śanakais tava kim kariṣye**

*Vilāpa-kusumāñjaliḥ (72),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī*

śrī-rūpa-mañjari – of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī; *kara* – by the hands; *arcita* – worshipped; *pāda* – feet; *padma* – lotus; *goṣṭha-indra* – of the King of Vraja; *nandana* – of the son; *bhujā* – arm; *arpita* – placed; *mastakāyāḥ* – on the head; *hā* – O!; *modataḥ* – out of joy; *kanaka* – gold; *gauri* – fair; *pada-aravinda* – lotus feet; *samvāhanāni* – massaging; *śanakaiḥ* – gently; *tava* – of You; *kim* – whether?; *kariṣye* – I will perform.

O Devī as fair as gold, Your lotus feet are worshipped by Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī's hands as You rest Your head against Kṛṣṇa's arm. When will I receive the remnants of Rūpa Mañjarī's service and joyously and gently massage Your lotus feet?

*“O Rādhike! I am passing my time with the sole hope of
being able to serve You”*

**āsā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sāmpratam hi**

**tvaṁ cet kṛpām mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kiṁ me
prāṇair vrajena ca varoru bakāriṇāpi**

Vilāpa-kusumāñjaliḥ (102),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

āśā-bharaiḥ – with heavy weights of hope; *amṛta* – of nectar; *sindhu* – of the ocean; *mayaiḥ* – consisting; *kathañcit* – somehow; *kālaḥ* – the time; *mayā* – by me; *atigamitaḥ* – has passed by; *kila* – indeed; *sāmpratam* – now; *hi* – indeed; *tvaṁ* – You; *cet* – if; *kṛpām* – mercy; *mayi* – to me; *vidhāsyasi* – will give; *na* – not; *eva* – certainly; *kiṁ* – what is the use?; *me* – to me; *prāṇaiḥ* – of my life; *vrajena* – of Vraja; *ca* – and; *vara-uru* – who possesses beautiful thighs; *baka-ariṇa* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Baka; *api* – even.

O Varoru Rādhā, till now I have been somehow able to pass my time by bearing in my heart the great burdens of my aspiration to render You service, for such aspirations resemble vast oceans of ambrosia. Now, however, if You withhold Your mercy from me, of what value is my life, the land of Vraja, or even Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Baka?

Rādhā's bhāva is reflected in the mañjarīs

**tvaṁ rūpa-mañjari sakhī! prathitā pure 'smin
puṁsaḥ parasya vadaṇāṁ na hi paśyasīti
bimbādhare kṣatam anāgata-bhartṛkāyā
yat te vyadhāyi kim u tac chuka-puṅgavena**

Vilāpa-kusumāñjaliḥ (1),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

tvam – you; *rūpa-mañjari* – O Rūpa Mañjarī; *sakhi* – O friend; *prathitā* – famous; *pure* – in the town; *asmin* – in this; *puṁsaḥ* – of a man; *parasya* – of another; *vadanam* – the face; *na* – not; *hi* – indeed; *paśyasi* – you look upon; *iti* – thus; *bimba* – bimba fruit; *adbare* – lips; *kṣatam* – bitten; *anāgata* – has not arrived; *bharṛkāyāḥ* – of one whose husband; *yat* – which; *te* – of you; *vyadhāyi* – caused; *kim* – what?; *u* – indeed; *tac* – that; *chuka* – parrot; *puṅgavena* – great.

“My dear *sakhī* Rūpa Mañjarī, you are well known in Vraja for not even looking at the face of any man other than your husband. Therefore it is surprising that your lips, crimson like *bimba* fruits, have been bitten, even though your husband has not yet arrived. Has this been done by the best of parrots?”

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “When Kṛṣṇa drinks the nectar of Rādhā’s lips, the resultant *bhāva* is also reflected in the *mañjarīs* who become as if intoxicated.”

Taking shelter of the mañjarīs

tāmbūlarpaṇa-pāda-mardana-
 payodānābhisārādibhir
 vṛndāraṇya-maheśvarīm priyatayā
 yās toṣayanti priyāḥ
 prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhī-kulād api kila-
 asaṅkocitā bhūmikāḥ

kelī-bhūmiṣu rūpa-mañjarī-mukhās tā dāsikāḥ saṁśraye

Vraja-vilāsa-stava (38),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

tāmbūla-arpaṇa – offering betel-nuts; *pāda-mardana* – massaging Her feet; *payah-dāna* – offering [refreshing and fragrant] water; *abbisāra* – by taking Her out to Her rendezvous with Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *ādibbiḥ* – and so forth; *vṛndāranya-maheśvarīm* – to the Queen of Vṛndāvana; *priyatayā* – by their endearing qualities; *yāḥ toṣayanti* – who give pleasure; *priyāḥ* – dearest; *prāṇa-preṣṭha* – headed by Lalitā and Viśākhā; *sakhī-kulāt* – than the group of *sakhīs*; *api* – although; *kila* – indeed; *asaṅkocitāḥ* – [they are] without hesitation; *bhūmikāḥ* – they act as Her chaperones; *kelī-bhūmiṣu* – within the pleasure groves; *rūpa-mañjarī-mukhāḥ* – headed by Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī; *tāḥ dāsikāḥ* – of those servants; *saṁśraye* – I take shelter.

I take shelter of the maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhikā headed by Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. They act as Her beloved chaperones and affectionately satisfy Śrīmatī Rādhikā by their endearing qualities as they render various services such as offering *tāmbūla*, massaging Her feet, bringing Her water and taking Her to Her rendezvous with Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, unlike the *prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhīs*, they can without hesitation perform any service within the pleasure groves.

*Always remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the prāṇa-nātha of
my Svāminī Śrī Rādhikā*

**mad-īśā-nāthatve vraja-vipina-candraṁ vraja-vane
śvarīm tan-nāthatve tad-atula-sakhīve tu lalitām
viśākhām śikṣālī-vitarāṇa-gurutve priya-saro-
girindrau tat-prekṣā-lalita-rati-datve smara manaḥ**

Manaḥ-śikṣā (9),

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

mat-īśā – of my mistress (Śrīmatī Rādhikā); *nāthatve* – as the Lord; *vraja* – of Vraja; *vipina-candram* – the moon of the forests [Śrī Kṛṣṇa]; *vraja* – of Vraja; *vana* – of the forest; *īśvarīm* – the empress [Śrīmatī Rādhikā]; *tan-nāthatve* – as His mistress; *tat* – Her; *atula* – incomparable; *sakhīve* – as the friend; *tu* – and; *lalitām* – Lalitā; *viśākhām* – Viśākhā; *śikṣā* – instruction; *ālī* – to the *gopīs*; *vitaraṇa* – disseminating; *gurutve* – as the *guru*; *priya-saraḥ* – the dearest lake [Rādhā-kuṇḍa]; *giri* – of mountains; *indrau* – the monarch [Govardhana Hill]; *tat* – of the Divine Couple; *prekṣā-lalita* – for the charming vision; *rati* – of attachment; *datve* – as the giver; *smara* – please remember; *manaḥ* – O mind.

*[What should be the mutual relationship between rāgānuga-
bhajana and mādhyura-rasa:]*

O mind! Always remember Vṛndāvana-candra Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the *prāṇa-nātha* of my Svāminī Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Vṛndāvaneśvarī Śrīmatī Rādhikā as His mistress, Śrī Lalitā as the peerless friend of my Svāminī, Śrī Viśākhā as the *śikṣā-guru* in instructing all the *gopīs* in making arrangements

for Śrī Yuga^ś sevā and Rādhā-kunḍa and Girirāja Govardhana as those who grant *darśana* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and bestow sublime *rati* for Their lotus feet.

Prayers for attaining śrī-rādhā-dāsyam

**rādhe vṛndāvanādhīse karuṇāmṛta-vāhini
kṛpayā nija-pādābja-dāsyam mahyam pradīyatām**

Arcana-paddhati

(based on *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*)

rādhe – O Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *vṛndāvana-adhīse* – O Queen of Vṛndāvana; *karuṇā-amṛta* – of the nectar of mercy; *vāhini* – river; *kṛpayā* – please; *nija* – Your own; *pāda-abja* – lotus feet; *dāsyam* – servitorship; *mahyam* – unto me; *pradīyatām* – please give.

O Śrīmatī Rādhikā, O Queen of Vṛndāvana, You are a flowing river of immortal mercy. Please bestow upon me the service of Your lotus feet. **

**bhajāmi rādhām aravinda-netrām
smarāmi rādhām madhura-smitāsyām
vadāmi rādhām karuṇā-bharādrām
tato mamānyāsti gatiṁ na kāpi**

Śrī Stavāvali, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

bhajāmi – I worship; *rādhām* – Śrī Rādhā; *aravinda* – lotus; *netrām* – eyes; *smarāmi* – I remember, contemplate, meditate;

rādhām – Śrī Rādhā; *madhura* – sweet; *smīta* – smile; *asyām* – face; *vadāmi* – I glorify; *rādhām* – Śrī Rādhā; *karuṇā* – of mercy; *bhara* – with an abundance; *arḍrām* – melting; *tataḥ* – other than that; *mama* – for me; *anyā* – another; *asti* – is; *gatiḥ* – goal; *na* – not; *kā-api* – anything else.

I worship Śrī Rādhā who has lotus eyes, I remember Śrī Rādhā whose face sweetly smiles, and I describe the qualities of Śrī Rādhā whose heart is melted with an abundance of compassion. In my life there is no other goal than Her service.

**hā devi kaku-bhara-gadgadayādyā vācā
yāce nipatyā bhuvī daṇḍavad udbhaṭārṭiḥ
asya prasādam abudhasya janasya kṛtvā
gāndharvike nija-gaṇe gaṇanām vidhehi**

Gāndharvā-samprārthanāṣṭakam (2),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

hā devi – O Gāndharvikā-devī; *kaku-bhara* – plaintive cries of distress; *gadgadayā ādyā* – with choked voice and so forth; *vācā* – with words; *yāce* – I beg; *nīpatyā* – falling down; *bhuvī* – on the ground; *daṇḍavat* – like a stick; *udbhaṭa-ārṭiḥ* – being afflicted with extreme distress; *asya* – of this; *prasādam* – mercy; *abudhasya* – unintelligent; *janasya* – person; *kṛtvā* – having bestowed; *gāndharvike* – O Rādhē; *nija-gaṇe* – in Your own *yūtha* (group of cowherd maidens); *gaṇanām vidhehi* – please count [me].

O Devī Gāndharvike! In utter desperation I fall on the ground at Your feet like a stick and with a choked voice I humbly implore You to be merciful to this foolish person and count me as one of Your own.

**tavaivāsmi tavaivāsmi
na jīvāmi tvayā vinā
iti vijñāya rādhe (devi) tvam
naya mām caraṇāntike**

Vilāpa-kusumāñjali (96),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

tava – Yours; *eva* – indeed; *asmi* – I am; *tava* – Yours; *eva* – indeed; *asmi* – I am; *na jīvāmi* – I am unable to live; *tvayā* – You; *vinā* – without; *iti* – thus; *vijñāya* – understanding; *rādhe (devi)* – Śrī Rādhā; *tvam* – You; *naya* – please lead; *mām* – me; *caraṇāntike* – to the tips of Your feet.

I am Yours! I am Yours! I cannot exist without You! O Śrīmatī Rādhikā, please understand this and bring me to the shelter of Your lotus feet.

*O Śyāmasundara! Please make me a maidservant
at the feet of Your beloved*

**śyāmasundara śikhaṇḍa-śekhara
smera-hāsa muralī-manohara**

**rādhikā-rasika mām kṛpā-nidhe
sva-priyā-caraṇa-kiṅkarīm kuru**

Rādhā-Prārthanā (2), Śrī Viṭṭhalācārya

śyāmasundara – O You who have a beautifully blackish-blue hue; *śikhaṇḍa-śekhara* – O best of the ‘peacocks’; *smera-bāsa* – O You whose smile evokes and captivates Cupid; *muralī-manohara* – O You who play enchantingly on Your Muralī flute; *rādhikā-rasika* – O You who are expert in relishing the loving mellows of Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *mām* – me; *kṛpā-nidhe* – O ocean of mercy; *sva-priyā-caraṇa-kiṅkarīm* – a maidservant at the feet of Your beloved; *kuru* – make.

O Śyāmasundara! O You whose head is adorned with a crown of peacock feathers! Your face is always graced with a playful smile which evokes Cupid in the *gopīs*’ hearts, Your flute-playing enchants their hearts, and You are expert in relishing the *ujjala-rasa* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Because You are an ocean of mercy, I am appealing to You to please make me a maidservant at the feet of Your beloved.

Without being in the ānugatya of the gopīs one cannot attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa

**gopī-ānugatya vinā aiśvarya-jñāne
bhajileha nāhi pāya vrajendra-nandane**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (8.230)

gopī-ānugatya – under the guidance of the *gopīs*; *vinā* – without; *aiśvarya-jñāne* – in the knowledge of opulence; *bhajileha* – if serving the Supreme Lord; *nāhi* – not; *pāya* – gets; *vrajendra-nandane* – the son of Mahārāja Nanda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Without accepting the guidance of the *vraja-gopīs*, and being endowed with the moods of awe and reverence instead, despite being engaged in devotional service, a person will be overcome by knowledge of the Lord's opulence and will not be able to attain the *prema-mayī sevā* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Śakti-tattva

Kṛṣṇa's parā-śakti is one, but appears in multifarious forms

**na tasya kāryam karaṇam ca vidyāte
na tat samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyāte
parāsyā śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvīkī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca**

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.8)

na – no; *tasya* – He has; *kāryam* – duty to perform; *karaṇam* – necessity; *ca* – also; *vidyate* – there exists; *na* – not; *tat-samaś* – anyone equal to Him; *ca* – or; *abhyadhikaś* – superior [to Him]; *ca* – also; *dṛśyāte* – it is seen; *parā* – supreme; *asya* – His; *śaktiḥ* – potency; *vividhā* – expands in multifarious ways; *eva* – certainly; *śrūyate* – it is heard [in the Vedic literatures]; *svābhāvīkī* – spontaneous; *jñāna* – knowledge; *bala* – strength; *kriyā* – activities; *ca* – also.

The Supreme Lord has nothing to do, and no one is found to be equal to or greater than Him. His *parā-śakti* (supreme potency) expands in multifarious ways by which everything is done naturally and spontaneously, providing Him full knowledge, power and pastimes.

The eightfold material elements of māyā-śakti, the deluding material potency of Kṛṣṇa

**bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuh khañ mano buddhir eva ca
ahañkāra itīyañ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā**

Bhagavad-gītā (7.4)

bhūmiḥ – earth; *āpaḥ* – water; *analaḥ* – fire; *vāyuh* – air; *kham* – ether; *manaḥ* – mind; *buddhiḥ* – intelligence; *eva* – certainly; *ca* – and; *ahañkāraḥ* – false ego; *iti* – as follows; *iyam* – this; *me* – of Mine; *bhinnā* – divisions; *prakṛtiḥ* – material energy; *aṣṭadhā* – eightfold.

My external material energy has eight divisions: earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego.

By surrendering unto Kṛṣṇa one can easily cross māyā

**daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāñ taranti te**

Bhagavad-gītā (7.14)

daivī – she bewilders the *jīvas*; *hi* – indeed; *eṣā* – this; *guṇa-mayī* – consisting of the three modes of material nature; *mama* – of Mine; *māyā* – illusory external energy; *duratyayā* – difficult to overcome; *mām* – to Me; *eva* – only; *ye* – who; *prapadyante* – takes shelter; *māyām* – illusion; *etāñ* – this; *taranti* – transcends, or crosses over; *te* – they.

This external energy of Mine, which consists of the three modes and which bewilders the living entities, is certainly

very difficult to overcome, but those who take exclusive shelter of Me can easily transcend this *māyā*.

Daśa-mūla-tattva describes the potencies of the Lord

**parākhyāyāḥ śakter aprthag
api sa sve mahimani
sthito jīvākhyāṁ svām acit-
abhihitāṁ tām tri-padikām
sva-tantrecchaḥ śaktim sakala-
viṣaye preraṇa-paro
vikārādyaiḥ śūnyaḥ parama-
puruṣo 'yaṁ vijayate**

Daśa-mūla-tattva (3),
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

parākhyāyāḥ śakteḥ – from His transcendental potency; *aprthag* – non-different; *api* – although; *saḥ* – that; *sve mahimani* – in His own glory; *sthitah* – is situated; *jīva-ākhyam* – that known as *jīva* [the multiple *vibhinnāmśa* parts]; *svām* – [His] own; *acit-abhihitam* – known as inanimate; *tām* – His; *tri-padikam* – threefold [potency]; *sva-tantra-icchaḥ* – fully independent in His desires; *śaktim* – potency; *sakala-viṣaye* – in all realms and dimensions of action; *preraṇa-parah* – the supreme instigator and ultimate source of inspiration; *vikāra-ādyaiḥ* – from all external transformations; *śūnyaḥ* – free; *parama-puruṣaḥ* – supreme person; *ayaṁ* – He [is]; *vijayate* – may He be especially glorious.

Although Śrī Bhagavān is non-different from His inconceivable transcendental potency (*parā-śakti*), He has His own independent nature and desires. His *parā-śakti* consists of three aspects: *cit-śakti* (spiritual potency), *jīva-śakti* (marginal potency) and *māyā-śakti* (external potency), and He always inspires them to engage in their respective functions. That *parā-tattva* (Supreme Absolute Truth), even while performing all these activities, still remains immutable and is eternally situated in the fully transcendental *svarūpa* of His own glory.

Three varieties of the Lord's potency

**kr̥ṣṇera ananta-śakti, tāte tina—pradhāna
'cic-chakti', 'māyā-śakti', 'jīva-śakti'-nāma**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (8.151)

kr̥ṣṇera – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *ananta-śakti* – unlimited potencies; *tāte* – in that; *tina* – three; *pradhāna* – chief; *cit-śakti* – spiritual potency; *māyā-śakti* – material potency; *jīva-śakti* – marginal potency, or living entities; *nāma* – named.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa has unlimited potencies, of which three are prominent. These are the spiritual potency (*cit-śakti*), the material potency (*māyā-śakti*) and the marginal potency (*jīva-śakti*), which is otherwise known as the living entities.

**‘antaraṅgā’, ‘bahiraṅgā’, ‘taṭasthā’ kahi yāre
antaraṅgā ‘svarūpa-śakti’—sabāra upare**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (8.152)

antaraṅgā – internal; *bahiraṅgā* – external; *taṭa-sthā* – marginal; *kahi* – we say; *yāre* – to whom; *antaraṅgā* – the internal potency; *svārūpa-śakti* – the personal energy; *sabāra upare* – above all.

In other words, these are all potencies of God – internal, external and marginal. But the internal potency is the Lord’s personal energy and stands over the other two.*

**viṣṇu-śaktir parā proktā kṣetra-jñākhyā tathā parā
avidyā-karma-sañjñānyā tṛtīyā śaktir iṣyate**

Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.7.61)

viṣṇu-śaktiḥ – the potency of Lord Viṣṇu; *parā* – spiritual; *proktā* – it is said; *kṣetra-jñā-ākhyā* – the potency known as *kṣetra-jñā*; *tathā* – as well as; *parā* – spiritual, transcendental; *avidyā* – ignorance; *karma* – fruitive activities; *sañjñā* – known as; *anyā* – other; *tṛtīyā* – third; *śaktiḥ* – potency; *iṣyate* – known thus.

Viṣṇu-śakti is *parā*, or transcendental potency. *Kṣetra-jñā* (the living entity) is also known as *parā*, transcendental. The other energy is material and facilitates the activities of the conditioned living beings in fruitive work and covers them in *avidyā*, or ignorance, of their constitutional nature as eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa. Viṣṇu’s *parā-śakti* is

called *cit-śakti*, *kṣetra-jñā* is called *jīva-śakti* and *avidyā* is called *māyā-śakti*.

**yayā kṣetra-jñā-śaktiḥ sā veṣṭitā nr̥pa sarva-gā
saṁsāra-tāpān akhilān avāpnoty atra santatān**

Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.7.62)

yayā – by which; *kṣetra-jñā-śaktiḥ* – the living entities, known as the *kṣetra-jñā* potency; *sā* – that potency; *veṣṭitā* – covered; *nr̥pa* – O King; *sarva-gā* – capable of going anywhere in the spiritual or material worlds; *saṁsāra-tāpān* – miseries due to the cycle of repeated birth and death; *akhilān* – all kinds of; *avāpnoti* – obtains; *atra* – in this material world; *santatān* – arising from suffering or enjoying various kinds of reactions to fruitive activities.

O King, the *kṣetra-jñā-śakti* is the living entity. Although he has the facility to live in either the material or spiritual world, he suffers the threefold miseries of material existence because he is influenced by the *avidyā* (nescience) potency, which covers his constitutional position. *

The gopīs are superior to the Vaikuṅṭha Lakṣmīs and the Dvārakā queens

**īśvarera śakti haya e-tina prakāra
eka lakṣmī-gaṇa, pure mahiṣī-gaṇa āra**

**vraje gopī-gaṇa āra sabhāte pradhāna
vrajendra-nandana yā'te svayam bhagavān**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.79–80)

īśvarera – of the Supreme Lord; *śakti* – energy; *haya* – is; *e-tina* – these three; *prakāra* – kinds; *eka* – one; *lakṣmī-gaṇa* – the goddesses of fortune in Vaikuṅṭha; *pure* – in Dvārakā; *mahiṣī-gaṇa* – the queens; *āra* – and; *vraje* – in Vṛndāvana; *gopī-gaṇa* – the *gopīs*; *āra* – and; *sabhāte* – among all of them; *pradhāna* – the chief; *vraja-indra-nandana* – Kṛṣṇa, the son of the King of Vraja; *yā'te* – because; *svayam* – Himself; *bhagavān* – the primeval Lord.

The energies [consorts] of the Supreme Lord are of three kinds: the Lakṣmīs in Vaikuṅṭha, the queens in Dvārakā and the *gopīs* in Vṛndāvana. The *gopīs* are the best of all, for they have the privilege of serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the primeval Lord, the son of the King of Vraja.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one soul in two bodies

**rādhā pūrṇa-śakti, kṛṣṇa pūrṇa-śaktimān
dui vastu bheda nāi, śāstra-paramāṇa
mṛgamada, tāra gandha—yaiche aviccheda
agni, jvālāte—yaiche kabhu nāhi bheda
rādhā-kṛṣṇa aiche sadā eka-i svarūpa
līlā-rasa āsvādite dhare dui-rūpa**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.96–98)

rādhā – Śrī Rādhā; *pūrṇa-śakti* – the complete energy; *kṛṣṇa* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *pūrṇa-śaktimān* – the complete possessor of energy; *dui* – two; *vastu* – things; *bheda* – difference; *nāi* – there is not; *śāstra-paramāṇa* – the evidence of revealed scripture.

mṛga-mada – musk; *tāra* – of that; *gandha* – fragrance; *yaiche* – just as; *aviccheda* – inseparable; *agni* – the fire; *juvālāte* – temperature; *yaiche* – just as; *kabhū* – any; *nāhi* – there is not; *bheda* – difference.

rādhā-kṛṣṇa – Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; *aiche* – in this way; *sadā* – always; *eka-i* – one; *svarūpa* – nature; *līlā-rasa* – the mellows of a pastime; *āsvādīte* – to taste; *dhare* – manifest; *dui-rūpa* – two forms.

Śrī Rādhā is the full power, and Lord Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of full power. The two are not different, as evidenced by the revealed scriptures. They are indeed the same, just as musk and its scent are inseparable, or as fire and its heat are nondifferent. Thus Rādhā and Lord Kṛṣṇa are one, yet They have taken two forms to enjoy the mellows of pastimes.*

Jīva-tattva

Sanātana Gosvāmī asked Mahāprabhu four questions

**ke āmi, kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya
ihā nāhi jāni—kemanē hita haya**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (20.102)

ke āmi – who am I; *kene* – why; *āmāya* – unto me; *jāre* – give trouble; *tāpa-traya* – the three kinds of miserable conditions; *ihā* – this; *nāhi jāni* – I do not know; *kemanē* – how; *hita* – my welfare; *haya* – there is.

Who am I? Why do the threefold miseries always give me trouble? If I do not know this, how can I be benefited?*

**‘sādhya’-‘sādhana’ tattva puchite nā jāni
kṛpā kari’ saba tattva kaha ta’ āpani**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (20.103)

sādhya – the ultimate goal of spiritual life; *sādhana* – of the process of obtaining that goal; *tattva* – truth; *puchite* – to inquire; *nā jāni* – I do not know; *kṛpā kari’* – by Your causeless mercy; *saba tattva* – all such truths; *kaha ta’ āpani* – please explain to me.

Actually I do not know how to inquire about the goal of life (*sādhya*) and the process (*sādhana*) for obtaining it. Being merciful upon me, please explain all these truths.*

In reply, Mahāprabhu instructs Sanātana Gosvāmī

**jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya—kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa’
kṛṣṇera ‘taṭasthā-śakti’ ‘bhedābheda-prakāśa’
sūryāṁśa-kiraṇa, yaiche agni-jvālā-caya
svābhāvika kṛṣṇera tina-prakāra ‘śakti’ haya
kṛṣṇera svābhāvika tina-śakti-pariṇati
cic-chakti, jīva-śakti, āra māyā-śakti**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (20.108–109, 111)

jīvera – of the living entity; *svārūpa* – the constitutional position; *haya* – is; *kṛṣṇera* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *nitya-dāsa* – eternal servant; *kṛṣṇera* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *taṭasthā* – marginal; *śakti* – potency; *bheda-abheda* – different and non-different; *prakāśa* – manifestation.

sūrya-āṁśa – part and parcel of the sun; *kiraṇa* – a ray of sunshine; *yaiche* – as; *agni-jvālā-caya* – a multitude of molecular particle of fire; *svābhāvika* – naturally; *kṛṣṇera* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *tina-prakāra* – three varieties; *śakti* – energies; *haya* – there are.

kṛṣṇera – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *svābhāvika* – natural; *tina* – three; *śakti* – of energies; *pariṇati* – transformations; *cit-śakti* – spiritual potency; *jīva-śakti* – spiritual sparks, living entities; *āra* – and; *māyā-śakti* – deluding material potency.

It is the living entity’s constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa because he is the marginal energy of Kṛṣṇa and a manifestation simultaneously one with and different from the Lord, like a molecular

particle of sunshine or fire. Kṛṣṇa has three varieties of potency. In accordance with Śrī Kṛṣṇa's nature, those energies undergo transformations and become known as His spiritual potency (*cit-śakti*), His living entity potency (*jīva-śakti*) and His deluding material potency (*māyā-śakti*).*

Śrī Daśa-mūla-tattva on jīva-tattva

**sphuliṅgāḥ ṛddhāgner iva cid-aṇavo jīva-nicayāḥ
hareḥ sūryasyaivāpṛthag api tu tad-bheda-viṣayāḥ
vaśe māyā yasya prakṛti-patir eveśvara iha
sa jīvo mukto 'pi prakṛti-vaśa-yogyaḥ sva-guṇataḥ**

Daśa-mūla-tattva (5),
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

sphuliṅgāḥ – sparks; *ṛddha-agneḥ* – of a blazing fire; *iva* – just like; *cit-aṇavaḥ* – spiritual atoms; *jīva-nicayāḥ* – multitudes of living entities; *hareḥ* – of Lord Hari; *sūryasya* – of the spirit sun; *eva* – certainly; *apṛthag* – not different [from Him in quality]; *api* – although; *tu* – indeed; *tad-bheda* – [they are] different from Him; *viṣayāḥ* – in terms of their sphere of influence; *vaśe* – within control; *māyā* – of the deluding potency; *yasya* – whose; *prakṛti-patiḥ* – the master of His energy; *eva* – indeed; *īśvaraḥ* – the Supreme Lord; *iha* – here; *saḥ* – he; *jīvaḥ* – the living entity; *muktaḥ* – liberated; *api* – even; *prakṛti* – of material nature; *vaśa* – under the control; *yogyaḥ* – amenable; *sva* – own; *guṇataḥ* – because of his [constitutional] nature.

Just as many tiny sparks burst out from a blazing fire, so the innumerable *jīvas* are like atomic, spiritual particles in the rays of the spiritual sun, Śrī Hari. Though these *jīvas* are non-different from Śrī Hari, they are also different from Him in terms of the extent of their power and sphere of influence. One eternal difference between the *jīva* and Īśvara is that Īśvara is the Lord and Master of *māyā-śakti*, whereas even the liberated *jīva* is subject to fall under the control of *māyā*, due to his constitutional nature.

The jīvas are eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa, but those who are averse to Him are covered by māyā

**sva-rūpa –
 hīnān nija-
 sukha-parān kṛṣṇa-vimukhān
 harer māyā-daṇḍyān guṇa-
 nigada-jālaiḥ kalayati
 tathā sthūlair liṅgair dvi-
 vidhāvaraṇaiḥ kleśa-nikarair
 mahā-karmālānair nayati
 patitān svarga-nirayau**

Śrī Daśa mūla tattva (6),
 Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

sva-rūpa – for their own spiritual nature; *arthaiḥ* – intent; *hīnān* – without; *nija-sukha* – to their own happiness; *parān* – devoted; *kṛṣṇa* – to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *vimukhān* – averse; *hareḥ* – of Lord Hari; *māyā* – by the deluding potency; *daṇḍyān* – worthy

of punishment; *guṇa* – of the three modes of material nature; *nigada* – of shackles; *jālaiḥ* – with networks of deceptive illusion; *kalayati* – she persecutes; *tathā* – in the same way; *sthūlaiḥ* – with gross elements; *līngaiḥ* – with subtle elements; *dvi-vidha* – of two kinds; *āvaraṇaiḥ* – with coverings; *kleśa* – of sufferings; *nikaraiḥ* – of many kinds; *mahā* – great; *karma* – of fruitive activities; *ālānaiḥ* – with chains; *nayati* – she leads; *patitān* – fallen conditioned souls; *svarga* – to the heavenly planets; *nirayau* – and the hellish planets.

[The *svarūpa-dharma*, or original nature, of the spirit soul is to render unmotivated service to Ś rī Kṛṣṇa.] Thus Bhagavān's deluding potency (*māyā*) punishes those *jīvas* who are bereft of concern for that *svarūpa-dharma*. These *jīvas* are averse to Kṛṣṇa and are concerned with their own happiness. Deeming them worthy of chastisement, *mahāmāyā* shackles them with the networks of deceptive illusion through the three modes of material nature. She covers their *svarūpa* (spiritual body) with gross and subtle bodies, and with the strong chains of fruitive activity, sends those fallen souls sometimes to heaven and sometimes to hell, making them experience many varieties of suffering.

All jīvas are eternally Kṛṣṇa's parts and parcels

**mamaivāṁśo jīva-loke jīva-bhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ
manaḥ-śaṣṭhānīndriyāṇi prakṛti-sthāni karṣati**

Bhagavad-gītā (15.7)

mama – My; *eva* – certainly; *aṁśaḥ* – separated part and parcel (*vibhinnāṁśa*); *jīva-loke* – in the world of conditioned living beings; *jīva-bhūtaḥ* – who experience conditioned life; *sanātanaḥ* – eternal; *manaḥ* – including the mind; *ṣaṣṭhāni* – the six; *indriyāṇi* – senses; *prakṛti-sthāni* – which are subject to the influences of material nature; *karṣati* – attracted.

The eternal living entities in this material world are certainly My separated parts and parcels (*vibhinnāṁśa*). Situated in material nature, they are attracted by the six senses, including the mind.

Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, the jīvas are suffering in this material world

**kr̥ṣṇa bhuli’ sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha
ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (20.117)

kr̥ṣṇa – from Kṛṣṇa; *bhuli* – being deviated; *sei jīva* – that living entity; *anādi* – since time without beginning; *bahir-mukha* – attracted by the external feature of Kṛṣṇa; *ataeva* – therefore; *māyā* – Kṛṣṇa’s deluding potency; *tāre* – to him; *deya* – gives; *saṁsāra-duḥkha* – miseries of material existence.

The *jīva* who has become deviated from Kṛṣṇa has been preoccupied with the external, material potency since time immemorial. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa’s deluding potency (*māyā*) gives him misery in the form of material existence.

However, the jīva is a superior potency to māyā

**apareyam itas tv anyām prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtām mahā-bāho yayedam dhāryate jagat**

Bhagavad-gītā (7.5)

aparā – inferior or inert; *iyam* – this [material energy]; *itaḥ* – beyond it; *tu* – but; *anyām* – another; *prakṛtiṁ* – energy; *viddhi* – you must understand; *me* – of Mine; *parām* – superior [spiritual]; *jīva-bhūtām* – the living beings; *mahā-bāho* – O mighty-armed [Arjuna]; *yayā* – by which [conscious energy]; *idam* – this; *dhāryate* – is accepted [by them in order to enjoy their fruitive actions]; *jagat* – universe.

O mighty-armed Arjuna, you should know that My external energy, which consists of eight divisions, is inferior. There is another potency of Mine known as the *jīva*, which is superior and which accepts this material world for the purpose of enjoying the fruits of his action.

One who attains My abode never takes birth again

**ā-brahma-bhuvanāl lokāḥ punar āvartino 'rjuna
mām upetya tu kaunteya punar janma na vidyate**

Bhagavad-gītā (8.16)

ā-brahma-bhuvanāt – from Brahma-loka; *lokāḥ* – the planets; *punaḥ* – again; *āvartināḥ* – returning; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *mām* – Me; *upetya* – having attained; *tu* – but; *kaunteya* – son of Kuntī; *punaḥ* – again; *janma* – birth; *na* – no; *vidyate* – there is.

O Arjuna, all planets in this universe up to the planet of Lord Brahmā are places of repeated birth and death, but one who attains Me, O son of Kuntī, never takes birth again.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja: “As it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, a person going to that spiritual sky never returns to this material world of death and suffering” (*Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*, Chapter 28). “The conclusion is that no one falls from the spiritual world, or Vaikuṅṭha planet, for it is the eternal abode” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.16.26, purport).

Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna: Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor anyone else

**na tv evāhaṁ jātu nāsaṁ na tvaṁ neme janādhipāḥ
na caiva na bhaviṣyāmaḥ sarve vayam ataḥ param**

Bhagavad-gītā (2.12)

na – never; *tu eva* – most certainly; *aham* – I; *jātu* – at any time; *na āsaṁ* – did not exist; *na* – nor; *tvam* – you; *na* – nor; *ime* – these; *jana-adhipāḥ* – kings; *na* – nor; *ca* – also; *eva* – certainly; *na bhaviṣyāmaḥ* – shall not exist; *sarve vayam* – all of us; *ataḥ param* – hereafter.

There was never a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings, nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.

You are not this temporary, ever-changing body

**dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanam jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati**

Bhagavad-gītā (2.13)

dehinaḥ – of the embodied soul; *asmin* – in this; *yathā* – just as; *dehe* – in the body; *kaumāram* – boyhood; *yauvanam* – to youth; *jarā* – to old age; *tathā* – in the same way; *dehāntara* – another body; *prāptiḥ* – achieving; *dhīraḥ* – an intelligent person; *tatra* – in this situation; *na muhyati* – he is not bewildered.

Just as the embodied soul gradually passes within this gross physical body from boyhood to youth and to old age, similarly, the soul receives another body at death. An intelligent person is not bewildered by the destruction and rebirth of the body.

There is no birth nor death for the spirit soul

**na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin
nāyaṁ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ
ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṁ purāṇo
na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre**

Bhagavad-gītā (2.20)

na jāyate – does not take birth; *mriyate* – die; *vā* – or; *kadācit* – at any time; *na* – nor; *ayam* – this [soul]; *bhūtvā* – has come

into being; *bhavitā* – will come into being; *vā* – nor; *na* – not; *bbūyaḥ* – repeatedly [accept material bodies]; *ajāḥ* – unborn; *nityaḥ* – eternal; *śāśvataḥ* – ever-existing; *ayam* – he; *purāṇaḥ* – primeval; *na hanyate* – he is not killed; *bhanyamāne* – is destroyed; *śarīre* – when the body.

The soul neither takes birth nor does he die, nor is he affected by the repeated growth and dwindling of the body. He is unborn, eternal and ever-existing. Though primeval, he remains ever-youthful. When the body is destroyed, the soul is not annihilated.

Acintya-bhedābheda Tattva

Śrī Daśa-mūla-tattva states:

**hareḥ śakteḥ sarvaṁ cid-acid akhilaṁ syāt pariṇatīḥ
vivartaṁ no satyaṁ śrutim iti viruddhaṁ kali-malam
harer bhedābheda-śruti-vihita-tattvaṁ suvimalaṁ
tataḥ premaṇaḥ siddhir bhavati nitarāṁ nitya-viṣaye**

Daśa-mūla-tattva (8),
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura

hareḥ – of Lord Hari; *śakteḥ* – the energy; *sarvaṁ* – everything; *cid-acid* – spiritual and material; *akhilam* – everything; *syāt* – let it be; *pariṇatīḥ* – a transformation; *vivartam* – the impersonalist philosophy of illusion; *na* – not; *u* – indeed; *satyaṁ* – true; *śrutim* – to the Vedas; *iti* – which; *viruddham* – contradicting; *kali* – of the age of Kali; *malam* – a contamination; *hareḥ* – from Lord Hari; *bheda-abhedau* – different and non-different; *śruti* – in the Vedas; *vihita* – established; *tattvam* – truth; *suvimalam* – completely pure; *tataḥ* – from that; *premaṇaḥ* – of spiritual love; *siddhiḥ* – the perfection; *bhavati* – may be; *nitaraṁ* – completely; *nitya-viṣaye* – in this eternal principle.

The entire spiritual and material creation is a transformation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *śakti*. The impersonal philosophy of illusion (*vivarta-vāda*) is not true. It is an impurity produced by Kali-yuga, and it is contrary to the teachings of the Vedas. The Vedas support *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*

(inconceivable oneness and difference) as the pure absolute doctrine, and one can attain perfect love for Kṛṣṇa when one realizes this principle.

**mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagat avyakta-mūrtinā
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.4)

mayā – by Me; *tatam* – is pervaded; *idaṁ* – this; *sarvaṁ* – entire; *jagat* – cosmic manifestation; *avyakta-mūrtinā* – by My form which is beyond the range of sense perception; *mat-sthāni* – are situated in Me; *sarva-bhūtāni* – all living beings; *na* – not; *ca* – yet; *ahaṁ* – I; *teṣu* – in them; *avasthitaḥ* – am situated.

This whole universe is pervaded by My form, which is beyond material sense perception. All living beings are situated in Me, but I am not in them.

**na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni
paśya me yogam aiśvaram
bhūta-bhṛn na ca bhūta-stho
mamātmā bhūta-bhāvanaḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.5)

na – not; *ca* – and; *mat-sthāni* – situated in Me; *bhūtāni* – the moving and non-moving beings; *paśya* – behold; *me* – My;

yogam – supernatural, mystic; *aiśvaram* – opulence; *bbūta-bhṛt* – the support of the moving and non-moving beings; *na* – not; *ca* – yet; *bbūta-sthaḥ* – situated in those entities; *mama* – My; *ātmā* – self; *bbūta-bbhāvanaḥ* – and the maintainer of all moving and non-moving beings.

All that is created, also, does not actually exist in Me. Behold My supernatural mystic opulence! Although I support and maintain the entire cosmic existence, I Myself am not situated within it.

The prelude to Catuṣ-slokī Bhāgavatam: Transcendental knowledge about Kṛṣṇa is acintya, inconceivable

**jñānam parama-guhyam me
yad vijñāna-samanvitam
sa-rahasyam tad-aṅgam ca
gṛhāṇa gaditam mayā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.31)

jñānam – knowledge; *parama* – extremely; *guhyam* – confidential; *me* – of Me; *yad* – which; *vijñāna* – realization; *samanvitam* – fully endowed with; *sa-rahasyam* – along with mystery; *tad* – of that; *aṅgam* – supplementary parts; *ca* – and; *gṛhāṇa* – just try to take up; *gadam* – explained; *mayā* – by Me.

[*Lord Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā:*] “Please hear attentively the knowledge which I shall speak to you together with its divisions and confidential secrets, for transcendental

knowledge about Me is not only scientific but also full of mysteries.”

Excerpt from *Bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā*, Tenth Ray:

“O Brahmā, the Supreme Absolute Truth is the nondual substance. He is one without a second. Knowledge about Me is nondual and most confidential. Even though it is undivided, it has four divisions, namely *jñāna*, *viñāna*, *rahasya* and *tad-aṅga*. The *jīvas* cannot understand this by their own endeavours. They can only realize it by My mercy. *Jñāna* is My form, *viñāna* is My potencies, *rahasya* is the *jīvas* (or *prema*) and *tad-aṅga* is the material energy (*pradhāna* or *māyā*). These four eternal *tattvas* are transformations of My *acintya-śakti*.”

Catuṣ-ślokī Bhāgavatam 1 – “I am the source of everything”

**aham evāsam evāgre nānyad yat sad-asat param
paścād ahaṁ yad etac ca yo ’vaśiṣyeta so ’smy aham**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.33)

aham – I, the Personality of Godhead; *eva* – certainly; *āsam* – existed; *eva* – only; *agre* – before the creation; *na* – never; *anyat* – anything else; *yat* – all those; *sat* – the effect; *asat* – the cause; *param* – the supreme; *paścāt* – at the end; *aham* – I, the Personality of Godhead; *yat* – all these; *etat* – this [creation]; *ca* – also; *yaḥ* – everything; *avaśiṣyeta* – remains; *saḥ* – that; *asmi* – I am; *aham* – I, the Personality of Godhead.

Before the creation of this world, only I existed. The gross and the subtle, up to the indefinable *brahma* – in other

words the cause (*sat*) and the effect (*asat*) – did not exist. Nothing other than I existed. What manifested in the form of creation is also I, and after annihilation only I will remain.

Catuṣ-ślokī Bhāgavatam 2 – The Absolute Truth and māyā, the deluding potency

**rte 'rtham yat pratīyeta na pratīyeta cātmani
tad vidyād ātmano māyām yathābhāso yathā tamaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.34)

rte – without; *artham* – value; *yat* – that which; *pratīyeta* – appears to be; *na* – not; *pratīyeta* – appears to be; *ca* – and; *ātmani* – in relation to Me; *tad* – that; *vidyāt* – you must know; *ātmanaḥ* – My; *māyām* – deluding potency; *yathā* – just as; *ābhāsaḥ* – the reflection; *yathā* – as; *tamaḥ* – the darkness.

The Supreme Absolute Truth (*parama-tattva* or *svarūpa-tattva*) is the only real truth. One should understand that which is seen to be separate from this truth, or not existing within it, to be the product of the Supreme Absolute Truth's deluding potency (*māyā*). The following example demonstrates this. *Parama-tattva* can be compared to the sun, which is an object consisting of light. The sun is experienced in two other forms, namely its reflection and darkness. Similarly, in regards to the Absolute Truth, reflection pertains to the living entities (*jīva-śakti*) and darkness to the material creation (*māyā-śakti*).

*Catuṣ-ślokī Bhāgavatam 3 – Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva,
the prayojana*

**yathā mahānti bhūtāni bhūteṣūccāveṣv anu
praviṣṭāny apraviṣṭāni tathā teṣu na teṣv aham**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.35)

yathā – just as; *mahānti* – the universal; *bhūtāni* – elements; *bhūteṣu ucca-avaceṣu* – in the gigantic and minute; *anu* – after; *praviṣṭāni* – entered; *apraviṣṭāni* – not entered; *tathā* – so; *teṣu* – in them; *na* – not; *teṣu* – in them; *aham* – Myself.

The five great elements of material creation [earth, water, etc.] enter into the bodies of all living entities, high and low, from the demigods to the sub-human species. But at the same time, these elements exist independently. Similarly, I have entered into all living entities as the Supersoul, but at the same time I am situated independently in My own *svarūpa*, and I appear to My surrendered devotees both internally and externally.

Catuṣ-ślokī Bhāgavatam 4 – The process, abhidheya-tattva

**etāvad eva jijñāsyam tattva-jijñāsunātmanah
anvaya-vyatirekābhyām yat syāt sarvatra sarvadā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.36)

etāvat – up to this; *eva* – certainly; *jijñāsyam* – is to be inquired; *tattva* – the Absolute Truth; *jijñāsunā* – by the student;

ātmanah – of the self; *anvaya* – directly; *vyatirekābhyām* – indirectly; *yat* – whatever; *syāt* – it may be; *sarvatra* – in all circumstances; *sarvadā* – at all times.

A person inquisitive about the truth of the self and the Superself (*ātma-tattva*) should make inquires always and everywhere through both direct (*anvaya*) and indirect (*vyatireka*) means of deliberation about that Supreme Absolute Truth.

Kṛṣṇa creates by transforming His śakti

avicintya-śakti-yukta śrī-bhagavān icchāya jagad-rūpe pāya pariṇāma

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (7.124)

avicintya – inconceivable; *śakti* – potency; *yukta* – possessed of; *śrī* – the affluent; *bhagavān* – Personality of Godhead; *icchāya* – by His wish; *jagad-rūpe* – in the form of the cosmic manifestation; *pāya* – becomes; *pariṇāma* – transformed by His energy.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is opulent in all respects. Therefore by His inconceivable energies He has transformed the material cosmic manifestation.*

**īśāvāsyam idam sarvaṁ yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam**

Īśopaniṣad (1)

īśa – by the Lord; *āvāśyam* – controlled; *idam* – this; *sarvam* – all; *yat kiñca* – whatever; *jagatyām* – within the universe; *jagat* – all that is animate or inanimate; *tena* – by Him; *tyaktena* – set-apart quota; *bhuñjīthāḥ* – you should accept; *mā* – do not; *grdhaḥ* – endeavour to gain; *kasya svit* – of anyone else; *dhanam* – the wealth.

The Supreme Lord is the controller and proprietor of all that is, of every animate and inanimate entity throughout creation. One should accept for himself what the Lord has given him as his share, and never try to take another's portion.

Overcoming Obstacles

Give up material attachments and aspire only for unalloyed devotion to Kṛṣṇa

**na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye
mama janmani janmaniśvare
bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi**

Śikṣāṣṭaka (4), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

na – not; *dhanam* – riches; *na* – not; *janam* – followers; *na* – not; *sundarim* – beautiful women; *kavitam* – fruitive activities or liberation described in flowery language; *va* – or; *jagad-isa* – O Lord of the universe; *kamaye* – I desire; *mama* – My; *janmani* – in birth; *janmani* – after birth; *śvare* – unto the Supreme Lord; *bhavatāt* – let there be; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *ahaituki* – causeless, with no motives; *tvayi* – unto You.

O Jagadīśa, I do not desire wealth, followers such as disciples, a beautiful wife, sons, friends and relatives, nor liberation or mundane knowledge expressed in poetic language. My only desire is that birth after birth I may have unmotivated devotional service unto You, the Lord of my life.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “Give up all worldly sense gratification. Don’t pray for a good wife, a

good family, salvation or anything else; only pray for causeless *bbakti* – service to the love that is in the heart of Śrīmatī Rādhikā” (*Gaura-vāṇī Pracāriṇe*, p34).

The definition of aparādha

apagata-rādho yasmāt iti aparādhaḥ (1)

apagata – devoid of; *rādhaḥ* – affection; *yasmāt* – on account of which; *iti* – thus; *aparādhaḥ* – an offence.

Any act or emotion which hinders the flow of love and affection [or any activity performed with an envious mood].

aparādhāt arthāt ārāghanāt-apagataḥ (2)

Aparādha means to be distanced from worship; to be removed from the service of Śrī Rādhā.

It is impossible for those intoxicated with opulence and beauty to approach You

**janmaishvarya-śruta-śrībhir edhamāna-madaḥ pumān
naivārhaty abhidhātum vai tvām akiñcana-gocaram**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.8.26)

janma – birth; *aiśvarya* – opulence; *śruta* – education; *śrībhiḥ* – by the possession of beauty; *edhamāna* – by feelings

of self-importance; *madah* – intoxicated; *pumān* – the human being; *na* – never; *eva* – ever; *arhati* – is able; *abhidhātum* – to address sincerely; *vai* – certainly; *tvām* – You; *akiñcana-gocaram* – who is easily accessible to the materially unattached.

You are easily attainable for those who are exhausted with this mundane world. On the other hand, no one who has become intoxicated by the four privileges of prestigious birth, wealth and luxury, erudition and physical beauty can approach You with true sincerity.

By crying out, “O Kṛṣṇa! I am Yours!” He will bestow His mercy

**kṛṣṇa! tomāra haṅa!—yadi bale eka-bāra
māyā-bandha haite kṛṣṇa tāre kare pāra**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22. 33)

kṛṣṇa – O Kṛṣṇa!; *tomāra haṅa* – I am Yours; *yadi* – if; *bale* – someone says; *eka-bāra* – once; *māyā-bandha haite* – from the bondage of conditioned life; *kṛṣṇa* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *tāre* – him; *kare pāra* – releases.

If any *jīva*, feeling extreme anguish, prays to Kṛṣṇa from the core of his heart and calls out, “O Kṛṣṇa! I am Yours!” – then Kṛṣṇa [gives him *sādhū-saṅga* and thus] allows him to cross over the impediments arranged by *māyā*.

*The mere thought of sex-life causes Yāmūnācārya
to spit in disgust*

**yadāvadhi mama cetaḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravinde
nava-nava-rasa-dhāmany udyata rantum āsīt
tadāvadhi bata nāri-saṅgame smaryamāne
bhavati mukha-vikāraḥ suṣṭu niṣṭhīvanam ca**

Yāmūnā-stotram

yadā-avadhi – ever since; *mama* – my; *cetaḥ* – heart; *kṛṣṇa-pada-āravinde* – at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa; *nava-nava-nava* – ever fresh; *rasa-dhāmani* – the delightful mellows; *udyata* – endeavouring; *rantum* – to enjoy; *āsīt* – it has been; *tadā-avadhi* – since then; *bata* – Oh! How astonishing!; *nāri-saṅgame* – the association of women for sense gratification; *smaryamāne* – remembering; *bhavati* – it becomes; *mukha-vikāraḥ* – face contorted in disgust; *suṣṭu* – appropriately; *niṣṭhīvanam* – while spitting; *ca* – and.

Since the time when my heart was captured by the ever fresh delightful mellows of service to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is astonishing that whenever I think of my former association with women for sense enjoyment, my face becomes contorted with disgust and I spit [at that thought].

Sex life is worse than poison for one seriously engaged in bhajana

**niṣkiñcanasya bhagavad-bhajanonmukhasya
pāram param jgamiṣor bhava-sāgarasya**

**sandarśanam viṣayiṇām atha yoṣitām ca
hā hanta hanta viṣa-bhakṣanato 'py asādhu**

Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka (8.23),

Kavi Karṇapūra

niṣkiñcanasya – of a person who has completely detached himself from material enjoyment; *bhagavat* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *bhajana* – in serving; *unmukhasya* – who is eager to be engaged; *pāram* – to the other side; *param* – distant; *jigamiṣoḥ* – who is desiring to go; *bhava-sāgarasya* – of the ocean of material existence; *sandarśanam* – the seeing [for some material purpose]; *viṣayiṇām* – of persons engaged in material activities; *atha* – as well as; *yoṣitām* – of women; *ca* – also; *hā* – alas; *hanta hanta* – expression of great lamentation; *viṣa-bhakṣanataḥ* – than the act of drinking poison; *api* – even; *asādhu* – more abominable.

Greatly lamenting, the Lord then informed Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, “Alas, for a person who is seriously desiring to cross the material ocean and engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord without material motives, seeing a materialist engaged in sense gratification or seeing a woman who is similarly interested is more abominable than drinking poison willingly.”*

The mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation

**mana eva manuṣyāṇām kāraṇam bandha-mokṣayoḥ
bandhāya viṣayāsaṅgo muktyai nirviṣayam manaḥ**

Amṛta-bindu Upaniṣad (2)

mana – the mind; *eva* – certainly; *manuṣyāṇām* – for man; *kāraṇam* – the cause; *bandha* – of bondage; *mokṣayoḥ* – of liberation; *bandhāya* – leads to bondage; *viṣaya-āsaṅgo* – attachment for sense objects; *muktyai* – leads to liberation; *nirviṣayaṁ* – detachment from sense objects; *manaḥ* – the mind.

A man’s mind is the sole cause of his bondage and liberation. A mind absorbed in sense objects causes bondage, and when it is detached from sense objects, it is the cause of liberation.

Lust is the real enemy of the conditioned souls

**kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ
mahāśano mahā-pāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam**

Bhagavad-gītā (3.37)

kāmaḥ eṣaḥ – this desire [to enjoy sense objects]; *krodhaḥ eṣaḥ* – [transformed into] this wrath; *rajaḥ-guṇa* – the binding force of passion; *samudbhavaḥ* – which is born of; *mahā-āśanaḥ* – all devouring; *mahā-pāpmā* – extremely fearsome; *viddhi* – know; *enam* – this; *iha* – in this world; *vairiṇam* – the enemy.

[Śrī Bhagavān said:] “This lust, the desire to enjoy sense objects, which indeed transforms into wrath, is born of passion. It is all-devouring and extremely fearsome. Know it to be the primary enemy of the living entities within this world.”

Pride is the root cause of all anarthas

**īśvaro 'ham ahaṁ bhogī
siddho 'haṁ balavān sukhī**

Bhagavad-gītā (16.14)

asau – this; *mayā* – by me; *bataḥ* – has been slain; *śatruḥ* – enemy; *haniṣye* – I shall slay; *ca* – and; *aparān* – the other enemies; *api* – also; *īśvaraḥ* – the lord; *aham* – I; *aham* – I; *bhogī* – the enjoyer; *siddhaḥ* – perfect; *aham* – I; *balavān* – powerful; *sukhī* – happy.

“I have slain this enemy and I shall also slay others. I am a great controller and enjoyer. I am perfect, powerful and happy.”

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “Pride, or *pratiṣṭha-āśa* (the desire for prestige), is the root cause of all *anarthas*. If one thinks one is better than others (“I am a better devotee”), humility gives way to pride and envy, and Bhakti-devī flees far away from one’s heart. One should dig deeply into one’s heart and if one finds any trace of pride, or desire for respect, one should uproot it completely and throw it far, far away.”

Only those bewildered by the false ego think they are the doers

**prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate**

Bhagavad-gītā (3.27)

prakṛteḥ – of material nature; *kriyamāṇāni* – are performed; *guṇaiḥ* – by the three binding forces; *karmāṇi* – activities; *sarvaśaḥ* – in every respect; *abāṅkāra-vimūḍha-ātmā* – a person bewildered by false ego; *kartā* – the doer; *aham* – I; *iti* – thus; *manyate* – thinks.

All aspects of material activity are performed by the three binding forces of material nature, but a person whose intelligence is bewildered by false ego thinks himself to be the doer.

My dear mind, abandon prajalpa, mukti and even the desire for Vaikuṅṭha; only worship Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja

**asad-vārtā-veśyā visṛja
mati-sarvasva-haraṇiḥ
kathā mukti-vyāghryā na śṛṇu
kila sarvātma-gilaṇiḥ
api tyaktvā lakṣmī-pati-
ratim ito vyoma-nayanīm
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇau sva-rati-
maṇi-dau tvam bhaja manaḥ**

*Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā (4),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī*

asad-vārtā-veśyā – the prostitute of contemptible mundane talk; *visṛja* – abandon; *mati* – of intelligence; *sarvasva* – the treasure; *haraṇiḥ* – plundering; *kathā* – talk; *mukti* – of

impersonal liberation; *vyāghryā* – the tigress; *na* – don't; *śṛṇu* – hear; *kila* – unequivocally; *sarva-ātmagilaṇiḥ* – devouring one's very soul; *api* – also; *tyaktvā* – reject; *lakṣmī-pati* – Lord Nārāyaṇa, the husband of Lakṣmī; *ratim* – attachment; *itaḥ* – from which; *vyoma-nayanīm* – the path to Vaikuṅṭha; *vraje* – in Vraja; *rādhā-kṛṣṇau* – Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *sva-rati* – love for the Divine Couple and Their service; *maṇi-dau* – bestowing the jewel; *tvam* – you; *bhaja* – just worship; *manaḥ* – O mind.

My dear brother mind! Please abandon altogether the prostitute of contemptible mundane talk, which plunders the entire treasure of pure wisdom. You must unequivocally give up hearing all talk of liberation which, like a tigress, devours your very soul. Furthermore, please abandon even the attachment to Lakṣmīpati Śrī Nārāyaṇa, which leads to Vaikuṅṭha. O mind! Just remain in Vraja and worship Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who bestow upon Their devotees the precious jewel of ecstatic *bhāva*.

O mind! Cry out to the Vaiṣṇavas for help when attacked by lust and anger

**asac-ceṣṭā-kaṣṭa-prada-
vikāṭa-pāśālibhir iha
prakāmaṁ kāmādi-prakaṣa-
pathapāti-vyatikaraiḥ
gale baddhvā hanye 'ham iti
bakā-bhid-vartmapa-gaṇe**

**kuru tvam phutkārān avati
sa yathā tvam mana itaḥ**

Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā (5),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

asat-ceṣṭā – of impure deeds; *kaṣṭa-prada* – that award misery; *vikāṭa-pāśa-ālibhiḥ* – by the dreadful stinging nooses; *iba* – in this material existence; *prakāmam* – licentiously; *kāma-ādi* – of lust, anger and so on; *prakāṭa* – suddenly manifest; *paṭhapāti-vyatikaraiḥ* – by the assembled aggressors on the open road; *gale* – by the neck; *baddhvā* – having bound; *hanye-aham* – I am being slain; *iti* – thus; *baka-bhid* – the killer of Baka; *vartma-pa-gaṇe* – to the group of Vaiṣṇavas who protect the path [of devotion]; *kuru-tvam* – you must make; *phutkārān* – loud cries; *avati* – He will deliver; *saḥ* – those devotees; *yathā* – so that; *tvam* – you; *manaḥ* – O mind; *itaḥ* – from their hands.

Lust, anger and so on are a band of dacoits who assail me suddenly on the open road of material life. Having wilfully bound my neck with their dreadful ropes of wicked deeds, they are thus slaying me. O my mind, cry out loudly to the powerful and merciful Vaiṣṇavas who are the protectors of the path of *bhakti* leading to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the killer of Bakāsura. Thus hearing their request, He will surely deliver me from this situation.

Give up bathing in the donkey urine of deceit and hypocrisy

**are cetaḥ prodyat-kapaṭa-
kuṭi-nāṭi-bhara-khara
kṣaran mūtre snātvā dahasi
katham ātmānam api mām
sadā tvam gāndharvā-giridhara-
pada-prema-vilasat
sudhāmbhodhau snātvā svam api
nitarām mām ca sukhaya**

Śrī Manah-śikṣā (6),

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

are – O; *cetaḥ* – mind; *prodyat* – of flourishing; *kapaṭa* – deceit; *kuṭi-nāṭi* – and hypocrisy; *bhara* – great; *khara* – donkey; *kṣarat* – trickling; *mūtre* – urine; *snātvā* – having bathed; *dahasi* – you burn; *katham* – why?; *ātmānam* – yourself; *api* – also; *mām* – me; *sadā* – always; *tvam* – you; *gāndharvā-giridhara* – of Śrī Rādhā-Giridhari; *pada* – of the feet; *prema* – ecstatic transcendental love; *vilasat* – shining; *sudhā-ambhodhau* – in the ocean of nectar; *snātvā* – having bathed; *svam* – yourself; *api* – also; *nitarām* – thoroughly; *mām* – me; *ca* – also; *sukhaya* – delighting.

[In spite of having subdued the enemies of lust and anger, one may not have conquered the great enemy of deceit. This śloka instructs us how to gain victory over this powerful enemy:]

O foolish mind, [although you adopt the path of *sādhana*, you imagine yourself purified by] bathing in the trickling

urine of the great donkey of full blown deceit and hypocrisy. By doing so, you are burning yourself and scorching me, a tiny *jīva*, simultaneously. Stop this! Delight yourself and me by eternally bathing in the nectarean ocean of pure love for the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-Yugala.

Lust, anger, greed and hypocrisy are weak enemies compared to pratiṣṭha-aśā, the desire for prestige, which is the root cause of all anarthas

**pratiṣṭhāśā dhr̥ṣṭā śvapaca-ramaṇī me hr̥di naṭet
katham sādhuḥ-premā spr̥ṣati śucir etan nanu manaḥ
sadā tvaṁ sevasva prabhu-dayita-sāmantam atulam
yathā tām niṣkāśya tvaritam iha taṁ veśayati saḥ**

Śrī Manaḥ-śīkṣā (7),

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

pratiṣṭhā – for prestige; *aśā* – the desire; *dhr̥ṣṭā* – an audacious; *śvapaca-ramaṇī* – outcaste or dog-eating woman; *me* – in my; *hr̥di* – heart; *naṭet* – if she dances; *katham* – how?; *sādhuḥ premā* – love for Kṛṣṇa; *spr̥ṣati* – can touch; *śucir* – pure; *etat* – that heart; *nanu* – isn't it so?; *manaḥ* – O mind; *sadā* – always; *tvaṁ* – you; *sevasva* – should serve; *prabhu* – of Prabhu, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *dayita* – beloved; *sāmantam* – general; *atulam* – peerless; *yathā* – so that; *tām* – that [dog-eating woman]; *niṣkāśya* – expelling; *tvaritam* – quickly; *iha* – in this heart; *taṁ* – that [general]; *veśayati* – cause to enter; *saḥ* – that.

[Why is it that deceit still lingers in the heart in spite of one's having given up all material sense-enjoyment? This śloka has been composed in order to answer this question:]

O mind! How can *prema* which is so immaculately pure [even] touch my heart if the audacious dog-eating outcaste woman of the desire for prestige is allowed to dance there? Therefore, O mind, always render service to *śrī gurudeva*, the incomparable general of the army of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so that he will quickly banish that outcaste woman, and make *prema* take her seat in my heart.

Lust is the real enemy of the conditioned souls

**kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ
mahāśano mahā-pāpmā viddhy enam iha vairiṇam**

Bhagavad-gītā (3.37)

kāmaḥ eṣaḥ – this desire [to enjoy sense objects]; *krodhaḥ eṣaḥ* – [transformed into] this wrath; *rajaḥ-guṇa* – the binding force of passion; *samudbhavaḥ* – which is born of; *mahā-āśanaḥ* – all devouring; *mahā-pāpmā* – extremely fearsome; *viddhi* – know; *enam* – this; *iha* – in this world; *vairiṇam* – the enemy.

[Śrī Bhagavān said:] “This lust, the desire to enjoy sense objects, which indeed transforms into wrath, is born of passion. It is all-devouring and extremely fearsome. Know it to be the primary enemy of the living entities within this world.”

Taking shelter of Śrī Vṛndā-devī

**bhaktiā vihīnā aparādha-lakṣaiḥ
kṣiptāś ca kāmādi-taraṅga-madhye
kṛpāmayi tvām śaraṇam prapannā
vṛnde numas te caraṇāravindam**

Vṛndā-Devyaṣṭakam (8),
Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

bhaktiāḥ – of *bhakti*; *vihīnā* – bereft; *aparādha* – of offences; *lakṣaiḥ* – hundreds of thousands of; *kṣiptāḥ* – thrown; *ca* – and; *kāmā-ādi* – lust, anger, greed, etc.; *taraṅga* – of waves; *madhye* – in the midst; *kṛpāmayi* – O merciful one; *tvām* – of you; *śaraṇam* – at the shelter; *prapannā* – I surrender; *vṛnde* – O Vṛndā-devī; *numas* – I offer my obeisances; *te* – your; *caraṇa-aravindam* – lotus feet.

O merciful Vṛndā-devī, being devoid of devotion and guilty of unlimited offences, I am being tossed about [in the ocean of material existence] by the turbulent waves of lust, anger, greed and other inauspicious impediments. Therefore, I take shelter of you as I offer *praṇama* unto your lotus feet.

Śraddhā

**śraddhā-śabde viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.62)

śraddhā-śabde – by the word *śraddhā*; *viśvāsa* – confidence; *kahe* – is indicated; *sudṛḍha* – very firm; *niścaya* – certainty; *kṛṣṇe* – unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; *bhakti* – devotional service; *kaile* – by executing; *sarva-karma* – all activities; *kṛta* – completed; *haya* – are.

The word *śraddhā* means very firm confidence that simply by performing *bhakti* to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa all other activities are automatically performed.

In our Gauḍīya line the meaning of śraddhā is given as follows:

**śraddhā tv anyopāya-varjam
bhakty-unmukhī citta-vṛtti-viśeṣaḥ**

Āmnāya-sūtra (57)

śraddhā – faith; *tu* – indeed; *anya-upāya-varjam* – free from dependence on any other means [like *karma* and *jñāna*]; *bhakti-unmukhī* – favourable to *bhakti*; *citta-vṛtti* – propensity of the heart; *viśeṣaḥ* – the specific.

Śraddhā is the special propensity of the heart that strives towards *bhakti* alone. It is totally devoid of *karma* and *jñāna*, and desires nothing other than to give pleasure to

Śrī Kṛṣṇa [the internal symptom of faith is *kṛṣṇa-sevā-vāsanā*, the desire to serve Kṛṣṇa favourably].

sā ca śaraṇāpatti—lakṣaṇa

Āmnāya-sūtra (58)

sā – that; *ca* – and; *śaraṇāpatti* – attainment of self-surrender; *lakṣaṇa* – characteristic.

The [external] symptom of *śraddhā* is known as *śaraṇāgati*, taking shelter of Śrī Hari.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “*Śraddhā* is the absence of doubt; it is an atomic particle of *prema*; the first ray of *prema*.”

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “*Śraddhā* is the halo of Śrīmatī Rādhikā by the light of which others may understand Kṛṣṇa.”

Śaraṇāgati

The definition of śaraṇāgati

**ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ prātikūlyasya varjanam
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso goptṛtve varaṇam tathā
ātma-nikṣepa-kārpaṇye ṣaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgatih**

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (11.676)

ānukūlyasya – of the favourable; *saṅkalpaḥ* – a firm vow; *prātikūlyasya* – of the unfavourable; *varjanam* – devoid of; *rakṣiṣyati* – He will protect; *iti* – thus; *viśvāsaḥ* – conviction; *goptrtve* – in being the guardian; *varaṇam* – acceptance; *tathā* – as well as; *ātma-nikṣepa* – self-surrender; *kārpanye* – and humility; *ṣaṭ-vidhā* – sixfold; *śaraṇa-āgatiḥ* – process of surrender.

There are six symptoms of self-surrender (*śaraṇāgati*). The first two are *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpa* and *prātikūlyasya varjanam*: “I will only do that which is favourable for unalloyed *bhakti*, and I will reject all that is unfavourable.” This is called *saṅkalpa* or *pratijñā*, a solemn vow. The third symptom is *rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso*, faith in Bhagavān as one’s protector: “Bhagavān is my only protector. I can derive absolutely no benefit from *jñāna*, *yoga* and other such practices.” This is an expression of trust (*viśvāsa*). The fourth symptom is *goptrtve varaṇam*, deliberate acceptance of Bhagavān as one’s maintainer: “I cannot obtain anything, or even maintain myself, by my own endeavour. I will serve Bhagavān as far as I am able, and He will take care of me.” This is what is meant by dependence (*nirabharatā*). The fifth symptom is *ātma-nikṣepa*, absence of independent mood. “Who am I? I am His. My duty is to fulfil His desire.” This is submission of the self (*ātma-nivedana*). The sixth symptom is *kārpanye*, meekness: “I am wretched, insignificant and spiritually destitute.” This is what is meant by humility (*kārpanya* or *dainya*).

Six impediments which destroy bhakti

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

Upadeśāmṛta (2), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

ati-āhāraḥ – overeating or accumulating more than necessary; *prayāsaḥ* – endeavours opposed to *bhakti*; *ca* – and; *prajalpaḥ* – idle talk; *niyama-āgrahaḥ* – improper compliance with rules and regulations; *jana-saṅgaḥ* – association with worldly-minded persons; *ca* – and; *laulyam* – ardent longing or greed, the restlessness of the mind to adopt worthless opinions; *ca* – and; *ṣaḍbhiḥ* – by these six; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *vinaśyati* – is destroyed.

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

Six vows favourable for the performance of bhakti

**utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt
tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt**

saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati

Upadeśāmṛta (3), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

utsāhāt – by enthusiasm; *niścayāt* – by confidence [in the statements of *śāstra* and *guru*]; *dhairyāt* – by patience or fortitude in the practice of *bhakti*; *tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt* – by engaging all of one’s activities in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* according to the guidance of *sādhvas*, *śāstra* and *guru*; *saṅga-tyāgāt* – by giving up bad association; *sataḥ-vṛtteḥ* – by adopting the behaviour of pure devotees; *ṣaḍbhiḥ* – by these six types of practice; *bhaktiḥ* – pure devotion; *prasidhyati* – becomes perfect.

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 *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) engaging in the limbs of *bhakti* such as hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*), according to the guidance of *sādhvas*, *śāstra* and *guru*; (5) giving up illicit connection with women [or men], the association of those who are overly attached to women [or men] and the association of Māyāvādīs, atheists and pseudo-religionists; and (6) adopting the behaviour and character of pure devotees.

The only way to gain relief from all adversities, the only way to find the hidden treasure, is to abandon all considerations of mundane religiosity and take shelter at the lotus feet of the Absolute Reality Śrī Kṛṣṇa

**sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaraṇam vraja
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (18.66)

sarva-dharmān – all other prescribed duties such as *varṇāśrama*, the four social orders and four spiritual orders; *parityajya* – abandoning; *mām* – of Me; *ekam* – exclusive; *śaraṇam* – shelter; *vraja* – take; *aham* – I; *tvām* – you; *sarva-pāpebhyaḥ* – from all sinful reactions; *mokṣayiṣyāmi* – shall deliver; *mā śucaḥ* – do not grieve.

Completely abandoning all bodily and mental *dharma*, such as *varṇa* and *āśrama*, fully surrender to Me alone. I shall liberate you from all reactions to your sins. Do not grieve.

Embracing Kṛṣṇa as one's personal maintainer

**ananyāś cintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṃ nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṃ vahāmy aham**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.22)

ananyāḥ – devoid of other desires; *cintayantaḥ* – absorbed in contemplation; *mām* – on Me; *ye* – who; *janāḥ* – persons;

paryuṣāsate – worship by every means; *teṣām* – for them; *nitya-abhiyuktānām* – who are constantly engaged; *yoga* – providing necessities; *kṣemam* – and maintaining what they possess; *vahāmi* – carry; *aham* – I.

However, for those who are devoid of material desires, who are always absorbed in thoughts of Me and who always worship Me completely, with one-pointed devotion, I Myself carry their necessities and preserve what they have.

Surrender to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only way to overcome māyā

**daivī hy eṣā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te**

Bhagavad-gītā (7.14)

daivī – she bewilders the *jīvas*; *hi* – indeed; *eṣā* – this; *guṇa-mayī* – consisting of the three modes of material nature; *mama* – of Mine; *māyā* – illusory external energy; *duratyayā* – difficult to overcome; *mām* – to Me; *eva* – only; *ye* – who; *prapadyante* – takes shelter; *māyām* – illusion; *etāṁ* – this; *taranti* – transcends, or crosses over; *te* – they.

This external energy of Mine, which consists of the three modes and which bewilders the living entities, is certainly very difficult to overcome, but those who take exclusive shelter of Me can easily transcend this *māyā*.

Humility

For the *śloka*: **ṛṇād api sunīcena**, see *Essential Ślokas*.

Śrī Caitanyadeva Himself has manifested unprecedented humility

**na prema-gandho 'sti darāpi me harau
krandāmi saubhāgya-bharam prakāśitum
vaṁśī-vilāsy-ānana-lokanam vinā
bibharmi yat prāṇa-pataṅgakān vṛthā**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (2.45)

na – never; *prema-gandhaḥ* – a scent of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *asti* – there is; *darā api* – even in a slight proportion; *me* – My; *harau* – for Śrī Hari; *krandāmi* – I cry; *saubhāgya-bharam* – the extent of My fortune; *prakāśitum* – to exhibit; *vaṁśī-vilāsi* – of the great flute-player; *ānana* – at the face; *lokanam* – looking; *vinā* – without; *bibharmi* – I carry; *yat* – because; *prāṇa-pataṅgakān* – My insect-like life; *vṛthā* – with no purpose.

[*Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said*:] “I have not even a scent of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I am crying simply to flaunt whatever fortune I once obtained. If I truly loved Him, how could I endure this useless, insect-like life, bereft of the sight of His lotus face as He sports with His flute?”

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “Humility is the foundation of *bhakti*, and it is by humility that *bhakti*

increases. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī defines humility as follows: ‘When a person has all good qualities but feelings arise in his heart of being unqualified, wretched and inferior, this is called humility. In other words, humility is the utmost anxiety to attain Bhagavān. A person with humility is without false ego even though he possesses all good qualities.’ Only humility can attract Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, and genuine humility only appears when *prema* is fully ripe” (Śrī *Bhajana-rāhasya*, Part 8, Text 4, purport).

The fifth śloka of Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka describes the stage of āsakti

**ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
patitaṁ mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūli-saḍṛśam vicintaya**

Śikṣāṣṭaka (5), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

ayi – O My Lord; *nanda-tanuja* – the son of Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa; *kiṅkaram* – the [maid]servant; *patitam* – fallen; *mām* – Me; *viṣame* – horrible; *bhava-ambudhau* – in the ocean of nescience; *kṛpayā* – by causeless mercy; *tava* – Your; *pāda-paṅkaja* – lotus feet; *sthita* – situated at; *dhūli-saḍṛśam* – like a particle of dust; *vicintaya* – kindly consider.

O Nanda-nandana, somehow I have fallen into this fearful ocean of material existence. Please bestow Your mercy upon this eternal [maid]servant of Yours. Consider me to be just like a speck of dust at Your lotus feet.

The Vaiṣṇava respects everyone knowing that Kṛṣṇa is in their hearts

**uttama hañā vaiṣṇava habe nirabhimāna
jīve sammāna dibe jāni' 'kṛṣṇa'-adhiṣṭhāna**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (20.25)

uttama hañā – although being very much exalted; *vaiṣṇava* – a devotee; *habe* – should become; *nirabhimāna* – without pride; *jīve* – to all living entities; *sammāna dibe* – should give respect; *jāni'* – knowing; *kṛṣṇa-adhiṣṭhāna* – the resting place of Kṛṣṇa.

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.*

Abhidheya-tattva

For the *śloka*: **labdhvā sudurlabham idam**, see *Essential Ślokas*.

*Kṛṣṇa has given three sequential paths for spiritual elevation:
karma, jñāna and bhakti*

**yogās trayo mayā proktā nṛṇām śreyo-vidhitsuṣyā
jñānam karma ca bhaktiś ca nopāyo 'nyo 'sti kutracit**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.6)

yogāḥ – processes; *trayaḥ* – three; *mayā* – by Me; *proktāḥ* – described; *nṛṇām* – for human beings; *śreyaḥ* – ultimate auspiciousness; *vidhitsuṣyā* – because of desiring to bestow; *jñānam* – the path of speculative knowledge; *karma* – the path of fruitive actions; *ca* – also; *bhaktiḥ* – the path of devotion; *ca* – also; *na* – no; *upāyaḥ* – means; *anyaḥ* – other; *asti* – exists; *kutracit* – whatsoever.

[*Śrī Kṛṣṇa said*:] “My dear Uddhava, because I desire that human beings may achieve perfection, I have presented three paths of advancement – the path of fruitive action (*karma*), the path of impersonal knowledge (*jñāna*) and the path of devotion (*bhakti*). Besides these three there is absolutely no other means of elevation.”*

Those who have faith in hari-kathā are qualified for bhakti

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.8)

yadṛcchayā – somehow or other by good fortune; *mat-kathā-ādau* – in the narrations and glorification of My pastimes; *jāta* – awakened; *śraddhaḥ* – faith; *tu* – indeed; *yaḥ* – one who; *pumān* – a person; *na* – not; *nirviṇṇaḥ* – disgusted; *na* – not; *ati-saktaḥ* – very attached; *bhakti-yogaḥ* – the path of loving devotion; *asya* – his; *siddhi-daḥ* – will award perfection.

If, by good fortune, one has developed faith in hearing the discussions of My *tattva* (spiritual truths) and *līlā* (pastimes) and is not excessively attached to or disgusted by worldly things, *bhakti-yoga* will award him perfection.

Give up the blind well of family life and take shelter of Kṛṣṇa

**tat sādhu manye 'sura-varya dehinām
sadā samudvigna-dhiyām asad-grahāt
hitvātma-pātaṁ gṛham andha-kūpaṁ
vanam gato yad dharim āśrayeta**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.5)

tat – that; *sādhu* – very good, or the best part of life; *manye* – I think; *asura-varya* – O best of the demons; *dehinām* – of persons who have accepted the material body; *sadā* – always;

samudvigna – full of anxieties; *dhiyām* – whose intelligence; *asat-grahāt* – because of accepting the temporary as real [or the body as the self]; *bitvā* – giving up; *ātma-pātam* – the downfall of the soul; *gṛham* – household life [or the bodily concept of life]; *andha-kūpam* – which is nothing but a blind well; *vanam* – to the forest [for *sādhva-saṅga*]; *gataḥ* – going; *yat* – which; *harim* – Śrī Hari; *āśrayeta* – one should take shelter of.

[*Prahlāda Mahārāja* replied to his father:] “O best of the *asuras*, King of the demons, any person who has accepted the temporary body as real is certainly embarrassed by anxiety because of having fallen into the dark well of family life [or the bodily concept of life] where there is no water [*rasa*] but only suffering. One should give up this position and go to the forest to take shelter of Śrī Hari.”*

Chewing the chewed, materialistic persons cannot come to Kṛṣṇa

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.30)

matir – consciousness; *na* – never; *kṛṣṇe* – unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; *parataḥ* – from the instructions of others; *svataḥ* – from their own understanding; *vā* – either; *mithaḥ* – from combined effort; *abhipadyeta* – can be brought about; *gṛha-vratānām* – of persons addicted to household life [or to the

bodily conception]; *adānta-gobhiḥ* – because of uncontrolled senses; *viśatām* – who are entering; *tamisram* – hellish life; *punaḥ punaḥ* – repeatedly; *carvita* – things already chewed; *carvaṇānām* – who are chewing.

Persons who are addicted to household life due to having uncontrolled senses, are entering into hellish life wherein they repeatedly chew that which has already been chewed. Their consciousness cannot turn towards the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa either by their own understanding, by the instructions of others or by the combination of both.

They don't know that the ultimate goal is Viṣṇu

**na te viduḥ svārtha-gatiṁ hi viṣṇuṁ
durāśayā ye bahir-artha-māninaḥ
andhā yathāndhair upanīyamānās
te 'pīśa-tantryām uru-dāmni baddhāḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.31)

na – not; *te* – they; *viduḥ* – know; *sva-artha-gatim* – their own best interest or the ultimate goal of life; *hi* – indeed; *viṣṇuṁ* – Lord Viṣṇu and His abode; *durāśayāḥ* – having hopes which are doomed to baffled; *ye* – who; *bahiḥ* – external sense objects; *artha-māninaḥ* – considering as valuable; *andhāḥ* – persons who are blind; *yathā* – just as; *andhair* – by other blind men; *upanīyamānāḥ* – being led; *te* – they; *api* – although; *īśa-tantryām* – by the modes of material nature; *uru-dāmni* – very strong ropes; *baddhāḥ* – bound.

Persons who consider external sense objects valuable, are bound to be baffled in their hopes for material happiness. They do not know that the ultimate goal of this human form of life is to take shelter of Lord Viṣṇu. Bound by the strong ropes of the three modes, they are just like blind men led by another blind man and they continue suffering in materialistic life.

Because this human body is very rare, one should practice bhakti from an early age

**kaumāra ācaret prājño
dharmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabhaṁ mānuṣaṁ janma
tad apy adhruvam arthadam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.6.1)

kaumāraḥ – in the tender age of childhood; *ācaret* – should practice; *prājñaḥ* – one who is intelligent; *dharmān* – occupational duties; *bhāgavatān* – which are devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *iha* – in this life; *durlabham* – very rarely obtained; *mānuṣam* – human; *janma* – birth; *tad* – that; *apy* – even; *adhruvam* – impermanent, temporary; *artha-dam* – full of meaning.

[*Śrī Prablāda said:*] “One who is sufficiently intelligent should use the human form of body from the very beginning of life – in other words, from the tender age of childhood – to practice the activities of devotional service,

giving up all other engagements. The human body is most rarely achieved, and although temporary like other bodies, it is meaningful because in human life one can perform devotional service. Even a slight amount of sincere devotional service can give one complete perfection.”*

Progress is troublesome for those attached to the impersonal feature of God

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

Bhagavad-gītā (12.5)

kleśaḥ – trouble; *adhikatarāḥ* – more; *teṣām* – for those; *avyakta-āsakta* – attached to the impersonal, unmanifest feature; *cetasām* – whose minds; *avyaktā* – the unmanifest; *hi* – because; *gatiḥ* – state; *duḥkham* – with difficulty; *dehavadbhiḥ* – by those who are embodied; *avāpyate* – is obtained.

Those whose minds are attached to the impersonal feature experience great difficulty, because for those who identify the body with the self, it is difficult to develop steadiness in something that is not manifest.

The impersonalists are bound to fall down because of neglecting Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet

**ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ**

**āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.32)

ye anye – those others; *aravinda-akṣa* – O lotus-eyed one; *vimukta-māninaḥ* – falsely considering themselves liberated; *tvayi* – towards You; *asta-bhāvāt* – on account of their mood being displaced; *avisuddha-buddhayaḥ* – their intelligence being impure; *āruhya* – even though achieving; *kṛcchreṇa* – through severe austerities; *param padam* – the highest position [impersonal realization]; *tataḥ* – from that position; *patanti* – they fall; *adbaḥ* – down [to material existence]; *anādṛta* – because of not honouring; *yuṣmat* – Your; *aṅghrayaḥ* – lotus feet.

[Someone may say that aside from the Vaiṣṇavas, who always seek shelter at the Lord's lotus feet, there are those who are not Vaiṣṇavas but have accepted a different process for attaining salvation. What happens to them? In answer to this question, Lord Brahmā states:]

O lotus-eyed Lord, some people proudly consider themselves liberated, despite having no realization of You, the Absolute Truth. Their speculations spoil their intelligence and no matter how much they fancy they have elevated their state of consciousness through their severe penance and austerity, they inevitably fall from their imaginary platform, because they disregard worship of Your lotus feet.

*Devotees reject the five kinds of liberation, even if offered
by Kṛṣṇa Himself*

**sālokya-sārṣṭi-sāmīpya-sārūpyaikatvam apy uta
dīyamānaṁ na gr̥hṇanti vinā mat-sevanaṁ janāḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.13)

sālokya – living on the same planet; *sārṣṭi* – having the same opulence; *sāmīpya* – to be a personal associate; *sārūpya* – having the same bodily features; *ekatvam* – oneness; *api* – also; *uta* – indeed; *dīyamānaṁ* – being offered; *na* – not; *gr̥hṇanti* – do accept; *vinā* – without; *mat* – My; *sevanam* – devotional service; *janāḥ* – pure devotees.

[*Lord Kapiladeva to Devabhūti:*] “My devotees do not accept *sālokya*, *sārṣṭi*, *sārūpya*, *sāmīpya* or oneness with Me (*sāyujya*) without devotional service, even if I offer these personally.”

*Even the ātmārāmas (self-satisfied liberated souls)
are attracted by pure bhakti*

**ātmārāmāś ca munayo
nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim
ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.7.10)

ātma-ārāmāḥ – those who take pleasure in *ātmā* [spirit soul]; *ca* – also; *munayaḥ* – sages; *nirgranthāḥ* – freed from

all bondage; *api* – in spite of; *urukrame* – unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa who performs great pastimes; *kurvanti* – they perform; *abaitukīm* – unmotivated; *bhaktim* – devotional service; *ittham-bhūta* – such is the nature; *guṇaḥ* – of the qualities; *hariḥ* – the Lord who removes all inauspiciousness.

All variety of those who are *ātmārāma*, who take pleasure in their *ātma*, as well as *munis*, who are absorbed in contemplating the self, are free from anger, false ego and other *anarthas*. Still they render selfless, unmotivated loving service, or *bhakti*, to Śrī Hari who performs awesome activities. He possesses such wonderful qualities that He can attract everyone, even those who are already liberated.

Real liberation means to be established in one's eternal form and relationship with Kṛṣṇa

muktir hitvānyathā rūpaṁ sva-rūpeṇa vyavasthitīḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.10.6)

muktiḥ – liberation; *hitvā* – giving up; *anyathā* – other; *rūpaṁ* – form(s); *sva-rūpeṇa* – in one's eternal, spiritual form [which consists of eleven aspects: *nitya-sambandha* (eternal relationship), *vayasa* (age), *nāma* (name), *rūpa* (form and beauty), *yūtha* (group), *veśa* (attire), *ājñā* (order), *vāsa* (residence), *sevā* (service), *parā-kāṣṭha-śvāsa* (the highest summit of emotion which is the aspirant's very life breath), *pālya-dāsī-bhāva* (the sentiment of a maidservant under the protection of Śrī Rādhā)]; *vyavasthitīḥ* – becoming situated.

Real liberation means to give up other forms [one's gross and subtle bodies] and become situated in one's *svarūpa*.

Karmīs, jñānis and yogīs cannot be happy, only the bhaktas attain blissful peace

**kr̥ṣṇa-bhakta niṣkāma ataeva 'śānta'
bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī sakali 'aśānta'**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (19.149)

kr̥ṣṇa-bhakta – a devotee of Kṛṣṇa; *niṣkāma* – actually desireless; *ataeva* – therefore; *śānta* – peaceful; *bhukti* – of material enjoyment; *mukti* – of liberation from material activities; *siddhi* – of mystic perfections through *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*; *kāmī* – those who are desirous; *sakali* – all of them; *aśānta* – not peaceful.

Because a devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is devoid of desires [desiring only to please Kṛṣṇa], he is peaceful. *Karmīs* (fruitive workers) desiring material enjoyment, *jñānīs* (philosophical speculators) desiring liberation and *yogīs* desiring mystic perfections are full of desires and thus cannot be peaceful.

The two witches of the desire for material enjoyment and liberation

**bhukti-mukti-spr̥hā yāvat piśācī hṛdi vartate
tāvad bhakti-sukhasyātra katham abhyudayo bhavet**

*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.22),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

bhukti – material enjoyment; *mukti* – liberation from material existence; *sprhā* – desires for; *yāvat* – as long as; *piśācī* – the witches; *hṛdi* – within the heart; *vartate* – remain; *tāvat* – that long; *bhakti* – of devotional service; *sukhasya* – of the happiness; *atra* – here; *katham* – how; *abhyudayaḥ* – awakening; *bhavet* – can there be.

As long as the two witches, namely the desire for material enjoyment and the desire for impersonal liberation, remain within the heart of the *sādhaka*, how can the happiness of pure *bhakti* be awakened there?

Mystic perfections are an obstacle to pure bhakti

**antarāyān vadanty etā yuñjato yogam uttamam
mayā sampadyamānasya kāla-kṣapaṇa-hetavaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.15.33)

antarāyān – impediments; *vadanti* – they say; *etāḥ* – these mystic perfections; *yuñjataḥ* – of one engaging in; *yogam* – connection with the Absolute; *uttamam* – the supreme stage; *mayā* – with Me; *sampadyamānasya* – for one who is attaining; *kāla* – of time; *kṣapaṇa* – of wasting; *hetavaḥ* – causes.

Learned experts in devotional service state that the mystic perfections of *yoga* that I have mentioned are actually impediments, and are a waste of time for one who is practising the supreme *yoga* by which one achieves all perfection in life directly from Me.

Of all yogīs, the bhakta is the best

**yoginām api sarveṣāṁ mad-gatenāntar-ātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo mām sa me yuktatamo mataḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (6.47)

yoginām – of the *yogīs*; *api* – however; *sarveṣāṁ* – amongst all; *mad-gatena* – by attaching himself to Me; *antar-ātmanā* – through his mind; *śraddhāvān* – one endowed with faith; *bhajate* – worships; *yaḥ* – who; *mām* – Me; *saḥ* – he; *me* – My; *yuktatamaḥ* – the best *yogī*; *mataḥ* – opinion.

However, he who constantly performs *bhajana* of Me with full faith, his mind incessantly attached to Me, is in My opinion the topmost of all *yogīs*.

Kṛṣṇa is controlled only by the bhakti of His pure devotees

**na sādhayati mām yogo na sāṅkhyam dharmā uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo yathā bhaktir mamorjitā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.20)

na – not; *sādhayati* – brings under control; *mām* – Me; *yogaḥ* – the *yoga* system; *na* – nor; *sāṅkhyam* – the system of Sāṅkhya philosophy; *dharmāḥ* – pious activities within the *varṇāśrama* system; *uddhava* – My dear Uddhava; *na* – not; *svādhyāyaḥ* – Vedic study; *tapas* – austerity; *tyāgaḥ* – renunciation; *yathā* – as; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *mama* – unto Me; *ūrjitā* – powerful.

My dear Uddhava, I cannot be controlled by those who study Sāṅkhya philosophy or *śāstra*, or who perform mystic *yoga*, pious acts, austerity or renunciation. I am controlled only by that powerful *bhakti* rendered to Me by My pure-hearted devotees.

*I was foolishly looking for a piece of broken glass but
instead I found a transcendental jewel*

**sthānābhilāṣī tapasi sthito 'ham
tvām prāptavān deva-munīndra-guhyam
kācam vicinvaṇ api divya-ratnaṁ
svāmin kṛtārtho 'smi varam na yāce**

Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (7.28)

sthāna-abhilāṣī – desiring a very high position in the material world; *tapasi* – in severe austerities and penances; *sthitah* – situated; *aham* – I; *tvām* – You; *prāptavān* – have obtained; *deva-muni-indra-guhyam* – difficult to achieve even for great demigods, saintly persons and kings; *kācam* – a piece of glass; *vicinvaṇ* – searching for; *api* – although; *divya-ratnam* – a transcendental gem; *svāmin* – O my Lord; *kṛta-arthah asmi* – I am fully satisfied; *varam* – any benediction; *na yāce* – I do not beg.

[*Dhruva Mahārāja said:*] “O my Lord, I am regretting that I was performing severe types of penance and austerity for attaining an opulent material position, which is like a piece of broken glass compared to the transcendental

gem of Your personal *darśana*. Now that I have obtained You, who are very difficult for the great demigods, saintly persons and kings to attain, I am completely satisfied and I do not wish to ask any benediction from You.”

In bhakti there is no loss or diminution

**nehābhikrama-nāśo ‘sti pratyavāyo na vidyate
sv-ālpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt**

Bhagavad-gītā (2.40)

na – no; *īha* – in this [*bhakti-yoga*]; *abhikrama* – endeavours; *nāśaḥ* – destruction; *asti* – there is; *pratyavāyaḥ* – flaw; *na* – no; *vidyate* – there is; *su-ālpam* – a very little; *āpi* – even; *asya dharmasya* – of this *yoga*; *trāyate* – delivers; *mahataḥ* – from great; *bhayāt* – danger.

Endeavours on the path of *bhakti-yoga* are neither fruitless, nor do they contain any flaw. Even a little practice frees one from the great danger of transmigrating endlessly within the cycle of repeated birth and death in this material world.

Only one bewildered by the false ego thinks he is the doer

**prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā kartāham iti manyate**

Bhagavad-gītā (3.27)

prakṛteḥ – of material nature; *kriyamāṇāni* – are performed; *guṇaiḥ* – by the three binding forces; *karmāṇi* – activities; *sarvaśaḥ* – in every respect; *ahaṅkāra-vimūḍha-ātmā* – a person bewildered by false ego; *kartā* – the doer; *aham* – I; *iti* – thus; *manyate* – thinks.

All aspects of material activity are performed by the three binding forces of material nature, but a person whose intelligence is bewildered by false ego thinks himself to be the doer.

Bhakti-tattva

For the *śloka*s: anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam, kṛti-sādhya bhavet sādhya, nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema, tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi, see *Essential Śloka*s.

Vaiṣṇava-sevā and nāma-saṅkīrtana bestow śrī kṛṣṇa-carāṇa

**prabhu kahe vaiṣṇava-sevā, nāma-saṅkīrtana
dui kara, śīghra pābe śrī-kṛṣṇa-carāṇa**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (16.70)

prabhu kabe – the Lord replied; *vaiṣṇava-sevā* – service to the Vaiṣṇavas; *nāma-saṅkīrtana* – chanting the holy name of the Lord; *dui kara* – perform these two things; *śīghra* – very soon; *pābe* – you will get; *śrī-kṛṣṇa-carāṇa* – shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied, “You should engage yourself in the service of the Vaiṣṇavas and always chant the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If you do these two things, you will very soon attain shelter at Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.”*

Sādhu-saṅga and kṛṣṇa-nāma – nothing else is essential

**sādhu-saṅge kṛṣṇa-nāma ei mātra cāi
saṁsāra jinite āra kauna vastu nāi**

*Prema-vivarta (6.13),
Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita*

sādhū-saṅge – in the association of pure-hearted saints; *kṛṣṇa-nāma* – the holy names of Kṛṣṇa; *ei* – this; *mātra* – only; *cāi* – I want; *saṁsāra* – material existence; *jinite* – to conquer; *āra* – further; *kauna-vastu* – anything; *nāi* – there is not.

My sole desire is to hear and chant *śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāma* in the association of pure-hearted saints. There is no other means to get free from the cycle of birth and death and thus nothing else is essential in this world.

The two results of pure bhakti

**sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam
hr̥ṣīkeṇa hr̥ṣīkeśa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate**

Nārada-Pañcarātra

sarva-upādhi-vinirmuktam – free from all kinds of material designations [i.e. being in one's *svarūpa*]; *tat-paratvena* – by full dedication [to pleasing the Divine Couple]; *nirmalam* – uncontaminated [by the effects of speculative knowledge or fruitive activity]; *hr̥ṣīkeṇa* – by the senses; *hr̥ṣīka-īśa* – to the master of the senses, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *sevanam* – service; *bhaktiḥ* – pure devotional service; *ucyate* – is called.

Bhakti, or pure devotional service, means engaging all of one's senses and mind in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the sole purpose of pleasing Him. It is uncontaminated by speculative knowledge or fruitive activities. When the spirit soul (*jīva*) renders service unto Hṛṣīkeśa, the Master

of the senses, one's senses become spiritualized and one is freed from all material designations.

Only kṛṣṇa-bhakti can make one completely happy

**sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā yayātmā suprasīdati**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.6)

saḥ – that; *vai* – certainly; *puṁsām* – for all humanity; *paraḥ* – sublime; *dharmāḥ* – occupation; *yataḥ* – by which; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *adhokṣaje* – unto the Transcendence; *ahaitukī* – causeless; *apratihātā* – unbroken; *yayā* – by which; *ātmā* – the self; *suprasīdati* – completely satisfied.

The supreme occupation (*dharmā*) for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self.*

The ninefold process of bhakti

**śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dāsyam sakhyam ātma-nivedanam
iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavaty addhā tan manye 'dhītam uttamam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.23–24)

śravaṇam – hearing; *kīrtanam* – chanting; *viṣṇoḥ* – of Lord Viṣṇu [not anyone else]; *smaraṇam* – remembering; *pādasevanam* – serving the lotus feet of the Lord; *arcanam* – offering worship; *vandanam* – offering prayers; *dāsyam* – engaging in service; *sakhyam* – becoming a friend; *ātmanivedanam* – surrendering one’s life and soul.

iti – thus; *pumsā arpitā* – offered by the surrendered devotee; *viṣṇau* – unto Lord Viṣṇu [not to anyone else]; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *cet* – if; *nava-lakṣaṇā* – of nine different characteristics; *kriyeta* – one may perform; *bhagavati* – unto Bhagavān; *addhā* – directly; *tat* – that; *manye* – I consider; *adbhītam* – learning; *uttamam* – topmost.

[*Prablāda Mahārāja said:*] “The *bhakti* of Bhagavān Viṣṇu has nine limbs: hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu; remembering them; serving His lotus feet; offering the Lord respectful worship; offering prayers to the Lord; becoming His servant; becoming His friend and surrendering everything unto Him. If one performs these nine limbs of devotion with a mood of surrender, then we should know this to be the topmost knowledge of the scriptures. His cultivation of the scriptures is successful.”

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “*Iti pumsārpitā viṣṇau*. Here, *viṣṇu* refers to both *viṣaya* and *āśraya-bhagavān*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and *śrī guru*. The nine limbs of *bhakti* are not *bhakti* if they are not offered first to a bona fide *guru*. Kṛṣṇa will not accept it unless one first takes shelter of *śrī guru*” (Lecture in Murwillumbah, Australia, on February 7, 2004).

The five essential limbs of bhakti

**sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa,
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.128)

sādhu-saṅga – association with pure devotees; *nāma-kīrtana* – chanting the holy name; *bhāgavata-śravaṇa* – hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *mathurā-vāsa* – living in Mathurā-maṇḍala [Vraja]; *śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana* – worshipping the Deity with faith.

[*Mahāprabhu said:*] “*Sādhu-saṅga*, chanting the holy name, hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, residing in Vraja-maṇḍala and worshipping the Deity with faith.”

Guru-pādāśraya is the foremost limb of bhakti

**guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam
viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā sādhu-vartmānu-vartanam**

*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.74),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

guru-pāda-āśrayaḥ – taking shelter of *śrī guru*; *tasmāt* – after that; *kṛṣṇa-dīkṣā-ādi* – initiation into *nāma*, *mantra*, etc.; *śikṣaṇam* – accepting instruction; *sevā* – service; *guroḥ* – of *śrī guru*; *viśrambheṇa* – with intimacy; *anuvartanam* – following; *vartma* – the path; *sādhu* – of the saintly devotees.

The first and foremost limbs of *sādhana-bhakti* are taking shelter of *śrī guru*, accepting *dīkṣā* (divine knowledge coupled

with removal of *anarthas*), receiving *śikṣā* (instructions on the process of *bhajana* and service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa), serving *śrī guru* with intimacy and affection and following the path of the previous *ācāryas* under his guidance.

[Of the 64 limbs of *bhakti* given by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the first five are related to *śrī guru*; only then can *sādhana-bhakti* begin.]

By faithful service to śrī guru one attains Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet

**tāte kṛṣṇa bhaje, kare gurura sevana
māyā-jāla chuṭe, pāya kṛṣṇera caraṇa**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.25)

tāte – therefore; *kṛṣṇa bhaje* – if one worships Lord Kṛṣṇa; *kare* – performs; *gurura sevana* – service to his spiritual master; *māyā-jāla chuṭe* – gets free from the binding net of *māyā*; *pāya* – gets; *kṛṣṇera caraṇa* – shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

Only by simultaneously performing *guru-seva* and *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* does a bound *jīva* become liberated from the web of *māyā* and attain the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Serving Kṛṣṇa like the gopīs is the supreme form of love

**śyāmam eva paraṁ rūpaṁ purī madhu-purī varā
vayaḥ kaiśorakaṁ dhyeyam ādya eva paro rasaḥ**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (19.106)

śyāmam – the form of Śyāmasundara; *eva* – certainly; *param* – supreme; *rūpam* – form; *purī* – the place; *madhu-purī* – Mathurā, Vraja-maṇḍala; *varā* – best; *vayaḥ* – the age; *kaiśorakam* – fresh youth; *dhyeyam* – to be meditated on; *ādyah* – the original transcendental mellow, *mādhurya-rasa*; *eva* – certainly; *paraḥ* – the supreme; *rasaḥ* – mellow.

The form of Śyāmasundara is the supreme form, Vraja-maṇḍala is the supreme abode, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's fresh youth should always be meditated upon, and love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the *gopīs* of Vraja is the supreme transcendental mellow and the sweetest form of pure love.

The process of bhakti prior to the stage of bhāva

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

Upadeśāmṛta (7), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

syāt – let it be; *kṛṣṇa* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *nāma* – the holy name; *carita-ādi* – character, pastimes and so forth; *sitā* – rock candy; *api* – although; *avidyā* – of ignorance; *pitta* – by the bile; *upatapta* – afflicted; *rasanasya* – of the tongue; *na* – not; *rocikā* – palatable; *nu* – oh, how wonderful it is; *kintu* – but; *ādarāt* – carefully; *anudinam* – every day, or twenty-four hours daily; *khalu* – naturally; *sā* – that [sugar candy of the holy name]; *eva* – certainly; *juṣṭā* – taken or chanted; *svādvī* – relishable;

kramāt – gradually; *bhavati* – becomes; *tat-gada* – of that disease; *mūla* – of the root; *hantrī* – the destroyer.

Aho! Those whose tongues are afflicted by the jaundice of *avidyā*, ignorance [born of being indifferent to Śrī Kṛṣṇa from a time without beginning], cannot relish the nectarean names, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which are compared to the sweetest sugar candy. Instead, these attributes taste bitter to them. But if with great respect one daily takes this sugar candy, it gradually becomes relishable to him and destroys at the root his disease, the jaundice of *avidyā*, or indifference to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [In other words, he becomes spontaneously attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa]

*By the power of bhakti Vyāsadeva saw Kṛṣṇa in
His most complete aspect*

**bhakti-yogena manasi samyak praṇihite 'male
apaśyat puruṣam pūrṇam māyām ca tad-apāśrayam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.7.4)

bhakti-yogena – by the practice of *bhakti-yoga*; *manasi* – upon the mind; *samyak* – perfectly; *praṇihite* – engaged in and fixed upon; *amale* – pure, without material affinity; *apaśyat* – saw; *puruṣam* – the Personality of Godhead; *pūrṇam* – complete; *māyām* – energy; *ca* – also; *tat* – His; *apāśrayam* – under full control.

By the power of *bhakti-yoga*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, being firmly concentrated in meditation with a purified mind, beheld

the all-perfect Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, fully endowed with His spiritual effulgence and His plenary portions. His potencies *yogamāyā* and *mahāmāyā* were under His shelter.

Whether free from desires or full of desires, one should worship Kṛṣṇa

**akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣam param**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.3.10)

akāmaḥ – one who has transcended all material desires; *sarva-kāmaḥ* – one who has the sum total of material desires; *vā* – either; *mokṣa-kāmaḥ* – one who desires liberation; *udāra-dhīḥ* – with broader intelligence; *tīvreṇa* – with great force; *bhakti-yogena* – by devotional service to the Lord; *yajeta* – should worship; *puruṣam* – Person, enjoyer; *param* – the Supreme.

Whether one is desireless, full of desires for sense enjoyment or desires liberation from material bondage, if he is intelligent he should worship the Supreme Person through intense and unalloyed cultivation of *bhakti-yoga*.

Kṛṣṇa is easily attained by His devotees but not by karmīs, yogīs or jñānīs

**nāyaṁ sukhāpo bhagavān
dehinām gopikā-sutaḥ**

jñāninām cātma-bhūtānām yathā bhaktimatām iha

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.21)

na – not; *ayam* – this; *sukha-āpaḥ* – very easily obtainable or an object of happiness; *bhagavān* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *dehinām* – of persons in the bodily concept of life, *karmīs*; *gopikā-sutaḥ* – Kṛṣṇa, the son of Mother Yaśodā; *jñāninām ca* – and of the *jñānīs*, who try to attain impersonal liberation; *ātma-bhūtānām* – of the *yogīs*, who try to attain self-realization by severe austerities; *yathā* – as; *bhakti-matām* – the devotees and eternal associates; *iha* – in this world.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of mother Yaśodā, is easily attained by His devotees who are absorbed in spontaneously and lovingly serving Him. But He is not at all easy to attain for the *karmīs* who are absorbed in the bodily concept of life, or the *jñānīs* who are absorbed in all-pervading, non-dual knowledge, or the *yogīs* who perform austerities to attain mystic perfections

Without bhakti one cannot see Kṛṣṇa

nāhaṁ vedair na tapasā na dānena na cejyayā śakya evaṁ-vidho draṣṭuṁ drṣṭavān asi yan mama

Bhagavad-gītā (11.53)

na – not; *aham* – I; *vedaiḥ* – by study of the Vedas; *na* – nor; *tapasā* – by austerities; *na* – not; *dānena* – by charitable acts;

na – nor; *ca* – and; *ījyayā* – by sacrifice; *śakyaḥ* – possible; *evaṁ-vidhaḥ* – in this way; *draṣṭum* – to see; *dr̥ṣṭavān asi* – you have seen; *yan* – which; *mama* – My.

It is not possible to see this extremely rare form of Mine, which you now behold, merely by studying the Vedas, practising austerities, giving in charity or performing sacrifices.

Only by exclusive bhakti can one know Kṛṣṇa and see His eternal svarūpa

**bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya aham evaṁ-vidho 'rjuna
jñātum draṣṭum ca tattvena praveṣṭum ca parantapa**

Bhagavad-gītā (11.54)

bhaktyā – by devotional service; *tu* – only; *ananyayā* – exclusive; *śakyaḥ* – possible; *aham* – I; *evaṁ-vidhaḥ* – in this way [in this unique human-like form]; *arjuna* – O Arjuna; *jñātum* – to know; *draṣṭum* – to see; *ca* – and; *tattvena* – truly; *praveṣṭum* – to enter [into association with Me]; *ca* – and; *parantapa* – O chastiser of the foe.

O Arjuna, conqueror of the foe, only by exclusive devotion can one actually know and see My exquisite human-like form and enter into association with Me in My abode.

Only by bhakti can one actually know Kṛṣṇa and enter into His pastimes

**bhaktyā mām abhijānāti yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā viśate tad-anantaram**

Bhagavad-gītā (18.55)

bhaktyā – by pure devotional service; *mām* – Me; *abhijānāti* – one can fully comprehend; *yāvān* – how great [My opulence]; *yaḥ ca asmi* – what My *svārūpa* is; *tattvataḥ* – in truth; *tataḥ* – then; *mām* – Me [My eternal pastimes]; *tattvataḥ* – in truth; *jñātvā* – having understood; *viśate* – one can enter; *tad-anantaram* – after leaving that *jñāna*.

It is only through pure devotional service that one can actually comprehend the truth concerning My glories and the nature of My original transcendental form. One who thus understands Me as I am enters My eternal pastimes on the strength of *prema-bhakti*.

Kṛṣṇa can be attained only through exclusive bhakti

**bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ
śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām
bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā
śva-pākān api sambhavāt**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.21)

bhaktyā – by devotional service; *aḥam* – I; *ekayā* – unalloyed; *grāhyaḥ* – am to be obtained; *śraddhayā* – by faith; *ātmā* –

the Supreme Soul; *priyaḥ* – the object of love; *satām* – of the devotees; *bhaktiḥ* – pure devotional service; *punāti* – purifies; *mat-niṣṭhā* – fixing Me as the only goal; *śva-pākān* – dog-eaters; *api* – even; *sambhavāt* – from the contamination of low birth.

O Uddhava, I who am the Supreme Soul and the beloved of the saintly devotees, can only be attained through devotion and faith. Through *bhakti*, I purify anyone who is firmly attached to Me even if he is born in a low [dog-eating] family.

I am controlled only by the bhakti of My pure devotees

**na sādhayati mām yogo na
sāṅkhyam dharma uddhava
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo
yathā bhaktir mamorjitā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.20)

na – not; *sādhayati* – brings under control; *mām* – Me; *yogaḥ* – the *yoga* system; *na* – nor; *sāṅkhyam* – the system of Sāṅkhya philosophy; *dharmaḥ* – pious activities within the *varṇāśrama* system; *uddhava* – My dear Uddhava; *na* – not; *svādhyāyaḥ* – Vedic study; *tapas* – austerity; *tyāgaḥ* – renunciation; *yathā* – as; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *mama* – unto Me; *ūrjitā* – powerful.

My dear Uddhava, I cannot be controlled by those who study Sāṅkhya philosophy or *śāstra*, or who perform

mystic *yoga*, pious acts, austerity or renunciation. I am controlled only by the powerful *bhakti* rendered to Me by My pure-hearted devotees.

Govindam ādi-puruṣam

**advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam
ādyam purāṇa-puruṣam nava-yauvanam ca
vedeṣu durlabham adurlabham ātma-bhaktau
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi**

Brahma-saṁhitā (33)

advaitam – nondual; *acyutam* – who is infallible; *anādim* – beginningless; *ananta-rūpam* – who possesses limitless forms; *ādyam* – who is the origin; *purāṇa-puruṣam* – who is the primeval person; *nava-yauvanam ca* – yet is ever-youthful; *vedeṣu durlabham* – whose *tattva* is difficult to determine through a study of the Vedas; *adurlabham* – but is understood without difficulty; *ātma-bhaktau* – by His own devotee; *govindam* – Śrī Govinda; *ādi-puruṣam* – that primeval Person; *tam* – unto Him; *aham bhajāmi* – I render service.

Although He is the non-dual Absolute Truth, infallible, beginningless, possessed of unlimited forms and is the primeval person, He is ever-youthful. Although He is incomprehensible to the Vedas, He is easily attainable by His own devotees. I engage in the devotional service of that *ādi-puruṣa*, Śrī Govinda.

*Only that which is offered with love and devotion
can attract Kṛṣṇa*

**patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.26)

patraṁ – a leaf; *puṣpaṁ* – a flower; *phalaṁ* – a fruit; *toyam* – or water; *yaḥ* – whoever; *me* – to Me; *bhaktyā* – with devotion; *prayacchati* – freely offers [without a desire for personal reward]; *tad* – that very thing; *ahaṁ* – I; *bhakti-upahṛtam* – presented with devotion; *aśnāmi* – accept; *prayata-ātmanaḥ* – from a pure-hearted devotee.

If any pure-hearted devotee offers Me a leaf, a flower, fruit or water with love and devotion, I will surely accept that gift.

The symptoms of bhakti in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.42)

bhaktiḥ – devotion; *para-īśa* – of Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord; *anubhavaḥ* – direct perception; *viraktiḥ* – detachment; *anyatra* –

from everything else; *ca* – and; *eṣaḥ* – this; *trikaḥ* – group of three; *eka-kālah* – simultaneously; *prapadyamānasya* – for one in the process of taking shelter of, or surrendering to, the Supreme Lord; *yathā* – in the same way as; *āsnataḥ* – for one engaged in eating; *syuḥ* – they occur; *tuṣṭiḥ* – satisfaction; *puṣṭiḥ* – nourishment; *kṣutapāyaḥ* – eradication of hunger; *anu-gbhāsam* – increasingly with each morsel.

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

Knowledge and detachment automatically follow bhakti

**vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ
janayati āśu vairāgyam jñānam ca yad ahaitukam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.7)

vāsudeve – unto Kṛṣṇa; *bhagavati* – unto the Personality of Godhead; *bhakti-yogaḥ* – devotional service; *prayojitaḥ* – being applied; *janayati* – it does produce; *āśu* – very soon; *vairāgyam* – detachment; *jñānam* – knowledge; *ca* – and; *yad* – which; *ahaitukam* – without desire for liberation.

Bhakti-yoga that is performed for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord Vāsudeva brings about detachment from all things unrelated to Him and gives rise to pure knowledge that is free from any motive for liberation and directed exclusively towards the attainment of Him.

Remaining equiposed in both happiness or distress

**duḥkheṣv anudvigna-manāḥ sukheṣu vigata-spr̥haḥ
vīta-rāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ sthita-dhīr munir ucyate**

Bhagavad-gītā (2.56)

duḥkheṣu – in the presence of the threefold miseries [*ādhyātmika* pains, given by oneself (bodily or mental), *ādhibhautika* pains, given by other living creatures, and *ādhidaivika* pains, given by the demigods, such as heat and cold]; *anudvigna-manāḥ* – one whose mind is unagitated; *sukheṣu* – in the presence of sense-pleasures; *vigata-spr̥haḥ* – and remains free from hankering; *vīta* – free from; *rāga* – attachment; *bhaya* – fear; *krodhaḥ* – and anger; *sthita-dhīḥ* – of fixed intelligence; *munir* – a sage; *ucyate* – is called.

One who is not disturbed by the three types of miseries – given by one’s own body or mind, given by others and given by the demigods or nature – who remains free from hankering in the presence of plentiful opportunities for sensual happiness, and who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage of steady mind.

Devotion to Kṛṣṇa, like watering the root of a tree, satisfies everything and everyone

**yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena
tr̥pyanti tat-skandha-bhujopaśākhāḥ
prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇām
tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.31.14)

yathā – as; *taror* – of a tree; *mūla* – the root; *niṣecanena* – by watering; *tr̥pyanti* – are satisfied; *tat* – its; *skandha* – trunk; *bhuja* – branches; *upaśākhāḥ* – and twigs; *prāṇa* – the life air; *upahārāt* – by feeding; *ca* – and; *yathā* – as; *indriyāṇām* – of the senses; *tathā eva* – similarly; *sarva* – of all living beings, demigods, forefathers, etc.; *arhaṇam* – worship; *acyuta* – of the infallible Lord; *ijyā* – worship.

By properly watering the root of a tree, its trunk, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and so forth, all become nourished, just as a person's life-air and senses are nourished by eating. Similarly, by worshipping Bhagavān Acyuta, everyone, including all the demigods, is worshipped.

One who has taken full shelter of Mukunda is not indebted to anyone

**devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇām pitṛṇām
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇī ca rājan**

**sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇam śaraṇyam
gato mukundam pariḥṛtya kartam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.41)

deva – of the demigods; *ṛṣi* – of the sages; *bhūta* – of ordinary living entities; *āpta* – of friends and relatives; *nṛṇām* – of ordinary men; *pitr̥ṇām* – of the forefathers; *na* – not; *kiṅkaraḥ* – the servant; *na* – nor; *ayam* – this one; *ṛṇī* – debtor; *ca* – also; *rājan* – O King; *sarva-ātmanā* – with his whole being; *yaḥ* – a person who; *śaraṇam* – shelter; *śaraṇyam* – the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who affords shelter to all; *gataḥ* – approached; *mukundam* – Mukunda; *pariḥṛtya* – giving up; *kartam* – duties.

One who has given up all other duties and has taken complete shelter of Bhagavān Mukunda, who is affectionate towards the surrendered, is not indebted nor is he a servant to the demigods, to his forefathers, to ordinary living entities or to relatives and guests. He is not subordinate to anyone other than Mukunda.

[These last two *śloka*s constitute *pramaṇa* that one who performs *bhakti* should do only *bhāgavat-bhajana* (Kṛṣṇa worship) and not *deva-bhajana* (demigod worship) or forefathers' worship (i.e. *śrāddha* ceremony).]

*Worshippers of the demigods should actually worship
Śrī Kṛṣṇa*

**ye 'py anya-devatā-bhaktā yajante śraddhayānvitāḥ
te 'pi mām eva kaunteya yajanty avidhi-pūrvakam**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.23)

ye – who; *api* – although; *anya-devatā* – other demigods; *bhaktāḥ* – devotees; *yajante* – worship; *śraddhayā anvitāḥ* – with faith; *te* – they; *api* – also; *mām* – Me; *eva* – certainly; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *yajanti* – worship; *avidhi-pūrvakam* – in a way that is contrary to the injunctions for attaining Me.

O son of Kuntī, those who worship other demigods with faith actually worship Me alone, but in a way that is unauthorized.

In Kali-yuga everyone is unfortunate and always disturbed

**prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ sabhya kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ
mandāḥ sumanda-matayo manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.10)

prāyeṇa – generally; *alpa* – short; *āyusaḥ* – duration of life; *sabhya* – O most exalted member [of the assembly of saints]; *kalau* – of Kali-yuga [the age of quarrel and hypocrisy]; *asmin* – herein; *yuge* – this age; *janāḥ* – people; *mandāḥ* – lazy; *sumanda-matayaḥ* – having misguided intelligence; *mandabhāgyāḥ* – unlucky; *hi* – and above all; *upadrutāḥ* – disturbed.

O learned one, in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, most people have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and, above all, always disturbed.

*Any activity which doesn't inspire attraction for
hari-kathā is simply a waste of time*

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

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.8)

dharmah – occupation; *sv-anuṣṭhitah* – nicely executed in terms of one's own position; *puṁsām* – of humankind; *viṣvaksena* – of the Personality of Godhead [plenary portion]; *kathāsu* – in the narrations; *yah* – what is; *na* – not; *utpādayet* – does produce; *yadi* – if; *ratim* – attraction; *śramah* – [useless] labour; *eva* – only; *hi* – certainly; *kevalam* – entirely.

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

Cutting the knot in the heart

**bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāsa karmāṇi mayi dṛṣṭe 'khilātmani**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.21, 11.20.30)

bbidyate – pierced; *hr̥daya* – heart; *granthibīḥ* – knots; *chidyante* – cut to pieces; *sarva* – all; *saṁśayāḥ* – misgivings; *kṣīyante* – destroyed; *ca* – and; *asya* – his; *karmāṇi* – karma, the chain of fruitive actions and reactions; *mayi* – when I; *dṛṣṭe* – am seen; *akbila-ātmani* – as the Paramātma in everyone’s heart.

When the *sādhaka* directly sees Me as Paramātma situated in the heart of all living entities, the knot of the false ego in his heart is pierced, all his doubts are cut to pieces and his desires for fruitive activities are completely eradicated.

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “Kṛṣṇa says, ‘By bringing Me – the Soul of all souls – into one’s heart, the hard knot in the heart is torn asunder and the flow of one’s innate tendency for divine love will inundate one’s entire being’” (Conversation on November 2, 1982).

Mahāprabhu’s instruction to Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

**bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā pariḥ
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā mānase karibe**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (6.236–7)

bhāla – well; *nā khāibe* – do not eat; *āra* – and; *bhāla* – nicely; *nā pariḥ* – do not dress; *vraje* – in the land of Vraja; *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā* – service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa; *mānase* – within the mind; *karibe* – you should do.

You should neither eat palatable foodstuffs nor dress yourself luxuriously. Rather, within your mind, you should always perform *sevā* to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.

Dovetailing everything in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa

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

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.255),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

anāsaktasya – of one who is without attachment; *viṣayān* – to material sense objects; *yathā-arham* – according to suitability; *upayuñjataḥ* – engaging; *nirbandhaḥ* – without attachment; *kṛṣṇa-sambandhe* – in relationship with Kṛṣṇa; *yuktaṁ* – connected; *vairāgyam* – renunciation; *ucyate* – is called.

A person without attachment to sense enjoyment who accepts whatever facilities are appropriate for the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not bound by such activities. Such detachment is said to be *yukta-vairāgya* which means renunciation through always maintaining a connection with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The higher taste śloka

**viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ
rasa-varjaṁ raso 'py asya paraṁ drṣṭvā nivartate**

Bhagavad-gītā (2.59)

viṣayāḥ – the sense objects; *vinivartante* – are forcibly restrained; *nirāhārasya* – for who practices sense-restraint such as fasting; *dehinaḥ* – for an ignorant person in the bodily concept of life;

rasa-varjam – devoid of taste [for sense objects]; *rasah* – [there is] a taste; *api* – however; *asya* – for such a person of fixed intelligence; *param* – of Paramātmā, the Supersoul; *dr̥ṣṭvā* – having seen or realized; *nivartate* – refrains.

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

Chanting, remembering and crying in separation

**bhakti-yoga bhakti-yoga bhakti-yoga dhana
bhakti ei kṛṣṇa nāma smaraṇa krandaṇa**

(source unknown)

bhakti yoga – devotional service; *dhana* – treasure; *bhakti* – devotion; *ei* – this; *kṛṣṇa nāma* – Kṛṣṇa’s name; *smaraṇa* – remembering; *krandaṇa* – crying.

If you desire to attain the treasure of *bhakti-yoga* you have to chant and remember Kṛṣṇa’s name and weep for His mercy.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “Kṛṣṇa likes one tear more than a thousand words. If we cry for Kṛṣṇa as we chant His names, His heart will melt and He will bestow His mercy. We should pray with our hearts. Our words and hearts should be one. When we pray, our hearts should

emanate from our bodies in the shape of tears, and then the fruit will come. We cannot achieve this without the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or one of His special associates. We are able to weep for worldly things, for our sense gratification, but not for *bhakti*. We are able to perform external services, but we don't know how to weep. We should want to weep from our hearts as we call out, 'O Rādhe, O Kṛṣṇa, O Gurudeva.'"

The six results of pure bhakti described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

**kleśa-gṇnī śubhadā mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt sudurlabhā
sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca śā**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.17),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

(1) *kleśa-gṇnī* – Śrīmatī Bhakti-devī destroys all kinds of distress; (2) *śubhadā* – she awards all kinds of good fortune; (3) *mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt* – she makes the pleasure of impersonal liberation appear insignificant; (4) *sudurlabhā* – she is rarely achieved; (5) *sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā* – her nature is imbued with the most intense and superlative bliss; (6) *śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī* – she is the sole means to attract Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The method of performing very deep and confidential bhajana

**samam śrī-rūpeṇa smara-
vivaśa-rādhā-giribhṛtor**

**vraje sākṣāt-sevā-labhana-
vidhaye tad-gaṇa-yujoh
tad-ijyākhyā-dhyāna-śravaṇa-
nati-pañcāmṛtam idam
dhayan nityā govardhanam
anudinam tvam bhaja manaḥ**

Manah-śikṣā (11),

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

samam – in accordance with; *śrī-rūpeṇa* – with [the teachings of] Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī; *smara* – with amorous love; *vivaśa* – overwhelmed; *rādhā-giri-bhṛtoḥ* – of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Giridhārī; *vraje* – in Vraja; *sākṣāt* – the direct; *sevā* – service; *labhana* – of obtaining; *vidhaye* – for the method; *tad-gaṇa-yujoh* – along with Their associates; *tad-ijya* – worshipping Them; *ākhyā* – describing (Their names, forms, pastimes, etc.); *dhyāna* – meditating; *śravaṇa* – hearing; *nati* – bowing down; *pañca* – five; *amṛtam* – nectars; *idam* – this; *dhayan* – drinking; *nityā* – regularly; *govardhanam* – Śrī Govardhana; *anudinam* – every day; *tvam* – you; *bhaja* – worship; *manaḥ* – O mind.

[*Now the method of performing very deep and confidential bhajana is being explained:*]

O my dear mind, in order to obtain the direct service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Giridhārī, who are always entranced by amorous desire, and the service of Their eternal associates in Vraja, one should regularly drink the *pañcāmṛta* of service to Them in accordance with the method prescribed

by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. This *pañcāmṛta* is ambrosial nectar comprised of the following five ingredients: worship of Śrī Yūgala (*arcana*), describing the glories of Their transcendental names, forms, qualities and pastimes (*saṅkīrtana*), meditating upon Them (*dhyāna*), hearing the glories of Their names, forms, qualities and pastimes (*śravaṇa*) and offering *praṇāma* unto Them. In addition, one should worship Śrī Govardhana daily in accordance with the precepts of *bhakti*.

Types of Bhakti

*Karma-miśra-bhakti, bhakti mixed with
fruitive desires or activities*

**yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva mad-arpaṇam**

Bhagavad-gītā (9.27)

yat – whatever; *karoṣi* – undertakings you make; *yat* – whatever; *aśnāsi* – you eat; *yat* – whatever; *juhoṣi* – you sacrifice; *dadāsi* – you give in charity; *yat* – whatever; *yat* – whatever; *tapasyasi* – austerities you perform; *kaunteya* – O son of Kuntī; *tat* – that; *kuruṣva* – you must do; *mat-arpaṇam* – as an offering to Me.

O son of Kuntī, whatever activities you perform, whatever you eat, whatever you sacrifice and give in charity and whatever austerities you perform, offer them all to Me.

*Jñāna-miśra-bhakti, bhakti mixed with speculative
knowledge aimed at impersonal liberation*

**brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām**

Bhagavad-gītā (18.54)

brahma-bhūtaḥ – one who is situated in spiritual realization; *prasanna-ātmā* – a fully joyful soul; *na śocati* – he does not lament; *na* – nor; *kāṅkṣati* – hanker; *samaḥ* – equal; *sarveṣu* – to

all; *bhūteṣu* – beings; *mad-bhaktim* – My pure bhakti; *labhate* – he attains; *parām* – which is blessed with the symptoms of *prema*.

A person thus situated in realization of *brahma* becomes fully joyful. He neither laments nor hankers for anything. Being equally disposed to all beings, he attains My pure *bhakti*, which is blessed with the symptoms of *prema*.

The definition śloka of vaidhī-bhakti

**yatra rāgānavāptatvāt pravṛttir upajāyate
śāsanenaiva śāstrasya sāvaidhā bhaktir ucyate**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.6),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

yatra – when; *rāga* – intense attachment [for *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, etc.]; *anavāptatvāt* – on account of not having attained; *pravṛttiḥ* – engagement in devotional practice; *upajāyate* – becomes manifest; *śāsanena* – on account of the injunction; *eva* – merely; *śāstrasya* – of the *śāstra*; *sā* – that; *vaidhā bhaktiḥ* – regulated *bhakti*; *ucyate* – is called.

When attachment or spontaneous loving service to the Lord has not manifested and one is engaged in the service of the Lord simply out of obedience to the order of *śrī guru* or due to the injunctions of the scriptures, such obligatory service is called *vaidhī-bhakti*.

[The *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* (primary aspect) is absence of spontaneous attraction; the *gauna-lakṣaṇa* (secondary characteristic) is that such service is motivated by fear of *sastric* injunctions.]

The definition śloka of rāgānuga-bhakti

**virājantīm abhivyaktām vraja-vāsi-janādiṣu
rāgātmikām anusṛtā yā sa rāgānugocyate**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.270),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

virājantīm – the brilliant; *abhivyaktām* – full manifestation; *vraja-vāsi-jana-ādiṣu* – among the eternal residents of Vraja; *rāga-ātmikām* – whose intrinsic nature is profound and spontaneous love; *anusṛtā* – follows; *yā* – which; *sā* – that; *rāga-anugā* – devotional service following in the wake of *rāgātmika-bhakti*; *ucyate* – it is said.

Devotional service imbued with spontaneous, profound love and attachment (*rāgātmika-bhakti*), is vividly expressed and manifested by the eternal residents of Vṛndāvana. Devotional service that follows their devotional mood is called *rāgānuga-bhakti*, or devotional service following in the wake of the *rāgātmika* associates of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “It is essential to clearly understand the difference between *rāgātmika* and *rāgānuga*. *Rāga* means ‘profound attachment for the object of

one's love' or 'that towards which the heart goes spontaneously without any effort or deliberation'; *ātmika* means 'imbued with' and *anuga* means 'following in the footsteps'. Therefore the term *rāgātmika* refers exclusively to perfected souls, the eternal associates of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja, while *rāgānuga* refers to conditioned souls who practise *bhakti* in this world with an intense greed to attain the *rāgātmika-bhāva* of the Vrajavāsīs."

The definition of rāgānuga-bhakti in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta

**rāgātmika-bhakti 'mukhyā' vraja-vāsi-jane
tāra anugata bhaktira 'rāgānugā'-nāme**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.149)

rāgātmika-bhakti – spontaneous devotional service; *mukhyā* – pre-eminent; *vraja-vāsi-jane* – in the inhabitants of Vraja, or Vṛndāvana; *tāra* – that; *anugata* – following; *bhaktira* – of devotional service; *rāgānugā-nāme* – named *rāgānugā* or following after spontaneous devotional service.

That devotion whose very essence is constituted of eternal spontaneous attachment (*rāga*) is known as *rāgātmika-bhakti*. That devotion is topmost amongst all forms of *bhakti* and manifests only in the Vrajavāsīs. Devotion which follows in the wake of this *rāgātmika-bhakti* is known as *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

The method of rāgānuga-bhakti (1)

**kr̥ṣṇam smaran janam cāsyā preṣṭham nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau kuryād vāsam vraje sadā**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.294),

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

kr̥ṣṇam – Lord Kṛṣṇa; *smaran* – remembering; *janam* – a devotee; *ca* – and; *asya* – of His; *preṣṭham* – very dear; *nija-samīhitam* – his [the dear devotee’s] activities, moods, etc.; *tat-tat-kathā* – for the topics of Their various pastimes; *rataḥ* – attachment; *ca* – and; *asau* – that person; *kuryād* – should practice; *vāsam* – residing; *vraje* – in Vraja; *sadā* – always.

One should constantly remember one’s dearest *navakīśora* Śrī Nanda-nandana and the beloved associate(s) of Kṛṣṇa [who possesses *sajātīya-bhāva* or the identical mood for which one aspires]. One should remember that devotee’s endeavors, his confidential moods and so forth. One should always reside in Śrī Vraja-dhāma with great attachment for hearing topics regarding Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His eternal associates. [If one is physically unable to live in Vraja, one should do so mentally.]

The method of rāgānuga-bhakti (2)

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

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.295),

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

sevā – service; *sādhaka-rūpeṇa* – with the external body as a devotee practising regulative devotional service; *siddha-rūpeṇa* – with a perfected spiritual body suitable for *nitya-sevā*; *ca* – also; *atra* – in this connection; *hi* – certainly; *tat* – of the dear devotee of Kṛṣṇa; *bhāva* – the mood; *lipsunā* – with a desire to obtain; *kāryā* – this should be performed; *vraja-loka* – of a particular servant(s) of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana; *anusārataḥ* – by following in the footsteps.

A *sādhaka* who has developed greed for *rāgānuga-bhakti* should serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa both in his *sādhaka-rūpa* and in his *siddha-rūpa* in accordance with the *bhāva* of the Vrajavāsīs who possess the same mood for which he aspires.

Serving in both the sādhaka-rūpa and the siddha-rūpa

**nijābhīṣṭa-kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha pācheta' lāgiyā
nirantara sevā kare antarmanā hañā**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.159)

nija-abhīṣṭa – one's own choice; *kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha* – the servitor of Kṛṣṇa; *pācheta' lāgiyā* – following; *nirantara* – twenty-four hours a day; *sevā* – service; *kare* – executes; *antarmanā* – within the mind; *hañā* – being.

The eternal residents of Vraja are known as *kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha*, very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Among Kṛṣṇa's various devotees, those who possess the mood of service towards Him for which one intensely hankers are known as *nijābhīṣṭa-kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha*. Following in the footsteps of those beloved

associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for whose mood of service one hankers, one should constantly serve Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa within the mind through one's internally conceived, eternal spiritual form.

The performance of vaidhī-bhakti is also a necessary part of rāgānuga-bhakti

**śravaṇotkīrtanādīni vaidha-bhakty-uditāni tu
yāny aṅgāni ca tāny atra vijñeyāni manīṣibhiḥ**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.296),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

śravaṇa – hearing; *utkīrtanaḥ* – loud chanting; *ādīni* – and so forth; *vaidha-bhakti* – devotional service performed under *vidhi* (regulation of the scripture); *uditāni* – which awakens; *tu* – but; *yāni* – which; *aṅgāni* – limbs; *ca* – and; *tāni* – all those; *atra* – here; *vijñeyāni* – understood; *manīṣibhiḥ* – by the thoughtful.

The *aṅgas* of *bhakti* such as *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, *śrī-guru-padāśraya* and others, which have already been described in regard to *vaidhī-bhakti*, are recognised by intelligent persons to also be useful and necessary in *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “Most of us do not practise *rāgānuga-bhakti*. We are not qualified for that. However we practise a special kind called *rāga-pravṛtti vaidhī-bhakti*, *vaidhī-bhakti* which is aimed at attaining *rāgānuga-bhakti*.”

A prayer to attain spontaneous love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa

**yuvatīnām yathā yūni yūnām ca yuvatau yathā
mano 'bhiramate tadvan mano me ramatām tvayi**

Padma Purāṇa

yuvatīnām – of young girls; *yathā* – as; *yūni* – for a young boy; *yūnām* – of young boys; *ca* – and; *yuvatau* – for a young girl; *yathā* – as; *manaḥ* – mind; *abbhiramate* – takes pleasure; *tadvan* – so; *manaḥ* – mind; *me* – of me; *ramatām* – may take pleasure; *tvayi* – in You.

O my Lord, just as young girls have natural attraction for young boys, and young boys have natural attraction for young girls, I am praying at Your lotus feet that my mind may become attracted unto You in the same spontaneous way.

The eligibility for rāgānuga-bhakti: greed

**rāgātmikaika-niṣṭhā ye vrajavāsi-janādayaḥ
teṣām bhāvāptaye lubdho bhaved atrādhikāravān**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.291),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

rāgātmika-eka-niṣṭhāḥ – who have exclusive attachment for the *rāgātmika* persons such as Nanda, Subala, etc.; *ye* – those; *vrajavāsi-jana* – persons residing in Vraja [in their *svarūpa*]; *ādayaḥ* – and so forth [those who have taken the Vrajavāsis' association as their life and soul]; *teṣām* – their [the *rāgātmika*

persons]; *bhāva-āptaye* – to attain the mood; *lubdhaḥ* – greed; *bhavet* – can become; *atra* – then; *adbikāravān* – the eligibility to be a *rāgānuga-bhakta*.

The greed of those devotees who, while residing in Vraja, cultivate exclusive and fixed determination to attain the *bhāva* of the *rāgātmika-jana* (the eternal associates of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja), establishes their qualification as *rāgānuga-jana*.

Transcendental greed (lobha)

**lobhe vraja-vāsīra bhāve kare anugati
śāstra-yukti nāhi māne rāgānugāra prakṛti**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.153)

lobhe – with such greed for; *vraja-vāsīra bhāve* – in the moods of the inhabitants of Vraja; *kare anugati* – follows; *śāstra-yukti* – injunctions or reasonings of the *śāstras*; *nāhi māne* – does not consider; *rāgānugāra* – of spontaneous devotion; *prakṛti* – the nature.

When one follows in the footsteps of the residents of Vraja by cultivating their devotional moods with intense greed, he does not consider the injunctions of the scriptures or their reasoning. This is the nature of spontaneous devotion.

The definition śloka of rāgātmika-bhakti

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

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.272),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

iṣṭe – for one’s worshipable Deity; *svā-rasikī* – spontaneous; *rāga* – deep attachment; *parama-āviṣṭatā* – characterised by intense absorption; *bhavet* – if there is; *tan-mayī* – of an identical nature; *yā* – which; *bhavet* – if there is; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *sā* – that; *atra* – here; *rāgātmikā-uditā* – the springing forth of the *rāga* nature.

Rāga is a spontaneous and profound attachment for one’s *iṣṭadeva* (worshipable Deity, i.e. Mahāprabhu or Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa) while being completely absorbed in thoughts of Them, with an intense desire to love and serve Them. That *bhakti* which is permeated with such intense feelings of spontaneous love is called *rāgātmika-bhakti*.

The two types of rāgātmika-bhakti

sā kāma-rūpā sambandha-rūpā ceti bhaved dvidhā

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.273),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

sā – that; *kāma-rūpā* – devotion due to divine lust; *sambandha-rūpā* – devotion due to pre-existing relationship; *ca* – and; *iti* – thus; *bhavet* – it should be; *dvidhā* – of two kinds.

[*Devotional service under the heading of rāgātmika-bhakti is divided further into two categories:*]

The first is called *kāmarūpa-bhakti* and refers to the *gopīs'* devotion which arises in the form of divine lust [i.e. transcendental desire to give Śrī Kṛṣṇa pleasure in conjugal love]. The other category is called *sambandharūpa*, devotion in the form of parental affection (*vātsalya-rasa*) or friendly relationship (*sakhyā-rasa*) with Kṛṣṇa.

[*Kāma-rūpa-bhakti* has two forms: *sambhoga-icchāmayī*, desiring to enjoy with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and *tat-tad bhāva icchāmayī*, desiring to experience the *bhāvas* or moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, but not to enjoy directly with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.]

tat-tad-bhāva-icchāmayī

Ujvala-nīlamanī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

tat tat – the various; *bhāva* – for the moods [of Rādhikā]; *icchāmayī* – consists of desires;

The exclusive desire to experience the moods of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja: “The desire [of the *mañjarī-gopīs*] is to unmotivatedly render service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā in Her dalliances with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the same way that the leaves and flowers of a creeper experience the happiness and distress of the creeper, the *mañjarīs* naturally taste *tat-tad-bhāva* (each and every one of Her sweet *bhāvas*).

They do not desire direct union with Kṛṣṇa even in their dreams – this is the essence of *rādhā-dāsyam*.”

The method to attain residence in Vraja on the platform of rāgātmika-bhakti

**yadīccher āvāsam vraja-bhuvi
sa-rāgam prati-janur
yuva-dvandvam tac cet paricaritum
ārād abhilaṣeḥ
svarūpaṁ śrī-rūpaṁ sa-gaṇam
iha tasyāgrajam api
sphuṭam premṇā nityam smara
nama tadā tvam śṛṇu manaḥ**

*Manaḥ-śikṣā (3),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī*

yadi – if; *iccheḥ* – you desire; *āvāsam* – residence; *vraja-bhuvi* – in the land of Vraja; *sa-rāgam* – with *rāgātmika-bhakti*; *prati-janur* – in every birth; *yuva-dvandvam* – the youthful divine couple; *tac* – that; *cet* – if; *paricaritum* – to serve; *ārāt* – directly; *abhilaṣeḥ* – you desire; *svārūpam* – Svārūpa Dāmodara; *śrī-rūpam* – Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī; *sa-gaṇam* – with their associates; *iba* – here [in Vraja]; *tasya* – of him; *agrajam* – his elder brother; *api* – also; *sphuṭam* – distinctly; *preṇṇā* – with love; *nityam* – always; *smara* – remember; *nama* – bow down; *tadā* – then; *tvam* – you; *śṛṇu* – listen; *manaḥ* – O mind.

My dear mind! Please hear me. If you are eager to reside in Vraja with a mood of spontaneous devotion and if you desire to obtain the direct service of *nava-yugala-kiśora*, Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, then birth after birth always distinctly remember and bow down with great love to Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, his elder brother Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī and all other associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who are recipients of His mercy.

Rūpānuga-bhakti: those who follow Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

**bhaktiḥ pūrvaiḥ śritā tān tu
rasam paśyed yad-āta-dhiḥ
tam naumi satatam rūpa-
nāma-priya-janam hareḥ**

Madhurya-kādambinī (1.2),
Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

bhaktiḥ – the path of *bhakti*; *pūrvaiḥ* – by previous authorities; *śritāḥ* – taken shelter of; *tān* – them; *tu* – but; *rasam* – *rasa*, the science of cultivating the five primary relationships with Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *paśyet* – one can see and understand; *yat* – by which; *āta* – one attains; *dhiḥ* – intelligence; *tam* – unto him; *naumi* – I offer my obeisances; *satatam* – constantly; *rūpa-nāma* – whose name is Rūpa; *priya-janam* – dearest associate; *hareḥ* – of [Gaura] Hari.

Because the previous *mahājanas* such as Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Jayadeva Gosvāmī, the four Kumāras

and so forth have shown the path of *bhakti*, I offer my respectful *praṇāma* unto them. However, I especially offer incessant praise unto that personality, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who is most dear to Śrī Gaurahari, for by his mercy one can now attain the intelligence to understand the nature of *bhakti-rasa*.

*One who follows the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī will
attain the matchless gem of service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa*

**manaḥ-śikṣā-daikādaśaka-varam etan madhurayā
girā gāyaty uccaiḥ samadhi-gata-sarvārtha-tati yaḥ
sa-yūthaḥ śrī-rūpānuga iha bhavan gokula-vane
jano rādhā-kṛṣṇātula-bhajana-ratnam sa labhate**

Manah-śikṣā (12),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

manaḥ – to the mind; *śikṣā* – instructions; *da* – giving; *ekādaśaka* – eleven verses; *varam* – excellent; *etat* – this; *madhurayā* – with a sweet; *girā* – voice; *gāyati* – sings; *uccaiḥ* – loudly; *samadhi-gata* – having thoroughly understood; *sarva* – all; *artha-tati* – the many meanings; *yaḥ* – who; *sa-yūthaḥ* – within the group; *śrī-rūpa-anugaḥ* – a follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī; *iha* – now; *bhavan* – becoming; *gokula-vane* – in this Gokula forest; *janaḥ* – the person; *rādhā-kṛṣṇa* – unto Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *atula* – incomparable; *bhajana* – of worship; *ratnam* – jewel; *saḥ* – he; *labhate* – attains.

[While instructing his own mind, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī offers the following benediction in order to inspire others to study and recite this stotra known as Manah-śikṣā:]

Any person in this world who loudly sings in a sweet voice this excellent prayer containing eleven instructions to the mind, after thoroughly understanding all of its many meanings, certainly becomes a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava within the group of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and attains the incomparable gem of the worship of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa within the forest of Gokula.

Śravaṇa

The Glories of Hearing Hari-kathā

For the *ślokas*: *anugrahāya bhaktānām, satām prasaṅgām mama vīrya-saṁvido, vikriḍitam vraja-vadhūbhir*, see *Essential Ślokas*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa cleanses inauspicious desires in the heart of those who hear His hari-kathā

**śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hr̥di antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.17)

śṛṅvatām – for those who hear; *sva-kathāḥ* – topics about Himself; *kṛṣṇaḥ* – the all-attractive Person; *puṇya* – who purifies; *śravaṇa* – and hearing; *kīrtanaḥ* – through chanting; *hr̥di* – in the heart; *antaḥ sthaḥ* – situated within; *hi* – certainly; *abhadrāṇi* – inauspicious desires; *vidhunoti* – He cleanses; *suhṛt* – the benefactor; *satām* – of the saintly devotees.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is situated in everyone’s heart and is the benefactor of the saintly devotees, cleanses the inauspicious desires for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who hears His narrations, which bring about virtuous consciousness when properly heard and chanted.

Drinking the nectar of hari-kathā through the ears

**pibanti ye bhagavata ātmanaḥ satām
kathāmṛtam śravaṇa-puteṣu sambhṛtam
punanti te viṣaya-vidūṣitāśayam
vrajanti tac-caraṇa-saroruhāntikam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.2.37)

pibanti – they drink; *ye* – who; *bhagavataḥ* – of the all-opulent Personality of Godhead; *ātmanaḥ* – of the soul; *satām* – of the saints; *kathā-amṛtam* – the nectar of topics about Śrī Hari; *śravaṇa-puteṣu* – through the earholes; *sambhṛtam* – fully filled; *punanti* – purify; *te* – their; *viṣaya* – for material enjoyment; *vidūṣita-āśayam* – contaminated desires; *vrajanti* – they go; *tac* – Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *caraṇa* – feet; *saro-ruha-antikam* – near the lotus.

Those who drink through their ears *hari-kathā* which is filled with the ambrosial pastimes of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who are the life and soul of the devotees, purify the contaminated desires for mundane enjoyment and thus attain the lotus feet of the Divine Couple.

*Hari-kathā from the mouths of pure devotees carries
the aroma of the saffron dust of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet*

**sa uttamaśloka mahan-mukha-cyutaḥ
bhavat-padāmbhoja-sudhā-kaṇānilaḥ**

**smṛtiṁ punar vismṛta-tattva-vartmanām
kuyoginām no vitaraty alam varaiḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.20.25)

saḥ – that; *uttama-śloka* – O Lord, who is praised by beautiful ślokas; *mahat* – of great devotees; *mukha-cyutaḥ* – delivered from the mouths; *bhavat* – of Your; *pada-ambhoja* – from the lotus feet; *sudhā* – of nectar; *kaṇa* – [carrying] particles; *anilaḥ* – soothing breeze; *smṛtim* – remembrance; *punaḥ* – again; *vismṛta-tattva* – of forgetting the truth; *vartmanām* – of those who are on the path; *ku-yoginām* – of persons not in the line of devotional service; *naḥ* – of us; *vitirati* – restores; *alam* – unnecessary; *varaiḥ* – other benedictions.

[*Prṥbu Mahārāja* prayed:] “O Lord, You are praised by transcendental ślokas. The breeze carrying the saffron particles from Your lotus feet is delivered from the mouths of great devotees and restores the remembrance of imperfect *yogīs* such as us who have forgotten the truth. Of what use are any other benedictions?”

*Unlimited rivers of pure nectar flow from the
lotus mouths of pure devotees*

**tasmin mahan-mukharitā madhubhic-caritra-
pīyūṣa-śeṣa-saritaḥ paritaḥ sraṇanti
tā ye pibanty avitrṣo nṛpa gāḍha-karṇais
tān na sprṣanty aśana-tṛḍ-bhaya-śoka-mohāḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.29.40)

tasmin – there; *mahat* – of great saintly persons; *mukharitāḥ* – emanating from the mouths; *madhu-bhit* – of the killer of the Madhu demon; *caritra* – the activities or the character; *pīyūṣa* – of nectar; *śeṣa* – surplus; *saritaḥ* – rivers; *paritaḥ* – all around; *sravanti* – flow; *tāḥ* – all of them; *ye* – they who; *pibanti* – drink; *avitr̥ṣaḥ* – without being satisfied; *nṛpa* – O King; *gāḍha* – attentive; *karnaiḥ* – with their ears; *tān* – them; *na* – never; *spṛśanti* – touch; *aśana* – hunger; *tr̥ṣ* – thirst; *bhaya* – fear; *śoka* – lamentation; *mohāḥ* – illusion.

In assemblies of great saints, rivers overflowing with pure nectar flow from the lotus mouths of great souls in the form of descriptions of the transcendental character, pastimes and qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the slayer of the Madhu demon. Those who drink without satiation through their thirsty ears from these rivers of nectar, are never touched by hunger and thirst and they become free from lamentation, illusion and fear.

Nāma-saṅkīrtana

Nāma-kīrtana is the only way in Kali-yuga

**harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā**

Bṛhan-nārādīya Purāṇa (38.126)

hareḥ nāma – the holy name of Śrī Hari; *hareḥ nāma* – the holy name of Śrī Hari; *hareḥ nāma* – the holy name of Śrī Hari; *eva* – certainly; *kevalam* – only; *kalau* – in Kali-yuga; *na asti* – there is not; *eva* – certainly; *na asti* – there is not; *eva* – certainly; *na asti* – there is not; *eva* – certainly; *gatiḥ* – destination, way; *anyathā* – any other.

To attain one's spiritual goal in Kali-yuga, there is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way than to chant the holy name, chant the holy name, chant the holy name.

Nāma-kīrtana is the best way to attain perfection in Kali-yuga

**kr̥te yad dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ tretāyām yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyām kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.3.52)

kr̥te – in Satya-yuga; *yat* – which; *dhyāyataḥ* – from meditation; *viṣṇuṁ* – on Lord Viṣṇu; *tretāyām* – in Tretā-yuga; *yajataḥ* – from worship; *makhaiḥ* – by performing sacrifices; *dvāpare* – in Dvāpara-yuga; *paricaryāyām* – by worshipping the Deity

form of Kṛṣṇa; *kalau* – in Kali-yuga; *tat* – that same result (can be achieved); *hari-kīrtanāt* – by *hari-kīrtana*, describing the names, form, qualities and so forth of Śrī Hari.

That which could only be attained in Satya-yuga by meditating upon Viṣṇu without interruption, in Tretā-yuga by perfect ceremonial fire sacrifices and in Dvāpara-yuga by extravagant ritual worship of the deity form of the Lord, is all attainable in Kali-yuga by performing *śrī hari-kīrtana*.

Definition of kīrtana

nāma-līlā-guṇādīnām uccair bhāṣā tu kīrtana

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.145),

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

nāma – name; *līlā* – pastimes; *guṇa-dīnām* – of the qualities, etc.; *uccaiḥ* – loudly; *bhāṣā* – chanting; *tu* – indeed; *kīrtana* – is *kīrtana*.

Kīrtana is defined as loudly chanting the glories of the Lord, beginning with the names, pastimes and qualities of Kṛṣṇa.

Definition of saṅkīrtana

sarvato bhāvena kīrtana—saṅkīrtana

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's
commentary on *Śikṣāṣṭaka* (1)

sarvataḥ – in every way; *bhāvena* – through one’s moods; *kīrtana* – describing the glories of the Lord, through singing, discussing, writing, drama and dancing in accordance with one’s special mood.

saṅkīrtana: *sam* – *sambandha* (with knowledge of one’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa); *kīrtana* – glorification of Kṛṣṇa’s names, form, qualities and pastimes.

Saṅkīrtana means complete *kīrtana*, or in other words, *kīrtana* that is performed in full knowledge of *sambandha* and completely free from *anarthas* and *aparādhas*.

bahubhir militvā kīrtayeti—saṅkīrtanam

When many meet together and chant, this is known as *saṅkīrtanam*

Loud kīrtana is a hundred times better than silent japa

**japato hari-nāmāni sthāne śata-gunādhikaḥ
ātmanam ca punāty uccair japau śrotrṇ punāti ca**

Bṛhad Nāradiya Purāṇa

japataḥ – than chanting; *hari-nāmāni* – the Holy Names; *sthāne* – in a [solitary] place; *śata* – one hundred times; *guna* – of quality; *ādhikaḥ* – greater; *ātmanam* – one’s self; *ca* – and; *punāti* – one purifies; *uccaiḥ* – loudly; *japaḥ* – chanting; *śrotrṇ* – hearers; *punāti* – one purifies; *ca* – as well.

A person who chants *śrī hari-nāma* loudly is one hundred times superior to one who chants quietly. The person who chants quietly only benefits and purifies himself, whereas one who chants loudly also benefits and purifies all who hear him, such as animals, insects, birds, trees and creepers. [Such entities cannot chant, but they can be delivered from the ocean of birth and death simply by hearing this *harināma*.]

One who has taken birth in the land of India should preach

**bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya janma yāñra
janma sārthaka kari' kara para-upakāra**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (9.41)

bbārata – of India [the land where there is *rati* (attachment) for *bhā* (Śrī Bhagavān, who is the sustainer and protector of all beings)]; *bbūmite* – in the land; *haila* – has become; *manuṣya* – a human being; *janma* – birth; *yāñra* – anyone; *janma* – such a birth; *sārthaka* – becomes meaningful and fulfilled; *kari'* – doing so; *kara* – do; *para* – others; *upakāra* – benefit.

One who has taken his birth as a human being in the holy land of India (Bhāratvarṣa) should make his life successful and work for the benefit of all other people. [In other words, he should himself perform the *sādhana* of *śuddha-bhakti* by accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of *śrī guru* and inspire others to do the same. This alone is the highest form of benevolence.]

*Gaurasundara's followers preach the Holy Name
to whomever they meet*

**yāre dekha, tāre kaha kṛṣṇa-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (7.128)

yāre – whomever; *dekha* – you meet; *tāre* – him; *kaha* – tell; *kṛṣṇa-upadeśa* – the instructions of the Lord in *Bhagavad-gīta* and the instructions to worship Kṛṣṇa in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *āmāra ājñāya* – under My order; *guru hañā* – becoming a spiritual master; *tāra'* – deliver; *ei deśa* – this country.

Instruct whomever you meet in devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Teach them the instructions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā* and the teachings about Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this way, on my order, become a *guru* and liberate everyone in the land.

*“The chanting of My name will be heard in every
town and village”*

**prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma**

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya-līlā (4.126)

prthivīte – on the face of the earth; *āche* – are; *yata* – as many; *nagara-ādi grāma* – cities and villages; *sarvatra* – everywhere; *pracāra haibe* – will be preached; *mora nāma* – My holy name.

In as many cities, towns and villages as there are on the surface of the earth, My holy names will be preached and chanted.

Preaching is the symptom of spiritual life

**prāṇa āche yān'ra, se hetu pracāra
pratiṣṭhāśā-hīna kṛṣṇa gāthā saba**

Vaiṣṇava Ke?

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda

prāṇa – life; *āche* – there is; *yān'ra* – for one who has; *se hetu* – for that reason; *pracāra* – preaching; *pratiṣṭa* – for personal fame; *āśā* – desire; *hīna* – bereft of; *kṛṣṇa-gāthā* – songs about Kṛṣṇa; *saba* – all.

The purpose of having life is to preach. When one is freed from the desire for fame and honor, then all of his energy becomes engaged in glorifying Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His name, teachings, form and pastimes.

[Those who have spiritual vitality can preach and instill spiritual life in their audience. The true Vrajavasīs are infused with life and therefore they preach in order to give life to the walking corpses of the mundane world.]

Nāma-tattva

O Bhagavān, Your names bestow all auspiciousness upon the jīvas

**nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktiḥ
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ**

Śikṣāṣṭaka (2), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

nāmnām – of the holy names of the Lord; *akāri* – You manifested; *bahudhā* – in many ways, by various kinds; *nija-sarva-śaktiḥ* – all kinds of personal potencies; *tatra* – in that; *arpitā* – bestowed; *niyamitaḥ* – restricted; *smaraṇe* – in remembering; *na* – not; *kālaḥ* – consideration of time; *etādṛśī* – so much; *tava* – Your; *kṛpā* – mercy; *bhagavan* – O Lord; *mama* – My; *api* – although; *durdaivam* – misfortune; *īdṛśam* – such; *iba* – in this [the holy name]; *ajani* – it was born; *na* – not; *anurāgaḥ* – continuous, ever-fresh attachment.

O Bhagavān, Your names bestow all auspiciousness upon the *jīvas*. Therefore, for their benefit, You are eternally manifest as Your innumerable names, such as Rāma, Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Mukunda, Mādhava, Govinda and Dāmodara. You have invested those names with all the potencies of Their respective forms. Out of Your causeless mercy, You have not even imposed any restrictions on the

remembrance of Your names, as is the case with *gāyatrī-mantras* that must be chanted at specific times (*śandhyā-vandana*). In other words, the holy name of Bhagavān can be chanted and remembered at any time of the day or night. This is the arrangement You have made. O Prabhu, You have such causeless mercy upon the *jīvas*; nevertheless, due to my *nāma-āparādha*, I am so unfortunate that no *anurāga* (ever deepening attachment) for Your holy names, which are so easily accessible and which bestow all good fortune, has awakened within me.

Kṛṣṇa (nāmī) and His name (nāma) are non-different

**nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ**

*Padma Purāṇa;
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.233),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

nāmaḥ – the holy name; *cintā-maṇiḥ* – a wish-fulfilling gem; *kṛṣṇaḥ* – Kṛṣṇa [Himself]; *caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ* – the form of all transcendental mellows; *pūrṇaḥ* – complete; *śuddhaḥ* – pure, without material contamination; *nitya-muktaḥ* – eternally liberated; *abhinna-tvāt* – due to non-difference; *nāma* – of the holy name; *nāminoḥ* – and of the person who has the name.

Because there is no difference between *nāma* (Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy names) and *nāmī* (Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Person who possesses the names), the holy name is a transcendental wish-fulfilling gem (*cintāmaṇi*) and the very embodiment of the transcendental mellows of divine consciousness (*caitanya-rasa-svarūpa*). Thus it is completely pure and eternally liberated.

A thunderbolt on the heads of the sabajiyās

**ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ**

Padma Purāṇa;
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.234),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

ataḥ – initially [in the conditioned state]; *śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmā-ādi* – Lord Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities, pastimes and so on; *na* – not; *bhaved* – can be; *grāhyam* – perceived; *indriyaiḥ* – by the blunt material senses; *sevā-unmukhe* – to one favourably engaged in His service; *hi* – certainly; *jihvā-ādau* – beginning with the tongue; *svayam* – Personally; *eva* – certainly; *sphurati* – become manifest; *adaḥ* – that [Kṛṣṇa's name, form and so on].

Initially the name, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa can not be perceived by the materially conditioned senses of the *baddha-jīva*. However if one who has a favourable mood towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa renders devotional

service through those same senses beginning with the tongue, Ś r ī K ṛ ṣ ṇ a will most certainly reveal Himself in His Personal form.

Devotion through nāma-saṅkīrtana is the supreme dharma

**etāvān eva loke 'smin
puṁsām dharmāḥ paraḥ smṛtaḥ
bhakti-yogo bhagavati
tan-nāma-grahaṇādibhiḥ**

Ś r ī m a d - B h ā g a v a t a m (6.3.22)

etāvān – this much; *eva* – indeed; *loke asmin* – in this material world; *puṁsām* – of human beings; *dharmāḥ* – the essence of one's spiritual nature and function; *paraḥ* – transcendental; *smṛtaḥ* – recognised; *bhakti-yogaḥ* – devotional service; *bhagavati* – unto Ś r ī K ṛ ṣ ṇ a; *taḥ* – His; *nāma-grahaṇa* – taking the holy name; *ādibhiḥ* – beginning with chanting.

The supreme religious process for humanity in this mortal world is proclaimed to be the practice of devotional service unto the all-opulent Personality of Godhead through repeatedly chanting His holy names.

A pure devotee chanting in ecstasy aspires for millions of tongues and ears

**tuṅḍe tāṅḍavinī ratim vitanute
tuṅḍāvalī-labdhaye**

karṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambinī ghaṭayate
karṇārbudebhyaḥ sprhām
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-saṅginī vijayate
sarvendriyāṅām kṛtim
no jāne janitā kiyadbhir amṛtaiḥ
kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī

Vidagdha-mādhava (1.15),
 Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

tuṅḍe – in the mouth; *tāṅḍavinī* – dancing; *ratim* – the inspiration; *vitanute* – expands; *tuṅḍa-āvalī-labdhye* – to achieve many mouths; *karṇa* – of the ear; *kroḍa* – in the hole; *kaḍambinī* – sprouting; *ghaṭayate* – causes to appear; *karṇa-arbudebhyaḥ sprhām* – the desire for millions of ears; *cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa* – in the courtyard of the heart; *saṅginī* – being a companion; *vijayate* – conquers; *sarva-indriyāṅām* – of all the senses; *kṛtim* – the activity; *no* – not; *jāne* – I know; *janitā* – produced; *kiyadbhiḥ* – of what measure; *amṛtaiḥ* – by nectar; *kṛṣṇa* – the name of Kṛṣṇa; *iti* – thus; *varṇa-dvayī* – the two syllables.

I do not know how much nectar the two syllables ‘*kṛṣ-ṇa*’ have produced. When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert.*

The holy name is the sweetest of all that is sweet

**madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalāṁ maṅgalānām
sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam
sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛgu-vara! nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇanāma**

Skanda Purāṇa

madhura – of all sweet things; *madhuram* – the most sweet; *etat* – this; *maṅgalam* – the most auspicious; *maṅgalānām* – of all auspicious things; *sakala* – all; *nigama* – of the Vedas; *vallī* – the creepers; *sat* – the pure; *phalam* – fruit; *cit-svarūpam* – the embodiment of the transcendental potency, *cit-śakti*; *sakṛt* – once; *api* – even; *parigītam* – sung; *śraddhayā* – with faith; *helayā* – with derision; *vā* – or; *bhṛgu-vara* – O most exalted of the Bhṛgu dynasty; *vara* – the most exalted; *nara* – a human being; *mātram* – even; *tārayet* – can deliver; *kṛṣṇa* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *nāma* – the name.

Kṛṣṇa-nāma is the sweetest of all sweet things and the most auspicious amongst all auspicious vibrations. It is the pure fruit of the desire creeper of all the Vedic literature and the embodiment of divine knowledge. O best of the Bhṛgu dynasty! If any person even once chants the holy name, either with faith or contempt, that name can eventually award him deliverance from this ocean of birth and death!

The method of japa (solitary chanting of nāma on beads)

**mano madhye sthito mantrō
mantra-madhye sthitam manah
mano mantrah sama-yuktam
etad hi japa-lakṣaṇam**

Dhyana-candra Paddhati (1.64)

manah – of the mind; *madhye* – in the midst; *sthitah* – situated; *mantrah* – the *mantra*; *mantrah-madhye* – in the midst of the *mantra*; *sthitam* – situated; *manah* – of the mind; *manah* – the mind; *mantrah* – the *mantra*; *sama-yuktam* – united in equilibrium; *etad* – this; *hi* – indeed; *japa-lakṣaṇam* – the characteristic of *japa*.

If the *mantra* is fixed in the mind and the mind is fixed on the *mantra* [in other words, if the mind and *mantra* are joined], then the *mantra* reveals itself to the chanter.

*Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults but simply by kīrtana
one can attain perfection*

**kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇah
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.3.51)

kaleḥ – the age of Kali; *doṣa-nidheḥ* – an ocean of faults; *rājan* – O King; *asti* – there is; *hi* – certainly; *ekaḥ* – one; *mahān* –

very great; *guṇaḥ* – a good quality; *kīrtanāt* – by chanting; *eva* – certainly; *kṛṣṇasya* – of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa; *mukta-saṅgaḥ* – liberated from material bondage; *param* – to the supreme destination; *vrajat* – one can go.

My dear King, this age of Kali is a veritable ocean of faults. Still, it has one most exalted attribute: one who simply performs *kīrtana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names, form, qualities and pastimes, especially by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, can certainly become liberated from material bondage and receive entrance to the highest destination – the transcendental realm of Vraja.

Offences prevent the appearance of prema

**bahu janma kare yadi śravaṇa, kīrtana
tabu ta' nā pāya kṛṣṇa-pade prema-dhana**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (8.16)

bahu – many; *janma* – births; *kare* – does; *yadi* – if; *śravaṇa* – hearing; *kīrtana* – chanting; *tabu* – still; *ta'* – in spite of; *nā* – does not; *pāya* – get; *kṛṣṇa-pade* – unto the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa; *prema-dhana* – love of Godhead.

If one is infested with the ten offences in the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, despite his endeavor to chant the holy name for many births, he will not get the love of Godhead that is the ultimate goal of this chanting.*

Offences prevent the sprouting of the seed of the holy name

**hena kṛṣṇa-nāma yadi laya bahu-bāra
tabu yadi prema nahe, nahe aśru-dhāra
tabe jāni, aparādha tāhāte pracura
kṛṣṇa-nāma-bīja tāhe nā kare aṅkura**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (8.29–30)

hena – such; *kṛṣṇa-nāma* – holy name of the Lord; *yadi* – if; *laya* – one takes; *bahu-bāra* – again and again; *tabu* – still; *yadi* – if; *prema* – love of Godhead; *nahe* – is not visible; *nahe aśru-dhāra* – there are no tears in the eyes; *tabe* – then; *jāni* – I understand; *aparādha* – offence; *tāhāte* – there [in that process]; *pracura* – enough; *kṛṣṇa-nāma* – the holy name of Kṛṣṇa; *bīja* – seed; *tāhe* – in those activities; *nā* – does not; *kare* – do; *aṅkura* – sprout.

If one chants the exalted holy name of the Lord again and again and yet his love for the Supreme Lord does not develop and tears do not appear in his eyes, it is evident that because of his offences in chanting, the seed of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa does not sprout.*

*Anyone who always keeps Your holy name on his tongue
is already perfect*

**aho bata śva-paco 'to garīyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam**

**tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā
brahmānūcur nāma gṛṇanti ye te**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.33.7)

aho bata – oh, how astonishing; *śva-pacaḥ* – a dog-eater; *ataḥ* – then this person [myself]; *garīyān* – better; *yat-jihvā-agre* – on the tip of whose tongue; *varṭate* – is rotating; *nāma* – the holy name; *tubhyam* – unto You; *tepuḥ tapaḥ* – practised austerities; *te* – they; *juhuvuḥ* – executed fire sacrifices; *sasnur* – took bath in the sacred rivers; *āryāḥ* – Āryans; *brahma anūcuḥ* – chanted the Vedas; *nāma* – the holy name; *gṛṇanti* – they accept; *ye* – who; *te* – Your.

[*Devahūti to her son Kapiladeva:*] “O how astonishing it is that upon the tongue of this outcaste, Your holy name is revolving in *japa*. He is far greater than myself. He must have performed all penances for Your satisfaction, offered fire sacrifices, bathed in all the holy rivers and chanted the Vedic hymns, for only the Āryans can chant Your holy name.”

Rasa-tattva

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment and fountainhead of all rasa

**akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrtiḥ
 prasṛmara-ruci-ruddha-tārakā-pāliḥ
 kalita-śyāmā-lalito
 rādhā-preyān vidhur jayati**

*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.1),
 Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

akhila-rasa-amṛta-mūrtiḥ – the embodiment of *rasa*, transcendental mellows of love, namely *śānta*, *dāsyā*, *sakhyā*, *vātsalyā* and *mādhuryā*; *prasṛmara* – spreading forth; *ruci* – by His bodily luster; *ruddha* – who has subjugated; *tārakā* – the *gopī* named Tārakā [a *vipakṣa-gopī*, representing a rival group to that of Śrī Rādhā]; *pāliḥ* – the *gopī* named Pālī [or Pālikā, a *tatastha-gopī*, representing a neutral group]; *kalita* – who has accepted; *śyāmā* – the *gopī* named Śyāmalā [a *subṛt-pakṣa-gopī*, representing a friendly group]; *lalitaḥ* – and the *gopī* Lalitā [a *sva-pakṣa-gopī*, belonging to Rādhikā's own group]; *rādhā-preyān* – dearest beloved of Śrīmatī Rādhikā [*preyān*, or He who endeavours to please to the utmost]; *vidhuḥ* – the moon, Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *jayati* – all glories to.

Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra is supremely glorious! He is the condensed form of all the eternal, supra-mundane *rasas*. Indeed, He has not neglected the full expression of any divine

sentiment. Just see how He subjugates the extremely submissive *gopī* Tāraka, just as the vernal full moon outshines a tiny star – her own effulgence totally engulfed by His brilliance – and Pāli, who is also controlled by Him, is just like a constellation keeping the moon at her bosom. His rays overpower her as well. When the vernal full moon accepts the night sky as a playground, the atmosphere becomes ideal for love dalliance. In the same way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes Śyāmā, who is like the dark blue vault, and Lalitā, who is love dalliance personified, His very own. He comes under the control of the *prema* of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is the embodiment of *mahābhāva* and the origin of all the *yūtheśvarīs*, just as the full moon comes under the powerful influence of the *rādhā* constellation in the spring season. Śrīmatī Rādhikā's love completely eclipses and defeats Him. She is His everything, without which He is just the lonely moon.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is an ocean of rasa

raso vai saḥ, rasam hy evāyam labdhvānandī bhavati

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (8.13.1);

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (2.7.1)

Only when one achieves Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of pleasure and the ocean of *rasa*, does one actually become transcendently blissful.*

Daśa-mūla on rasa-tattva

**sa vai hlāḍinyāś ca praṇaya-vikṛter hlādana-ratas
tathā samvic-chakti-prakaṭita-raho-bhāva-rasitaḥ
tathā śrī-sāndhinyā kṛta-viśada-tad-dhāma-nicaye
rasāmbhodhau magno vraja-rasa-vilāsī vijayate**

Daśa-mūla-tattva (4),
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

sah vai – that same Śrī Hari; *hlāḍinyāḥ* – for His *hlāḍinī* potency, Śrī Rādhā; *ca* – and; *praṇaya-vikṛteḥ* – on account of a transformation caused by love; *hlādana-rataḥ* – is attached to the activities of pleasure; *tathā* – in the same way; *samvit-śakti* – of the cognitive potency; *prakaṭita* – is manifested; *rahaḥ* – confidential; *bhāva* – transcendental love; *rasitaḥ* – tasted; *tathā* – and; *śrī-sāndhinyāḥ* – through His existence-sustaining potency; *kṛta* – created; *viśada-tad-dhāma* – of His splendid abodes; *nicaye* – multitude; *rasa-ambhodhau* – in an ocean of *rasa* (transcendental mellows); *magnaḥ* – is immersed; *vraja* – in Vraja; *rasa-vilāsī* – that enjoyer of pleasure pastimes; *vijayate* – may He be gloriously victorious.

There are three functions of *svarūpa-śakti*: *hlāḍinī*, *sāndhinī* and *samvit*. Kṛṣṇa remains perpetually immersed in the *praṇaya*, transformations of ever newer and newer love manifested by His *hlāḍinī-śakti*. Because of the confidential *bhāvas* evoked by *samvit-śakti*, He is ever-situated as *rasika-śekhara* in relishing newer and newer *rasa*. That supremely independent pastime prince, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is ever-drowned

within the ocean of *vraja-rasa* in His transcendental bliss-filled abodes, headed by Vṛndāvana, which are manifest through *sandhinī-śakti*. All glories to Him!

*Kṛṣṇa as the viṣaya (object) of all twelve rasas
at the same time*

**daityācāryās tadāsyē vikṛtim
aruṇatām malla-varyāḥ sakhāyo
gaṇḍaunnatyām khaleśāḥ pralayam
ṛṣi-gaṇā dhyānam uṣṇasrum ambā
romañcam sām̐yugīnāḥ kam api
nava-camatkāram antaḥ surendrā
lāsyām dāsāḥ kaṭākṣam yayur
asita-dṛśāḥ prekṣya raṅge mukundam**

Lalita-mādhava (4.1.11),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

daitya – of the demons; *ācāryāḥ* – the teachers; *tadā* – then; *asye* – on the face; *vikṛtim* – transformation; *aruṇatām* – redness; *malla* – of wrestlers; *varyāḥ* – the best; *sakhāyaḥ* – the friends; *gaṇḍa-unnatya* – smiling; *khala* – of the demon; *īśāḥ* – the kings; *pralayam* – devastation; *ṛṣi* – of sages; *gaṇāḥ* – cheeks; *dhyānam* – meditation; *uṣṇa* – warm; *asrum* – tears; *amba* – mother; *roma-añcam* – hairs standing up; *sām̐yugīnāḥ* – the chivalrous fighters; *kam api* – something; *nava* – new; *camatkāram* – wonder; *antaḥ* – within; *sura* – of demigods; *indraḥ* – the leaders; *lāsyam* – dancing; *dāsāḥ* – the menial

servants; *kaṭa-akṣam* – sidelong glances; *yayubh* – attained; *asita* – black; *dr̥śaḥ* – whose eyes; *prekṣya* – seeing; *raṅge* – in the arena; *mukundam* – Kṛṣṇa.

[Different people saw Kṛṣṇa in different ways:] When the priests of Kāmsa saw Śrī Kṛṣṇa enter the wrestling arena anointed with blood after killing the elephant Kuvalayāpīḍa, their faces became contorted with disgust (*vībhatsa*). The faces of the wrestlers turned red with anger (*rudra*). The cheeks of Kṛṣṇa’s friends blossomed with joy (*bhāsya* and *sakhya*). The wicked lost all consciousness as if on the verge of death (*bhayānaka*, fear). The sages became absorbed in deep meditation (*śānta*). Devakī and the other mothers began to cry warm tears in parental compassion (*vātsalya* and *karuṇā*). The bodily hairs of the of the warriors stood on end in chivalry (*vīra*). Indra and the other demigods experienced unprecedented astonishment within their hearts (*adbhuta*). The *dāsya-bhaktas* danced (*dāsya*), and the young girls cast sidelong amorous glances with their black eyes (*mādburya*).

Kṛṣṇa is one, yet becomes many for the purpose of loving exchanges

eko (ekam) bahu syām

Chāndogya Upaniṣad (6.2.3)

eko/ekam – one; *bahu* – many; *syām* – I will become.

Kṛṣṇa is one and becomes many, yet becoming many still remains one. [He expands Himself into many for the purpose of loving exchanges.]

Bhāva-bhakti

For the *śloka*: **śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā**, see *Essential ślokas*.

The sixth verse of Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka describes the external manifestations of perfection (bhāva)

**nayanam galad-aśru-dhārayā
vadanam gadgada-ruddhayā girā
pulakair nicitam vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati**

Śikṣāṣṭaka (6), Śrīla Caitanya Mahāprabhu

nayanam – the eyes; *galat-aśru-dhārayā* – with streams of tears running down; *vadanam* – mouth; *gadgada* – faltering; *ruddhayā* – choked up; *girā* – with one’s words; *pulakaiḥ* – by erection of the hairs due to transcendental happiness; *nicitam* – covered; *vapuḥ* – the body; *kadā* – when?; *tava* – Your; *nāma-grahaṇe* – in chanting the name; *bhaviṣyati* – it will be.

O Prabhu! When will tears flow from my eyes like torrents of rain, my voice falter and the hairs on my body stand erect as I chant Your holy names?

On the appearance of bhāva-bhakti the following nine symptoms are observed:

**kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvaṁ viraktir māna-śūnyatā
āśā-bandhaḥ samutkaṇṭhā nāma-gāṇe sadā ruciḥ**

āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāne prītis tad-vasati-sthale ity ādayo 'nubhāvāḥ syur jāta-bhāvāṅkure jane

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.3.25–26),

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

kṣāntiḥ – forgiveness, tolerance; *avyartha-kālatvam* – not wasting time; *viraktiḥ* – detachment; *māna-śūnyatā* – the quality of pridelessness; *āśā-bandhaḥ* – the bondage of hope; *samutkañṭhā* – eagerness; *nāma-gāne* – in chanting Your holy names; *sadā* – always; *ruciḥ* – taste; *āsaktiḥ* – attachment; *tat* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *guṇa-ākhyāne* – in describing the transcendental qualities; *prītiḥ* – affection; *tat* – His; *vasati-sthale* – for places of residence [the temple or holy places]; *iti* – thus; *ādayaḥ* – and so on; *anubhāvāḥ* – the ecstatic moods; *syuḥ* – may be; *jāta* – developed; *bhāva-āṅkure* – whose ecstatic emotions have begun to sprout; *jane* – in a person.

(1) *kṣāntiḥ* – forgiveness, forbearance or tolerance, (2) *avyartha-kālatva* – not wasting time, (3) *viraktiḥ* – detachment from worldly enjoyment, (4) *māna-śūnyatā* – absence of pride, (5) *āśā-bandha* – steadfast hope [that Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy], (6) *samutkañṭhā* – intense eagerness [to obtain one's goal], (7) *nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ* – a taste for always chanting the holy names, (8) *tad-guṇa-ākhyāne āsakti* – attachment to *hari-kathā*, (9) *tad-vasati-sthale prītiḥ* – affection for the transcendental pastime places of the Lord. These nine ecstatic moods or *anubhāvas* develop within a person in whom the symptoms of *bhāva* have begun to sprout.

Bhāva can only be attained by sādhu-saṅga

**yathā duṣṭatvam me davayati
 śaṭhasyāpi kṛpayā
 yathā mahyam premāmṛtam
 api dadāty ujjvalam asau
 yathā śrī-gāndharvā-bhajana-
 vidhaye prerayati mām
 tathā goṣṭhe kākvā giridharam
 iha tvam bhaja manaḥ**

Manaḥ-śikṣā (8),

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

yathā – so that; *duṣṭatvam* – wickedness; *me* – my; *davayati* – he drives away; *śaṭhasya* – of a rogue; *api* – although; *kṛpayā* – mercifully; *yathā* – so that; *mahyam* – to me; *prema-āmṛtam* – nectar of divine love; *api* – also; *dadāti* – He gives; *ujjvalam* – the radiant; *asau* – He; *yathā* – so that; *śrī-gāndharvā* – of Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *bhajana-vidhaye* – in the service; *prerayati* – He may impell; *mām* – me; *tathā* – therefore; *goṣṭhe* – in Vraja; *kākvā* – with humble words; *giridharam* – the lifter of Govardhan; *iha* – now; *tvam* – you; *bhaja* – worship; *manaḥ* – O mind.

[*By the association of sādhus, blādinī-śakti is transmitted into the sādhaka's heart, dispels all contamination and brings about the highest perfection. But that type of sādhu-saṅga is not easily available.*]

Therefore, O mind, with utter humility and grief-stricken words, just worship Śrī Giridhārī Kṛṣṇa in such a way that

He will remove the wickedness of even this rogue, bestow the nectar of His supremely radiant *prema* and confer upon me the inspiration to worship Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Vṛtrāsura's four prayers

**aham hare tava pādaika-mūla-
dāsānudāso bhavitāsmi bhūyaḥ
manaḥ smaretāsu-pater guṇāms te
grṇīta vāk karma karotu kāyaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.11.24)

aham – I; *hare* – O my Lord Hari; *tava* – Your; *pāda-ekamūla* – whose only shelter is the lotus feet; *dāsa-anudāsaḥ* – the servant of Your servant; *bhavitāsmi* – shall I become; *bhūyaḥ* – again; *manaḥ* – my mind; *smareta* – may remember; *asu-pateḥ* – of the Lord of my life; *guṇān* – the attributes; *te* – of Your Lordship; *grṇīta* – may chant; *vāk* – my words; *karma* – activities of service to You; *karotu* – may perform; *kāyaḥ* – my body.

O Lord, please bestow such mercy upon me so that in my next birth I may obtain the opportunity to exclusively serve the servants who have taken exclusive shelter at Your lotus feet. May my mind always remember Your all-auspicious qualities, my speech always chant the glories of these qualities and my body always remain engaged in Your service.

In separation from You, I don't even desire liberation

**na nāka-prṣṭham na ca pārameṣṭhyam
na sārva-bhaumam na rasādhipatyam
na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavam vā
samañjasa tvā virahayya kāñkṣe**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.11.25)

na – not; *nāka-prṣṭham* – Dhruvaloka; *na* – nor; *ca* – also; *pārameṣṭhyam* – Brahmā's planet; *na* – nor; *sārva-bhaumam* – sovereignty of the whole earthly planetary system; *na* – nor; *rasā-ādhipatyam* – sovereignty of the lower planetary system; *na* – nor; *yoga-siddhīḥ* – eight kinds of mystic yogic powers (*aṇimā*, *laghimā*, *mahimā*, etc.); *apunaḥbhavam* – liberation from rebirth in a material body; *vā* – or; *samañjasa* – properly, O source of all opportunities; *tvā* – You; *virahayya* – being separated from; *kāñkṣe* – I desire.

O source of all good fortune, I have no desire to attain the royal throne of Dhruva-loka, the position of Brahmā's emperorship over the Earth or sovereignty over the lower planetary system. Nor do I desire the eight kinds of mystic perfections. I do not even want liberation, in separation from You.

Like a beloved in separation, I always long to see You

**ajāta-pakṣā iva mātaram khagāḥ
stanyam yathā vatsatarāḥ kṣudhārtāḥ**

**priyam priyeva vyuṣitam viṣaṇṇā
mano 'ravindākṣa didr̥kṣate tvām**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.11.26)

ajāta-pakṣāḥ – who have not yet grown wings; *iva* – like; *mātaram* – the mother; *khagāḥ* – small birds; *stanyam* – the time of milking; *yathā* – just as; *vatsatarāḥ* – the young calves; *kṣudha-ārtāḥ* – distressed by hunger; *priyam* – the beloved or husband; *priyā* – the wife or lover; *iva* – like; *vyuṣitam* – who is separated; *viṣaṇṇā* – morose; *manaḥ* – my mind; *aravinda-akṣa* – O lotus-eyed one; *didr̥kṣate* – wants to see; *tvām* – You.

O lotus-eyed Lord, as baby birds whose wings have not yet grown always look for their mother to feed them, as small calves tied with ropes anxiously await the time of milking, or as a beloved feels despondent due to separation from her lover – I always yearn to see You.

A prayer for sakhya mood (viśrambha-sevā)

**mamottamaśloka-janeṣu sakhyam
saṁsāra-cakre bhramataḥ sva-karmabhiḥ
tvan-māyayātmātmaḥ dāra-geheṣv
āsakta-cittasya na nātha bhūyāt**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.11.27)

mama – my; *uttama-śloka-janeṣu* – for those attached to You who are praised by transcendental songs; *sakhyam* – friendship; *saṁsāra-cakre* – in the cycle of birth and death; *bhramataḥ* –

who am wandering; *sva-karmabhiḥ* – by the results of my fruitive activities; *tvat-māyayā* – by Your external energy; *ātma* – to the body; *ātma-ja* – children; *dāra* – wife; *gebeṣu* – and home; *āsakta* – attached; *cittasya* – whose mind; *na* – not; *nātha* – O my Lord; *bhūyāt* – may there be.

O my Lord and Master, as I wander within this cycle of birth and death as a result of my fruitive activities, kindly award me friendship with persons who have taken complete shelter of You, the all-attractive Person who are eulogised by transcendental songs. Let my heart become detached from those who, under the influence of Your deluding potency, remain absorbed to their mundane body, children, wife and home.

Liberation stands before a devotee with folded hands

**bhaktis tvayi sthīratarā bhagavan yadi syād
daivena naḥ phalati divya-kiśora-mūrtiḥ
muktiḥ svayaṁ mukulitāñjaliḥ sevate 'smān
dharmārtha-kāma-gatayaḥ samaya-pratīkṣāḥ**

Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta (107),
Śrīla Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura

bhaktiḥ – devotional service; *tvayi* – unto You; *sthīratarā* – very steady; *bhagavan* – O Lord; *yadi* – if; *syāt* – it may be; *daivena* – by destiny; *naḥ* – unto us; *phalati* – bears the fruit; *divya* – transcendental; *kiśora-mūrtiḥ* – the youthful form of Kṛṣṇa; *muktiḥ* – liberation; *svayaṁ* – personally; *mukulita-añjaliḥ* –

standing with folded hands; *sevate* – renders service; *asmān* – unto us; *dharmā* – religiosity; *artha* – economic development; *kāma* – sense gratification; *gatayaḥ* – the final goals; *samaya* – nearby; *pratīkṣāḥ* – expecting.

O Bhagavān, if by the grace of Providence I attain steady devotion unto Your lotus feet, at that time Your most charming divine form of Nanda-Kiśora always manifests to me. Then I perceive liberation in person standing before me with folded hands, and mundane religion, wealth and sense pleasure in their personified forms also await to offer me service.

The practice of hari-kathā at the stage of rati

**parasparānukathanam
pāvanam bhagavad-yaśaḥ
mitho ratir mithas tuṣṭir
nivṛttir mitha ātmanaḥ
smarantaḥ smārayantaś ca
mitho 'ghaughā-haram harim
bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā
bibhraty utpulkām tanum**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.3.30–31)

paraśpara – mutual; *anukathanam* – discussion; *pāvanam* – purifying; *bhagavat* – of the Supreme Lord; *yaśaḥ* – glories; *mithaḥ* – mutual; *ratīḥ* – loving attraction; *mithaḥ* – mutual;

tuṣṭiḥ – satisfaction; *nivṛttiḥ* – cessation of material miseries; *mīṭhaḥ* – mutual; *ātmanaḥ* – of the soul.
smarantaḥ – remembering; *smārayantaḥ ca* – and reminding; *mīṭhaḥ* – one another; *agha-ogha-haram* – the killer of Aghasura, or He who removes everything inauspicious from His devotees; *harim* – Śrī Hari; *bhaktyā* – because *bhakti*; *sañjātayā* – is awakened; *bhaktyā* – by *bhakti*; *bibhrati* – possess; *utpūlakām* – standing of hairs; *tanum* – body.

As the devotees of the Lord discuss the purifying glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa among themselves in accordance with the teachings of their spiritual preceptors, they experience mutual loving attractions amongst themselves and taste great satisfaction whereby the influence of material miseries is nullified. As they remember and remind one another about the Soul of all souls, Śrī Hari, the slayer of Aghasura, an immense volume of sins is destroyed. *Bhakti* can only be attained through association with those who have *bhakti*. After attaining this *śuddha-bhakti* all symptoms of ecstasy, such as the standing of the hairs on the body, are naturally manifest.

Prema-bhakti

The definition śloka of prema (1)

**samyāṅ masṛṅita-svānto mamatvātiśayāṅkitaḥ
bhāvaḥ sa eva sāndrātmā budhaiḥ premā nigadyate**

*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.1),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*

samyak – completely; *masṛṅita* – softened; *sva-antaḥ* – the heart of one’s heart; *mamatva* – of ‘mineness’ or possessiveness; *atiśaya* – by an abundance; *aṅkitaḥ* – characterised; *bhāvaḥ* – emotion; *saḥ* – that; *eva* – certainly; *sāndra* – condensed; *ātmā* – whose nature; *budhaiḥ* – by enlightened persons; *premā* – pure ecstatic love of God; *nigadyate* – is called.

When *bhāva-bhakti*, or *rati*, deepens and matures, the *sādhaka’s* heart becomes completely soft and melted with an overwhelming sense of *mamatā*, or possessiveness, towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thereafter the devotee experiences the supreme exaltation of condensed transcendental bliss. This extremely condensed stage of *bhāva* is known as *prema* by enlightened persons.

The definition śloka of prema (2)

**sarvathā dhvaṁsa-rahitaṁ yadyapi dhvaṁsa-kāraṇe
yad bhāva-bandhanaṁ yūnoḥ sa premā parikīrtitaḥ**

Ujjvala-nīlāmaṇi, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

sarvathā – in every way; *dhvaṁsa-rahitam* – free from destruction; *yady api* – although; *dhvaṁsa-kāraṇe* – there is cause for destruction; *yad* – which; *bhāva-bandhanam* – the affectionate bond; *yūnoḥ* – between a youthful couple; *saḥ* – that; *prema* – pure transcendental love; *parikīrtitaḥ* – declared.

When the affectionate bond between a young man and a young woman can never be destroyed, even when there is every cause for the destruction of that relationship, the attachment between them is said to be pure love.*

Definition of bhakti endowed with mamatā (i.e. prema)

**ananya-mamatā viṣṇau mamatā prema-saṅgatā
bhaktir ity ucyate bhīṣma-prahlādoddhava-nāradaih**

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.2),
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

ananya-mamatā – having a sense of exclusive possessiveness; *viṣṇau* – for Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa; *mamatā* – the sense of ownership; *prema-saṅgatā* – a kinship with love; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *iti* – thus; *ucyate* – is said; *bhīṣma* – by Bhīṣma; *prahlāda* – by Prahlāda Mahārāja; *uddhava* – by Uddhava; *nāradaih* – and by Nārada.

When one develops an unflinching sense of ‘mineness’ or possessiveness (*mamatā*) in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or in other words, when one thinks of Kṛṣṇa and no one else as the only object of love, such an awakening is called *prema-bhakti* by exalted persons like Bhīṣma, Prahlāda, Uddhava and Nārada.*

The difference between lust and love (kāma and prema)

**ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā—tāre bali 'kāma'
kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare 'prema' nāma**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.165)

ātma-indriya-prīti – for the pleasure of one's own senses; *vāñchā* – desire; *tāre* – that; *bali* – I call; *kāma* – lust; *kṛṣṇa-indriya-prīti* – for the pleasure of Lord Kṛṣṇa's senses; *icchā* – desire; *dhare* – holds; *prema* – love; *nāma* – the name.

The desire to gratify one's own senses is *kāma* (lust), but the desire to please the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *prema*.*

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: “Kṛṣṇa is saying, “Those *jīvas* who do not serve Me by correctly using their free will, have to accept *kāma*, an enjoying mood, which is the perverted form of the *jīvas'* pure love, *prema*, for Me.”

The love between Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs is pure prema, not lust

**gopī-gaṇera premera rūḍha-bhāva nāma
viśuddha nirmala prema, kabhu nahe kāma**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.162)

gopī-gaṇera – of the *gopīs*; *premera* – of the love; *rūḍha-bhāva* – the ecstatic mood in the state of ascended *bhāva*; *nāma* – named; *viśuddha* – fully pure; *nirmala* – spotless; *prema* – love; *kabhu* – at anytime; *nahe* – is not; *kāma* – lust.

The love of the *gopīs* is called *rūḍha-bhāva*. It is pure and spotless *prema*. It is not at any time lust (*kāma*).*

Lust and love are as different as iron and gold

**kāma, prema—doṅhākāra vibhinna lakṣaṇa
lauha āra hema yaiche svarūpe vilakṣaṇa**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.164)

kāma – lust; *prema* – love; *doṅhākāra* – of the two; *vibhinna* – separate; *lakṣaṇa* – symptoms; *lauha* – iron; *āra* – and; *hema* – gold; *yaiche* – just as; *svarūpe* – in nature; *vilakṣaṇa* – different.

Lust and love have different characteristics, just as iron and gold have different natures.*

Lust is like dense darkness, but love is like the bright sun

**ataeva kāma-preme bahuta antara
kāma—andha-tamaḥ, prema—nirmala bhāskara**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (4.171)

ataeva – therefore; *kāma-preme* – in lust and love; *bahuta* – much; *antara* – difference; *kāma* – lust; *andha-tamaḥ* – blind darkness; *prema* – love; *nirmala* – pure; *bhāskara* – sun.

Therefore lust and love (*prema*) are quite different. Lust is like dense darkness, but love is like the bright sun.*

Kṛṣṇa's form is superior to Nārāyaṇa's

**siddhāntatas tv abhede 'pi śrīśa-kṛṣṇa-svarūpayoḥ
rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa-rūpam eṣā rasa-sthitih**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (9.117)

siddhāntataḥ – from the perspective of perfected philosophical truth; *tu* – but; *abhede* – no difference [for They are both the abode of six opulences]; *api* – although; *śrī-īśa* – of the husband of Lakṣmī, Nārāyaṇa; *kṛṣṇa* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *svarūpayoḥ* – between the forms; *rasena* – from the perspective of transcendental mellows; *utkṛṣyate* – is superior; *kṛṣṇa-rūpam* – the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *eṣā* – this; *rasa-sthitiḥ* – reservoir of pleasure.

From the perspective of conclusive truths, there is no difference between the forms of Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa. Yet from the viewpoint of *rasa*, or the capacity to engage in profound loving relationships with His devotees, Kṛṣṇa surpasses Nārāyaṇa. This is the unique characteristic of *rasa*.

Even Lakṣmī-devī failed to attain the position of a gopī

**kasyānubhāvo 'sya na deva vidmahe
tavanṅhri-reṇu-sparśādhikāraḥ
yad-vāñchayā śrīr lalanācarat tapo
vihāya kāmān su-ciraṁ dhṛta-vratā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.16.36)

kasya – of what; *anubhāvaḥ* – consequence; *asya* – of this [the serpent Kāliya]; *na* – not; *deva* – my Lord; *vidmahe* – we know; *tava* – Your; *aṅhri* – of the lotus feet; *reṇu* – of the dust; *sparaśa* – for touching; *adhikāraḥ* – qualification; *yat* – for which; *vāñchayā* – with the desire; *śrīḥ* – the goddess of fortune; *lalanā* – enchanted by desires; *ācarat* – performed;

tapah – austerity; *vihāya* – giving up; *kāmān* – all desires; *suciram* – for a long time; *dhṛta-vratā* – with a firm vow.

[*The Nāgapatnīs, wives of Kālīya, prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa:*] “Oh Deva! Śrī Lakṣmī-devī gave up all her desires, took a *vrata* and performed austerities for a long, long time just to attain the dust of Your lotus feet. [Nonetheless, she failed to achieve her heart’s desire.] Who knows what pious activities Kālīya Nāga performed to become qualified to receive that same rare footdust.”

Even Lakṣmī cannot attain the embrace of Śrī Kṛṣṇa

**nāyam śriyo 'ṅga u nitānta-rateḥ prasādaḥ
 svar-yoṣitām nalina-gandha-rucām kuto 'nyāḥ
 rāsotsave 'sya bhujā-daṇḍa-grhīta-kaṅṭha
 labdhāśiṣām ya udagād vraja-sundarīṅām**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.60)

na – not; *ayam* – this; *śriyaḥ* – of the goddess of fortune; *aṅge* – on the chest; *u* – alas; *nitānta-rateḥ* – who is very intimately related; *prasādaḥ* – the favour; *svaḥ* – of the heavenly planets; *yoṣitām* – of women; *nalina* – of the lotus flower; *gandha* – having the aroma; *rucām* – and bodily luster; *kutḥ* – much less; *anyāḥ* – others; *rasa-utsave* – in the festival of the *rāsa* dance; *asya* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *bhujā-daṇḍa* – ‘elephant-trunk-like’ arms; *grhīta* – embraced; *kaṅṭha* – their necks; *labdhā-āśiṣām* – who achieved such a blessing; *yaḥ* – which; *udagāt* – became manifest; *vraja-sundarīṅām* – for the beautiful *gopīs* of Vrajabhūmi.

In the *rāsa* festival, Śrī Kṛṣṇa embraced the *vraja-sundarīs* around their necks with His elephant-trunk-like arms, thus fulfilling their hearts' desires. Even Lakṣmī, who is so intimately associated with Him being situated on His chest, does not attain this mercy. It is also not attained by the most beautiful girls of the heavenly planets, whose bodily lustre and fragrance resemble the lotus flower, what to speak of other [mortal] beautiful women.

Even the topmost devotee, Śrī Uddhava, longs for gopī-bhāva

**āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
yā dustyajam̐ sva-janam ārya-patham̐ ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīm̐ śrutibhir vimṛgyām**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.61)

āsām – of the *gopīs*; *aho* – Oh, how astonishing!; *caraṇa-reṇu* – to the dust of the lotus feet; *juṣām* – favourably devoted to; *aham syām* – let me become; *vṛndāvane* – in Vṛndāvana; *kim api* – any one; *gulma-latā-auṣadhīnām* – of the bushes, creepers and herbs; *yāḥ* – they who; *dustyajam̐* – very difficult to give up; *svajanam* – family members; *ārya-patham̐* – the path of *dharmā* or chastity; *ca* – and; *hitvā* – having given up; *bhejuḥ* – worshipped; *mukunda-padavīm̐* – the path which leads to the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa; *śrutibhiḥ* – by the Vedas; *vimṛgyām* – sought after.

[Śrī Uddhava prayed:] “Oh, how wonderful the character of *vraja-devīs* is. They have given up everything that is difficult to renounce, such as children, family and the path of chastity, and they have taken shelter of the path of *prema-bhakti* to Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is sought after by the Śrutis. My prayer is that I may appear as a bush, a creeper or even a blade of grass in Śrī Vṛndāvana and thus receive the footdust of the *gopīs*’ lotus feet.”

Uddhava forever prays to the dust of the lotus feet of the gopīs

**vande nanda-vraja-strīṅām pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśaḥ
yāsām hari-kathodgītaṁ punāti bhuvana-trayam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.47.63)

vande – I offer my respects; *nanda-vraja* – of the cowherd village of Nanda Mahārāja; *strīṅām* – of the women; *pāda* – of the feet; *reṇum* – to the dust; *abhīkṣṇaśaḥ* – perpetually; *yāsām* – whose; *hari* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *kathā* – about the topics; *udgītaṁ* – loud chanting; *punāti* – purifies; *bhuvanatrāyam* – the three worlds.

[Śrī Uddhava said:] “I bow down to the dust of the feet of the *gopīs* who reside in Nanda Bābā’s Vraja. Oh, whatever these *gopīs* have sung about Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes always has and always will purify the entire world.”

The Mathurā ladies glorify the love of the gopīs

**gopyaḥ tapaḥ kim acaranaḥ yad amuṣya rūpaṁ
lāvaṇya-sāraṁ asamordhvam ananya-siddham
dṛgbhiḥ pibanti anusavābhinavaṁ durāpam
ekānta-dhāma yaśasaḥ śriya aiśvarasya**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.44.14)

gopyaḥ – the *gopīs*; *tapaḥ* – austerities; *kim* – what; *acaran* – performed; *yad* – from which; *amuṣya* – of such a one (Lord Kṛṣṇa); *rūpaṁ* – the form; *lāvaṇya-sāraṁ* – the essence of loveliness; *asama-ūrdhvam* – not paralleled or surpassed; *ananya-siddham* – not perfected by any other ornament (self-perfect); *dṛgbhiḥ* – by the eyes; *pibanti* – they drink; *anusava* – at every moment; *abhinavam* – constantly new; *durāpam* – difficult to obtain; *ekānta-dhāma* – the only abode; *yaśasaḥ* – of fame; *śriyaḥ* – of beauty; *aiśvarasya* – of opulence.

[*The Mathurā-ramaṇīs prayed:*] “Oh, how astonishing. What kind of austerities did the *gopīs* perform to be able to constantly drink the unequalled and unsurpassed sweetness of His self-perfect bodily beauty, which appears newer and newer at every moment? The *gopīs* directly see with their own eyes the very rare loveliness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s form, which is the essence of all lustre, and is the unrivaled, exclusive reservoir of independently perfect fame, beauty and opulence.”

Choked up by tears, the gopīs constantly sing about Kṛṣṇa

**yā dohane ’vahanane mathanopalepa-
preṅkheṅkhanārbha-ruditokṣaṇa-mārjanādau
gāyanti cainam anurakta-dhiyo ’śru-kaṅṭhyo
dhanyā vraja-striya urukrama-citta-yānāḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.44.15)

yaḥ – who [the *gopīs*]; *dohane* – while milking; *avahanane* – threshing; *mathana* – churning; *upalepa* – smearing; *preṅkha* – on swings; *iṅkhana* – swinging; *arbha-rudita* – [taking care of] crying babies; *ukṣaṇa* – sprinkling; *mārjana* – cleaning; *ādau* – and so on; *gāyanti* – they sing; *ca* – and; *enam* – about Him; *anurakta* – very much attached; *dhiyaḥ* – whose minds; *aśru* – with tears; *kaṅṭhyaḥ* – whose throats; *dhanyāḥ* – fortunate; *vraja-striyaḥ* – the ladies of Vraja; *urukrama* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa; *citta-yānāḥ* – in the chariots of their hearts.

[*The Mathurā-ramaṇīs said:*] “The *gopīs* of Vraja are the most fortunate of women because their minds are fully attached to Kṛṣṇa. They keep Him always seated on the chariots of their hearts and with their throats choked up by tears, they constantly sing about Him while milking the cows, threshing grain, churning butter, smearing their courtyards with cow dung, riding on swings, taking care of crying babies, sprinkling the ground with water, cleaning their houses, gathering cow dung for fuel and so forth.”

Upon hearing Kṛṣṇa's flute the gopīs come out to see Him

**prātar vrajād vrajata āviśataś ca sāyam
gobhiḥ samam kvaṇayato 'sya niśamya veṇum
nirgamya tūrṇam abalāḥ pathi bhūri-puṇyāḥ
paśyanti sa-smita-mukhaṁ sa-dayāvalokam**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.44.16)

prātaḥ – in the early morning; *vrajāt* – from cow grazing; *vrajataḥ* – of Him who is going; *āviśataḥ* – entering; *ca* – and; *sāyam* – in the evening; *gobhiḥ samam* – together with the cows; *kvaṇayataḥ* – who is vibrating; *asya* – His; *niśamya* – hearing; *veṇum* – the flute; *nirgamya* – coming out; *tūrṇam* – quickly; *abalāḥ* – the women; *pathi* – on the road; *bhūri* – extremely; *puṇyāḥ* – pious; *paśyanti* – they behold; *sa-smita-mukham* – with smiling faces; *sa-daya* – with mercy [or love]; *avalokam* – with glances.

When the *gopīs* hear Kṛṣṇa playing His flute as He leaves Vraja in the morning with His cows or returns with them at sunset, the young girls quickly come out of their houses to see Him. They must have performed many pious activities to be able to see Him as He walks on the road, His smiling face mercifully glancing upon them.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā attributes Her own prema to the Pulindī girls

**pūrṇāḥ pulindya urugāya-padābja-rāga
śrī-kuṅkumena dayitā-stana-maṇḍitena**

tad-darśana-smara-rujas tṛṇa-rūṣitena limpantya ānana-kuceṣu jahus tad-ādhim

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.17) (*Veṅu-gīta* 10)

pūrṇāḥ – fully satisfied; *pulindyaḥ* – the young girls of the low-caste Pulinda tribe; *urugāya* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who loudly sings sweet songs by mouth or flute; *pada-abja* – from the lotus feet; *rāga* – the reddish color of affection; *śrī-kuṅkumena* – by the beautifully transcendental *kuṅkuma* powder or paste; *dayitā* – of His beloved [Śrī Rādhikā]; *stana* – the breasts; *maṅḍitena* – which had adorned; *tat* – of that; *darśana* – by the sight; *smara* – by the force of *kāma*; *rujaḥ* – the burning torment of desire; *tṛṇa* – upon the blades of grass; *rūṣitena* – touching; *limpantyaḥ* – smearing; *ānana* – upon their faces; *kuceṣu* – and breasts; *jabuḥ* – they gave up; *tat* – that; *ādhim* – the disease of the heart or the anguish caused by *kāma*.

[*Śrīmatī Rādhikā* said:] “O *sakhī!* These Pulindīs, the young women who live in the forest, are fully satisfied because they possess *anurāga*, extraordinary attachment for Śrī Śyāmasundara within their hearts. When they see our dearest beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the anguish of divine lust arises within them, and their hearts are struck with the disease of love. One of His beloveds had adorned her breast with reddish *kuṅkuma* which came off on Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. When Śyāma roams through Vṛndāvana, the grass gets covered with this *kuṅkuma*. The supremely fortunate Pulindī girls see it and are immediately overwhelmed by

the burning torment of *smara* [Cupid]. They take this *kuṅkuma* and smear it on their faces and breasts. In this way they alleviate the anguish of their *kāma*.”

Only the eyes of devotion smeared with love can see Kṛṣṇa

**premañjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi**

Brahma-saṁhitā (38)

prema-añjana – with the salve of love; *cchurita* – smeared; *bhakti-vilocanena* – with eyes of devotion; *santaḥ* – exclusively devoted saints; *sadā* – at all times; *eva* – certainly; *hṛdayeṣu* – within their purified hearts; *vilokayanti* – certainly behold; *yaṁ* – whose; *śyāmasundaram* – as beautiful Śyāma; *acintya-guṇa* – having inconceivable qualities; *sva-rūpaṁ* – original form; *ādi-puruṣaṁ govindam* – primeval Supreme Person, Śrī Govinda; *tam* – to that; *ahaṁ bhajāmi* – I render service.

The saintly personalities, whose eyes of *bhakti* are smeared with the *kājjala* of *prema*, always behold Śrī Kṛṣṇa within their hearts as Śyāmasundara, the embodiment of inconceivable qualities. I render service to that *ādi-puruṣa*, Govinda.

Separation and Meeting in Prema

The internal symptom of perfection

**yugāyitaṁ nimeṣeṇa cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitaṁ
śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ govinda-virahaṇa me**

Śikṣāṣṭaka (7), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

yugāyitaṁ – becomes a millenium; *nimeṣeṇa* – even a moment; *cakṣuṣā* – from my eyes; *prāvṛṣāyitaṁ* – tears flow like rain from the monsoon clouds; *śūnyāyitaṁ* – becomes void; *jagat sarvaṁ* – this entire world; *govinda-virahaṇa* – in separation from Govinda; *me* – to me.

O *sakhī!* In separation from My Govinda, a moment becomes a millennium. Tears begin to shower from my eyes like torrents of rain from the clouds, and this entire world becomes void.

The sentiments of Śrī Rādhā in separation

**ayi dīna-dayārdra nātha he
mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayaṁ tvad-aloka-kātaraṁ
dayita bhrāmyati kiṁ karomy aham**

Padyāvalī (334)

ayi – O My Lord; *dīna* – to the wretched; *dayā-ārdra* – compassionate; *nātha* – O Master; *he* – O; *mathurā-nātha* – the

Master of Mathurā; *kadā* – when; *avalokyase* – You shall be seen; *hṛdayam* – My heart; *tvat* – You; *aloka* – without seeing; *kātaram* – aggrieved; *dayita* – O beloved; *bhrāmyati* – becomes bewildered; *kim* – what; *karomi* – shall do; *abam* – I.

[Śrī Mādhavendra Purī said:] “O You whose heart is most merciful to the wretched! O Master! O Lord of Mathurā! When will I have Your *darśana*? O Lord of My life, because I cannot see You, My heart has become agitated. What shall I do now?”

In extreme separation, Śrīmatī Rādhikā calls upon Kṛṣṇa

**he deva he dayita he bhuvanaika-bandho
he kṛṣṇa he capala he karuṇaika-sindho
he nātha he ramaṇa he nayanābhirāma
hā hā kadā nu bhavitāsi padam dṛśor me**

Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta (40),
Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura

he deva – O Lord; *he dayita* – O dear one; *he bhuvana-eka-bandho* – O only friend of the universe; *he kṛṣṇa* – O Lord Kṛṣṇa; *he capala* – O restless one; *he karuṇa-eka-sindho* – O only ocean of mercy; *he nātha* – O my Lord; *he ramaṇa* – O my enjoyer; *he nayana-abhirāma* – O the delight my eyes; *hā hā* – alas, alas; *kadā* – when?; *nu* – certainly; *bhavitāsi* – will You be; *padam* – the dwelling place; *dṛśor me* – of my vision.

O Lord! O dear one! O sole friend of the worlds! O Kṛṣṇa!
O restless one! O only ocean of compassion! O Deva!

O playful one (*ramaṇa*)! O You who delight the eyes! Alas! Alas! When will You again be present on the path of My eyes?

Śrī Rādhikā is lamenting in separation from Kṛṣṇa

**hā nātha ramaṇa preṣṭha kvāsi kvāsi mahā-bhuja
dāsyās te kṛpaṇāyā me sakhe darśaya sannidhim**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.30.39)

hā – O; *nātha* – Master; *ramaṇa* – lover; *preṣṭha* – dearest; *kva asi kva asi* – where are You? where are You?; *mahābhuja* – O mighty-armed one; *dāsyāḥ* – the maidservant; *te* – Your; *kṛpaṇāyāḥ* – the wretched; *me* – Me; *sakhe* – O friend; *darśaya* – please show; *sannidhim* – Your presence.

O Master! My lover! O dearest, where are You? Where are You? Please, O mighty-armed one, O friend, show Yourself to Me, Your wretched maidservant.*

*The gopīs' intense longing to always hold Śrī Kṛṣṇa's
lotus feet in their hearts*

**āhuś ca te nalina-nābha padāravindam
yogeśvarair hṛdi vicintyam agādha-bodhaiḥ
saṁsāra-kūpa-patitottaraṇāvalambam
geham juṣām api manasy udiyāt sadā naḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.82.48)

ābuh – they said; *ca* – and; *te* – Your; *nalina-nābha* – O Lord, whose navel is just like a lotus flower; *pada-aravindam* – lotus feet; *yoga-īśvaraiḥ* – by the great mystic *yogīs*; *hr̥di* – within the heart; *vicintyam* – to be meditated upon; *agādha-bodhaiḥ* – by the highly learned philosophers; *samsāra-kūpa* – the dark well of material existence; *patita* – of those fallen; *uttarāṇa* – of deliverers; *avalambam* – the only shelter; *geham* – family affairs; *juṣām* – of those engaged; *api* – though; *manasi* – in the hearts; *udiyāt* – let be awakened; *sadā* – always; *naḥ* – our.

[*At the meeting in Kurukṣetra, Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the prominent gopīs said:*] “O Kamala-nābha (You whose navel is like a lotus), great *yogīs* who possess profound intelligence meditate upon Your lotus feet in their hearts. Your lotus feet are the only means of shelter for those who have fallen into the well of material existence. O Lord, please give us the benediction that, even when we perform household work, Your lotus feet shall always reside in our hearts.”

Śrīmatī Rādhikā begs Kṛṣṇa to place His lotus feet in Vṛndāvana

**anyera hṛdaya—mana, mora mana—vṛndāvana,
‘mane’ ‘vane’ eka kari’ jāni
tāhān tomāra pada-dvaya, karāha yadi udaya,
tabe tomāra pūrṇa kṛpā māni**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (13.137)

anyera – of others; *hr̥daya* – consciousness; *mana* – mind; *mora mana* – My mind; *vṛndāvana* – Vṛndāvana consciousness; *mane* – with the mind; *vane* – with Vṛndāvana; *eka kari'* – as one and the same; *jāni* – I know; *tābān* – there, at Vṛndāvana; *tomāra* – Your; *pada-dvaya* – two lotus feet; *karāba* – You should do; *yadi* – if; *udaya* – appearance; *tabe* – then; *tomāra* – Your; *pūrṇa* – complete; *kṛpā* – mercy; *māni* – I accept.

Speaking in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Caitanya Mahāprabhu said: “For most people, the mind and heart are one, but because My mind is never separated from Vṛndāvana, I consider My mind and Vṛndāvana to be one. My mind is already Vṛndāvana, and since You like Vṛndāvana, will You please place Your lotus feet there? I would deem that Your full mercy”.*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks the following words to give the gopīs consolation

**mayi bhaktir hi bhūtānām amṛtatvāya kalpate
diṣṭyā yad āsīn mat-sneho bhavatīnām mad-āpanaḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.82.44)

mayi – to Me; *bhaktiḥ* – devotional service; *hi* – only; *bhūtānām* – for living beings; *amṛtatvāya* – to immortality; *kalpate* – leads; *diṣṭyā* – by good fortune; *yat* – which; *āsīt* – has developed; *mat* – for Me; *snehaḥ* – the love; *bhavatīnām* – on the part of your good selves; *mat* – Me; *āpanaḥ* – which is the cause of obtaining.

Sakhīs, it is greatly fortunate that you have developed *prema* for Me, which is the only way to attain Me. Loving devotional service unto Me qualifies living entities to attain My supremely blissful eternal abode.

As Mahāprabhu was ecstatically dancing at the Ratha-yātrā, He was singing in Rādhikā's mood of separation

**‘sei ta parāṇa-nātha pāinu, yāhā lāgi’
madana-dahane jhuri’ genu’**

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (13.113)

sei ta – that indeed; *parāṇa-nātha* – the master of My life; *pāinu* – I have attained; *yāhā lāgi’* – for whom; *madana-dahane* – being burned by Cupid; *jhuri’ genu* – I became dried up.

I have attained that very Lord of My life, for whom I was burning in the fire of Cupid.

As My devotees surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly

**ye yathā mām prapadyante
tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham
mama vartmānuvartante
manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ**

Bhagavad-gītā (4.11)

ye – they; *yathā* – as; *mām* – Me; *prapadyante* – as they serve; *tān* – them; *tathā* – so; *eva* – certainly; *bhajāmi aham* – I love

and serve; *mama vartma*— My path; *anuvartante* — follow; *manuṣyāḥ* — all men; *pārtha* — O son of Pṛthā; *sarvaśaḥ* — in all respects.

O Pārtha, in whichever way a person renders service to Me, I reciprocate with him accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects.

However, the prema of the gopīs is so exalted that Kṛṣṇa is unable to keep His promise

**na pārāye 'haṁ niravadya-saṁyujām
sva-sādhū-kṛtyaṁ vibudhāyūṣāpi vaḥ
yā mābhajan durjaya-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ
saṁvṛścyā tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.22)

na — not; *pārāye* — able to make; *aham* — I; *niravadya-saṁyujām* — faultless union; *sva-sādhū-kṛtyam* — proper compensation; *vibudha-āyūṣā* — a lifetime as long as that of the demigods; *api* — although; *vaḥ* — to you; *yāḥ* — who; *mā* — Me; *abhajan* — have worshipped; *durjaya* — difficult to overcome; *geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ* — the chains of household life; *saṁvṛścyā* — cutting; *tad* — that; *vaḥ* — of you; *pratiyātu* — let it be returned; *sādhunā* — by the good activity itself.

[When the gopīs were overwhelmed with dissatisfaction due to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's absence from the rāsa-līlā, Kṛṣṇa returned and told them:]

“My dear *gopīs*, our meeting is certainly free of all material contamination. I must admit that even with the lifetime of a demigod it would be impossible for Me to repay My debt to you because you have cut off the shackles of family life which are so difficult to break, just to search for Me. Consequently I am unable to repay you. Therefore please be satisfied with your saintly activities in this regard.”

Gopī-gīta, the *gopīs*' song of separation

**jayati te 'dhikam janmanā vrajaḥ
śrayata indirā śaśvad atra hi
dayita dṛśyatām dikṣu tāvakāś
tvayi dhṛtāsavas tvām vicinvate**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.31.1) (*Gopī-gīta* 1)

jayati – is glorious; *te* – Your; *adhikam* – exceedingly; *janmanā* – by the birth; *vrajaḥ* – the land of Vraja; *śrayate* – is residing; *indirā* – Lakṣmī, the goddess of fortune; *śaśvat* – perpetually; *atra* – here; *hi* – indeed; *dayita* – O beloved; *dṛśyatām* – may (You) be seen; *dikṣu* – in all directions; *tāvakāḥ* – Your (devotees); *tvayi* – for Your sake; *dhṛta* – sustained; *asavaḥ* – their life-airs; *tvām* – for You; *vicinvate* – they are searching.

[The *gopīs* say:] “O most beloved, because of Your birth in this land of Vraja, the entire area has become more glorious than Vaikuṅṭha and other planets. It is for this reason that Lakṣmī, the goddess of beauty

and wealth, eternally decorates it with her presence. O beloved, in this blissful land of Vraja, it is only we *gopīs* who are not happy. We maintain our lives solely for Your sake, being extremely anguished in separation from You, and are wandering from forest to forest in search of You. Therefore, please appear before us now.

**tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam
kavibhir īḍitam kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ
bhūvi gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.31.9) (*Gopī-gīta* 9)

tava – Your; *kathā-amṛtam* – the nectar of pastime topics; *tapta-jīvanam* – enlivening the hearts of those afflicted by the threefold material miseries; *kavibhiḥ* – by enlightened sages; *īḍitam* – praised; *kalmaṣa-apaham* – dispells the ignorance of sinful life; *śravaṇa-maṅgalam* – creates auspiciousness simply by hearing; *śrīmat* – imbued with spiritual potencies; *ātataṁ* – broadcast all over the world; *bhūvi* – on the Earth; *gṛṇanti* – chant and proclaim; *ye* – those who; *bhūri-dāḥ* – most magnanimous; *janāḥ* – persons.

Nectarean discussions about You are the life and soul of those who are tormented by separation from You, and greatly learned personalities, such as Brahmā, Śiva and the four Kumāras, sing of them. Those narrations vanquish the distress of past sins [*prārabda* and *apṛārabda*].

Immediately upon being heard, they bestow the highest auspiciousness, and especially the wealth of *prema*. The nectar of Your narrations is expanded by those who glorify Your pastimes, and therefore such narrators are truly the most generous benefactors in the world.

The gopīs express their supreme love for Kṛṣṇa

**yat te sujāta-caraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu
bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaṣeṣu
tenāṭavīm aṭasi tad vyathate na kim svit
kūrpadibhir bhramati dhīr bhavad-āyusām naḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.31.19) (Gopī-gīta 19)

yat – which; *te* – Your; *su-jāta* – very fine; *caraṇa-amburuham* – lotus feet; *staneṣu* – on the breasts; *bhītāḥ* – being afraid; *śanaiḥ* – gently; *priya* – dear one; *dadhīmahi* – we place; *karkaṣeṣu* – rough; *tena* – with them; *aṭavīm* – the forest; *aṭasi* – You roam; *tat* – they; *vyathate* – are distressed; *na* – not; *kim svit* – we wonder; *kūrpa-ādibhiḥ* – by small stones and so on; *bhramati* – reels; *dhīḥ* – the mind; *bhavad-āyusām* – of those whom Your Lordship is the very life; *naḥ* – of us.

[*The gopīs said:*] “O beloved, fearing to hurt Your very tender lotus feet, we carefully place them on our hard breasts. Tonight, with those very same soft feet, You are wandering somewhere in this secluded forest. Are Your lotus feet not in pain, being injured by sharp stones, edges

of dry grains and the like? O You who are our very life, our intelligence is bewildered, overwhelmed with thoughts of You.”

Steadiness in perfection

**āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣtu mām
adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampāṭaḥ
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ**

Śikṣāṣṭaka (8), Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

āśliṣya – embracing; *vā* – or; *pāda-ratām* – one who is attached to His lotus feet; *pinaṣtu* – let Him crush; *mām* – Me; *adarśanāt* – by not being visible; *marma-hatām* – broken-hearted; *karotu* – let Him make; *vā* – or; *yathā* – as; *tathā* – so; *vā* – or; *vidadhātu* – let Him do; *lampāṭaḥ* – a debauchee; *mat-prāṇa-nāthaḥ* – the Lord of My life; *tu* – but; *saḥ* – He; *eva* – only; *na āparaḥ* – not anyone else.

Let that debauchee (Kṛṣṇa) tightly embrace this maidservant, who is devoted to serving His lotus feet, and thus delight Me. Or, let Him trample Me under His feet, or break My heart by not giving Me His *darśana*. He may do whatever He desires. Even if He sports with His other beloveds directly in front of Me, He is still My *prāṇanātha*, My life and soul. In My heart, there is none other than Him.

The Glories of Śrī Girirāja Govardhana

Śrī Govardhana praṇāma

**namas-te girirājāya śrī govardhana-nāmine
aśeṣa-kleṣa-nāśāya paramānanda-dāyine**

namaḥ – obeisances; *te* – unto you; *girirājāya* – unto the king of mountains; *śrī-govardhana-nāmine* – whose name is Śrī Govardhana; *aśeṣa* – unlimited; *kleṣa* – miseries; *nāśāya* – destroying; *parama-ānanda* – supreme bliss; *dāyine* – bestowing.

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the king of mountains (Girirāja) whose name is Govardhana. He destroys unlimited miseries and bestows the highest bliss.

O sakhīs, Govardhana is the crown jewel of Śrī Hari's servants

**hantāyam adrir abalā hari-dāsa-varyo
yad rāma-kṛṣṇa-caraṇa-sparśa-pramodaḥ
mānaṁ tanoti saha-go-gaṇayos tayor yat
pānīya-sūyavasa-kandara-kandamūlaiḥ**

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.21.18) (*Veṅu-gīta* 18)

hanta – Oh look!; *ayam* – this [as if indicating with the finger that Govardhana is just nearby]; *adriḥ* – hill [Govardhana]; *abalāḥ* – O *sakhīs*, literally meaning those who have no *balā* or power [to serve Kṛṣṇa as Govardhana does]; *hari-dāsa-varyaḥ* – the best among the servants of Hari; *yat* – because;

rāma-kṛṣṇa – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma [or of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His beloved *gopīs*]; *caraṇa-sparśa* – of the touch of the lotus feet; *pramodaḥ* – great jubilation; *mānam tanoti* – he offers respect; *saba* – with; *go-gaṇayoḥ* – unto the cows, calves and cowherd boys; *tayoḥ* – to Them [Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma or Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *yugala*]; *yat* – because; *pānīya* – with refreshing drinking water or cooling waterfalls; *sūyavasa* – very soft grass [and food-grains, flowers and fruits]; *kandara* – [*kuñja*-like] caves; *kanda-mūlaiḥ* – and edible roots.

O *sakhīs*, just see this hill, Govardhana, who is the crown jewel of Śrī Hari's servants (*hari-dāsa-varyaḥ*). Blessed is his fortune! By the touch of the lotus feet of our *prāṇa-vallabha* Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva Prabhu, who are most pleasing to the eyes, Govardhana is blossoming with delight and supplying refreshing crystal-clear water, soft grass, wonderful caves and varieties of roots. By serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, who are surrounded by the cowherd boys and cows, he highly honours them.

Girirāja Govardhana manifested directly from the heart of Śrīmatī Rādhikā

**manasaḥ prakṛteḥ jāto giri-govardhano mahān
divyaṁ vṛndāvanaṁ dṛṣtvā paramānandam āpa saḥ**

Bhaviṣya Purāna

manasaḥ – from the heart; *prakṛteḥ* – of Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *jāto* – born; *giri-govardhan* – Girirāja

Govardhana; *mahān* – the best, topmost; *divyam* – divine; *vṛndāvanam* – Vṛndāvana; *dr̥ṣtvā* – seeing; *parama-ānandam* – supreme bliss; *āpa saḥ* – he attained.

The topmost servant of Śrī Hari, Girirāja Govardhana, manifested directly from the heart of Kṛṣṇa's *blādinī-śakti*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā. He attained the topmost transcendental bliss upon seeing Vṛndāvana

The Glories of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa

Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa vijñapti

**he śrī sarovara sadā tvayi sā mad-īṣā-
preṣṭhena sārdham iha khelati kāma-raṅgaiḥ
tvam cet priyāt priyam atīva tayor itīmān
ha darśayādyā kṛpayā mama jīvitam tām**

Vilāpa-kusumāñjaliḥ (98),
Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

he – O!; *śrī-sarovara* – O best of lakes; *sadā* – eternally; *tvayi* – in your [waters]; *sā* – She; *mat* – my; *īṣā* – queen; *preṣṭhena sārdham* – with Her most beloved; *iha* – here; *khelati* – frolics; *kāma* – of amorous pastimes; *raṅgaiḥ* – with the delights; *tvam* – you; *cet* – if; *priyāt priyam* – dearer than the most dear; *atīva* – great; *tayor* – of Them; *iti* – thus; *imam* – this; *hā* – O!; *darśaya* – please reveal; *adya* – now; *kṛpayā* – with mercy; *mama* – of me; *jīvitam* – the life; *tām* – that.

O Rādhā-kuṇḍa! My mistress is engaging in very secret and beautiful playful pastimes with Her darling Kṛṣṇa in the *kuñjas* on your banks. You are so near and dear to Them. Therefore I am taking shelter of you and pray for your mercy that you will show me my Svāminī, who is my very life and soul.

What is the topmost holy place?

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

Upadeśāmṛta (9), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

vaikuṅṭhāt – than Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual world; *janitaḥ* – because of taking birth; *varā* – more exalted; *madhu-purī* – Mathurā; *tatra api* – superior to that; *rāsa-utsavāt* – because of the performance of the *rāsa-līlā*; *vṛndā-raṇyam* – the forest of Vṛndāvana; *udāra-pāṇi* – of Lord Kṛṣṇa whose hand is munificent; *ramaṇāt* – because of various kinds of loving pastimes; *tatra api* – superior to that; *govardhanaḥ* – Govardhana Hill; *rādhā-kuṇḍam* – the bathing place of Śrī Rādhā; *iha api* – superior to this; *gokula-pateḥ* – of Kṛṣṇa, the master of Gokula; *prema-amṛta* – with the nectar of divine love; *ā-plāvanāt* – because of being fully overflowed; *kuryāt* – would do; *asya* – of this [Rādhā-kuṇḍa]; *virājataḥ* – gracefully situated; *giri-taṭe* – at the foot of Govardhana Hill; *sevām* – service; *vivekī* – who is intelligent; *na* – not; *kaḥ* – who.

Due to Śrī Kṛṣṇa having taken birth there, the abode of Mathurā is superior even to Vaikuṅṭha, the realm of

spiritual opulence. Superior to Mathurā is the forest of Vṛndāvana because there the festival of the *rāsa* dance took place. Superior to Vṛndāvana forest is Govardhana Hill because Śrī Kṛṣṇa raised it with His benedictive lotus hand and performed many pastimes there with His devotees. Yet superior even to Govardhana Hill is Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa because it is overflowed by the nectar of divine love felt by the Master of Gokula. What intelligent person would not desire to render service to this magnificent pond, which is gracefully situated at the base of Govardhana Hill?

Who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dearest beloved?

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

Upadeśāmṛta (10), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

karmibhyaḥ – than all fruitive workers; *paritaḥ* – in all respects; *hareḥ* – by the Supreme Lord; *priyatayā* – because of being favoured; *vyaktim yayuḥ* – it is said in the *śāstra*; *jñāninaḥ* – those advanced in knowledge; *tebhyaḥ* – superior to them;

jñāna-vimukta – liberated by knowledge; *bhakti-paramāḥ* – those engaged in devotional service; *prema-eka-niṣṭhāḥ* – those who have attained pure love of God; *tataḥ* – superior to them; *tebhyaḥ* – better than them; *tāḥ* – they; *paśu-pāla-pankaja-drśaḥ* – the *gopīs* who always gaze at Kṛṣṇa, the cowherd boy who has lotus eyes; *tābhyaḥ* – above all of them; *api* – certainly; *sā* – She; *rādhikā* – Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *preṣṭhā* – most dear; *tadvat* – similarly; *iyam* – this; *tadīya-sarasī* – Her lake, Śrī Rādhā-kunḍa; *tām* – Rādhā-kunḍa; *na* – not; *āśrayet* – would take shelter; *kaḥ* – who?; *kṛtī* – accomplished person, the perfected *sādhaka*.

One who selflessly performs virtuous acts in accordance with the path of *karma-yoga* is superior to those who engage in fruitive activities. The *brahma-jñānīs*, who by dint of their spiritual knowledge are transcendental to the three modes of material nature, are more dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than those pious followers of the *karma* path who are forever occupied in performing virtuous deeds. More dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than the *brahma-jñānīs* are His devotees like Sanaka, who have abandoned the pursuit of knowledge and who consider *bhakti* alone to be the best path. In doing so, they have followed the statement in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.3): *Jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā* – one should abandon the endeavour for knowledge. Pure devotees like Nārada, who are resolutely fixed in *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, are even more dear to Him than all such devotees. The *vraja-gopīs*, whose very lives belong solely to Kṛṣṇa, are even more beloved to Him than all such loving (*premi*) devotees.

Amongst all those beloved *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is more dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than His own life; in the same way, He dearly loves Her pond, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Therefore, what accomplished, spiritually perfected person would not reside on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in a state of transcendental consciousness, performing *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eightfold daily pastimes?

The glories of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa

**kṛṣṇasyocaiḥ praṇaya-vasatiḥ
preyasībhyo 'pi rādhā
kuṇḍam cāsyā munibhir abhitas
tādṛg eva vyadhāyi
yat preṣṭhair apy alam asulabham
kiṁ punar bhakti-bhājām
tat-premedam sakṛd api saraḥ
snātur āviṣkaroti**

Upadeśāmṛta (11), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

kṛṣṇasya – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *ucchaiḥ* – is the foremost; *praṇaya* – of love; *vasati* – object; *preyasībhyāḥ api* – even more than the other beloved *gopīs*; *rādhā* – Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *kuṇḍam* – pond; *ca* – also; *asyāḥ* – Her [Śrīmatī Rādhikā's]; *munibhiḥ* – by the sages; *abhitaḥ* – in every respect; *tādṛg eva* – is just so [the topmost object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's love]; *vyadhāyi* – this has been established [in the scriptures]; *yat* – which; *preṣṭhaiḥ api* – even for such dear devotees of Bhagavān as Nārada;

alam – is immensely; *asulabham* – difficult to attain; *kim punar* – what to speak of; *bhakti-bhājām* – other reservoirs of *bhakti* [the *sādhaka-bhaktas*]; *tat* – that; *prema – gopī-prema*; *idam* – this; *sakṛt api* – only once; *saraḥ* – pond [Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa]; *snātuh* – upon one who simply bathes in its waters with great devotion; *āviṣkaroti* – bestows.

After thorough deliberation on the matter, the sages have unanimously declared [in the *Padma Purāṇa*] that just as amongst all the *gopīs* Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the foremost object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's great love, in precisely the same way this pond of Hers is also the topmost object of His love. Upon one who simply bathes in its waters just once with great devotion, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa bestows that rare treasure of *gopī-prema* which is so immensely difficult to attain even for such dear devotees of Bhagavān as Nārada – what to speak of ordinary *sādhakas*.

T H U S E N D S Ś r ī Ś l o k ā m ṛ t a m - b i n d u

APPENDIX

Basic Questions of Siddhānta & Corresponding Definition Ślokas

(1) What is *bhakti*?

**anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam, sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ, sa vai
puṁsām paro dharmo.**

(2) What is *guru-tattva*?

**tasmād gurum prapadyeta, yasya deve parā bhaktir,
bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād, tad viddhi praṇipātena**

(3) What is *dīkṣā*?

**divyam jñānam yato dadyāt, dīkṣā-kāle bhakti
kare ātma-samarpaṇa**

(4) What is *śraddhā*?

śraddhā-śabde viśvāsa kahe, śraddhā tv anyopāya-varjam

(5) What is *śaraṇāgati*?

**ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ, sarva-dharmān parityajya, daivī
hy eṣā guṇa-mayī**

(6) What is humility (as well as the basic mood for chanting)?

tṛṇād api sunīcena

(7) What is the definition of tolerance ('the *karma śloka*')?

tat te 'nukampāṁ su-samīkṣamāṇo

(8) How to avoid criticism and offences?

vāco vegaṁ manasaḥ krodha-vegaṁ

(9) What is the first and foremost necessity for attaining perfection?

**sādhū-saṅga sādhu-saṅga sarva-sāstre kaya,
kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla haya 'sādhū-saṅga'**

(10) What is *sādhana-bhakti*?

kṛti-sādhyā bhavet sādhyā

(11) What is *bhāva-bhakti*?

śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā

(12) What are the symptoms of *bhāva-bhakti*?

kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvaṁ

(13) What is *prema-bhakti*?

**samyāṁ maṣṇita-svānto, sarvathā dhvaṁsa-rahitaṁ,
ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā**

(14) What is *vaidhī-bhakti*?

yatra rāgānavāptatvāt

(15) What is *rāgānuga-bhakti*?

**kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāśya, sevā sādḥaka-rūpeṇa,
virājanātmā abhivyaktāṁ, rāgātmika-bhakti 'mukhyā'**

(16) What is *rāgātmika-bhakti*?

iṣṭe svā-rasikī rāgaḥ

(17) What is the definition *śloka* of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and the only qualification for *rāgānuga bhakti*?

kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ

(18) What is Sanātana *śikṣā*, the four basic questions of spiritual life?

ke āmi kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya, sadhya sādhana tattva

(18.1) Who am I? What is the *jīva*'s real identity?

jīvera svarūpa haya – kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa, nāhaṁ vipro na ca nara-patir

(18.2) Why am I suffering in this material world?

kṛṣṇa bhuli' sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha

(18.3) What is the ultimate goal of life (*sādhyā*)?

ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas, āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim, (for general audience: labdhvā su-durlabham idam, nṛ-deham ādyam)

(18.4) What is the process (*sādhana*) to attain the ultimate goal?

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam (pure bhakti)

An additional question related to Sanātana śikṣā:

(19) How to stop all suffering and solve all problems?

sarva-dharmān parityajya, daivī hy eṣā guna-mayī sādhu-saṅga sādhu-saṅga sarva-śāstre kaya

(20) What is the essence of *gaura-vāṇī*, the teachings of Māhaprabhu?

ārādhya bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas, āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim, anarpita-carīm cirāt, tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi (plus Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam)

(21) What are the four main reasons for Māhaprabhu's appearance?

prema-rasa-niryāsa karite āsvādana, anarpita-carīm cirāt, śrī-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā

Two external reasons: to bestow *kṛṣṇa-prema* and *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Two internal reasons: to taste Śrīmatī Rādhikā's love and answer the call of Advaita Ācārya. Kṛṣṇa desired to taste Rādhā's *praṇaya-mahimā* (the glories of Her love), Her *adbhuta-madhurimā* (the astonishing sweetness of Her love) and Her *saukhyam* (happiness).

(22) What is the foremost limb of *bhakti* and the way to attain perfection in Kali-yuga?

harer nāma harer nāma, nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis (kīrtana)

(23) What is the Gauḍīya Maṭha's main purpose and sole object of worship?

ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam....param vijāyate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam – Let there be supreme victory to the congregational chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's names (saṅkīrtana).

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