

Mādhurya-kādambinī

by
Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

MĀDHURYA-KĀDAMBINĪ

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śrī śrī guru-gaurāṅgau jayataḥ

Mādhurya-kādambinī

A Cloud Bank of Nectar

by
Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

Bhāvānuvāda
~revelation of the author's intent~
and
Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti
~the commentary that showers nectar~

by
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja



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Published by the inspiration of
my most worshipful, causelessly merciful gurupāda-padma,

nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa-om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī
Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Although it is already his,
we offer this publication into his lotus hands.

~Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa



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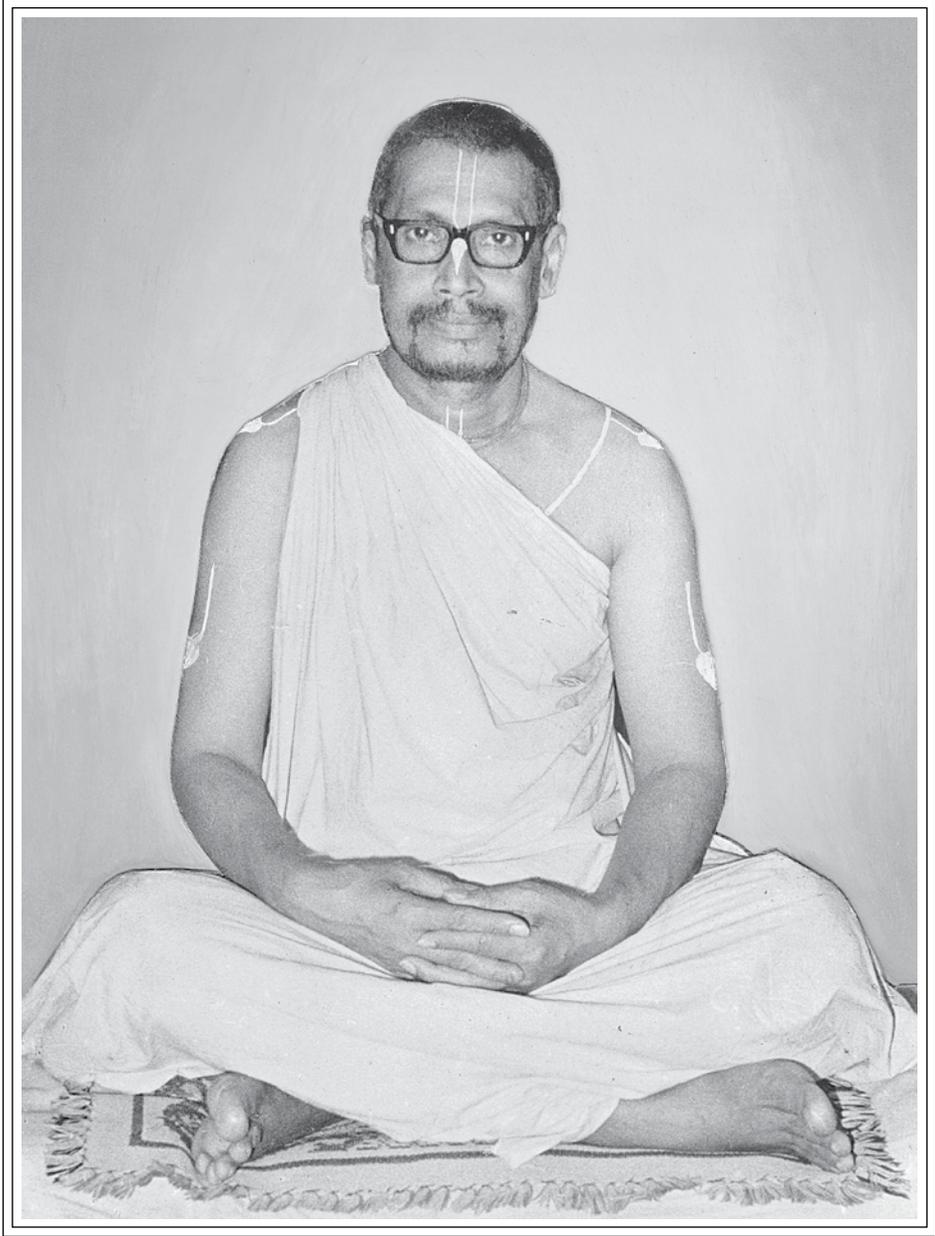
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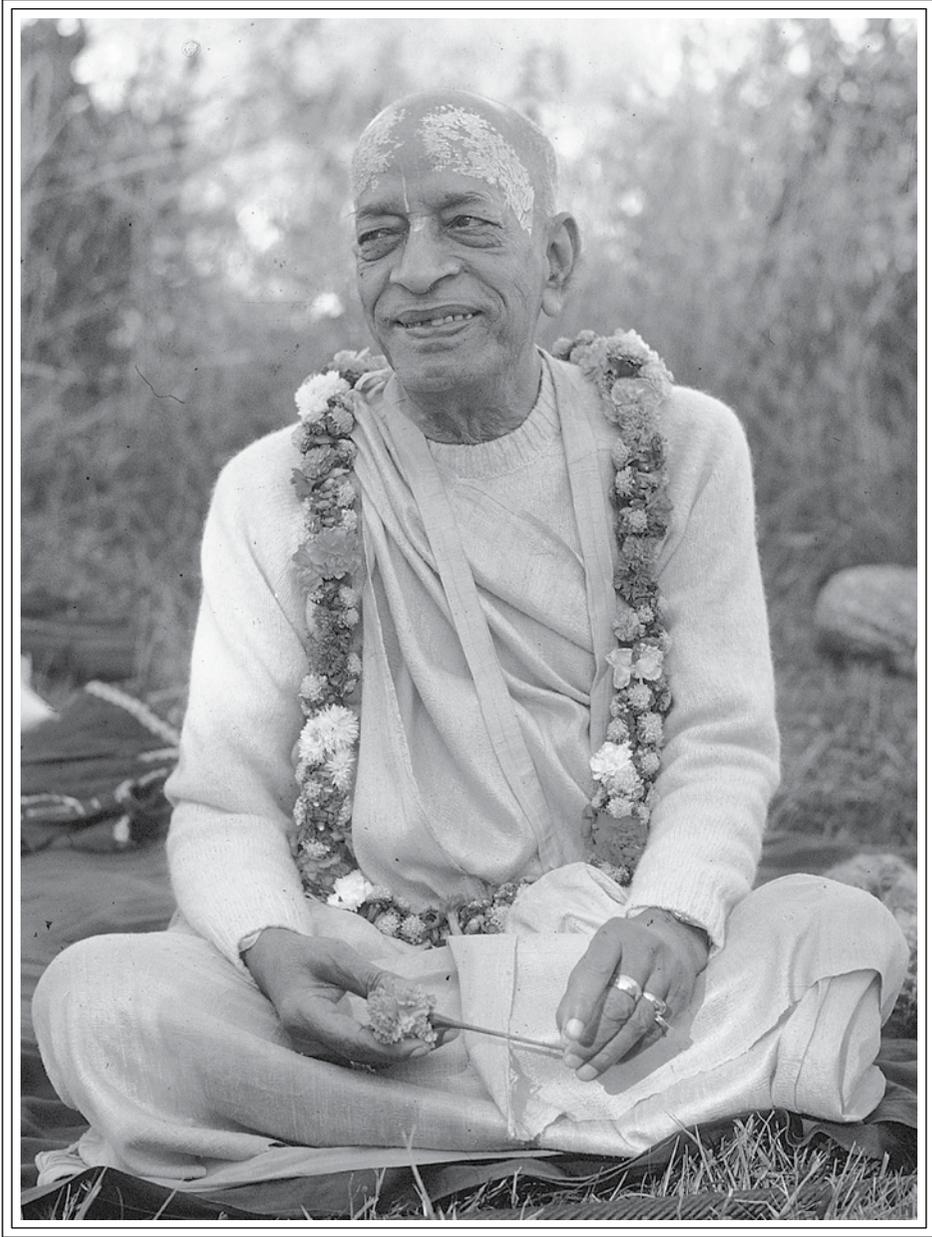
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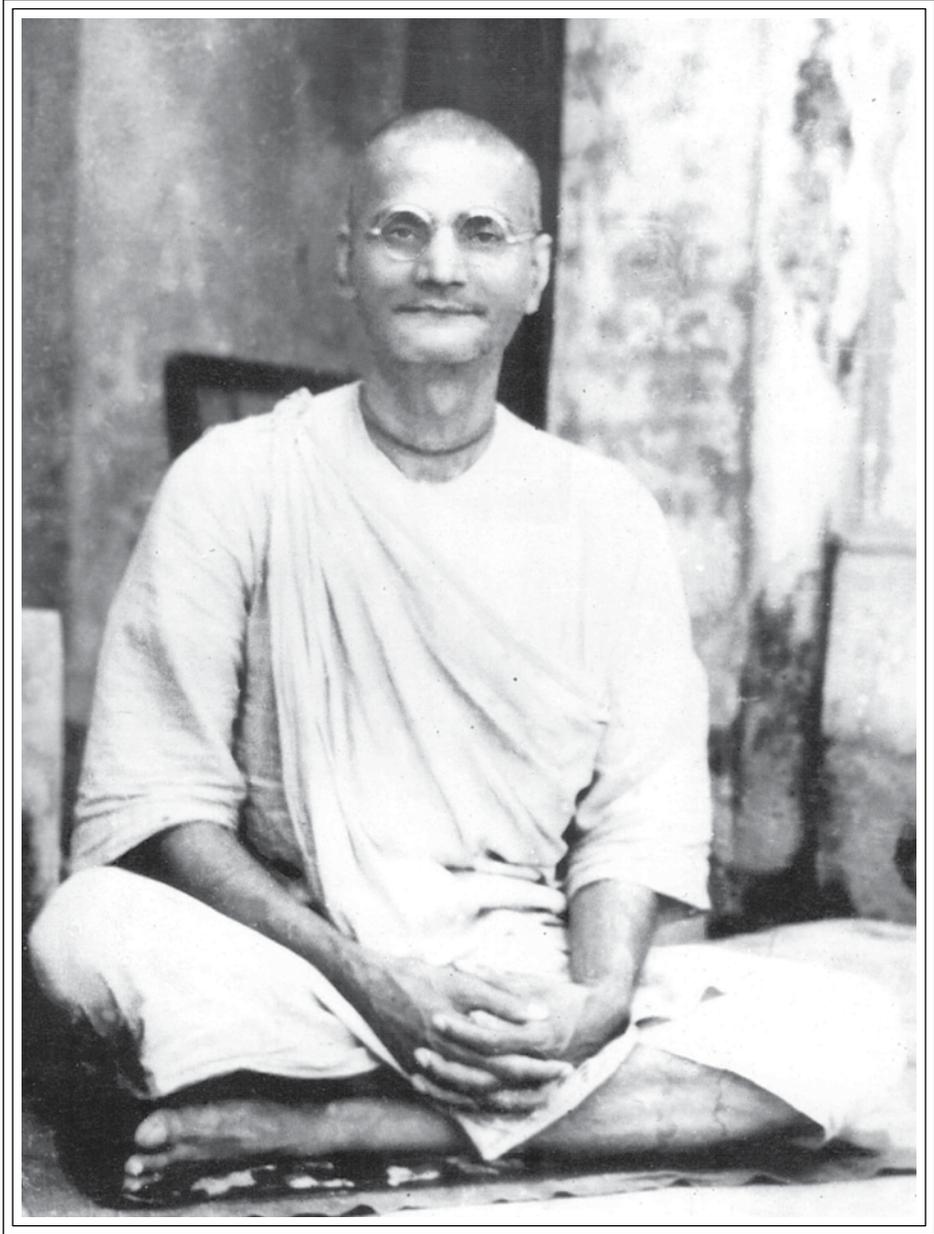
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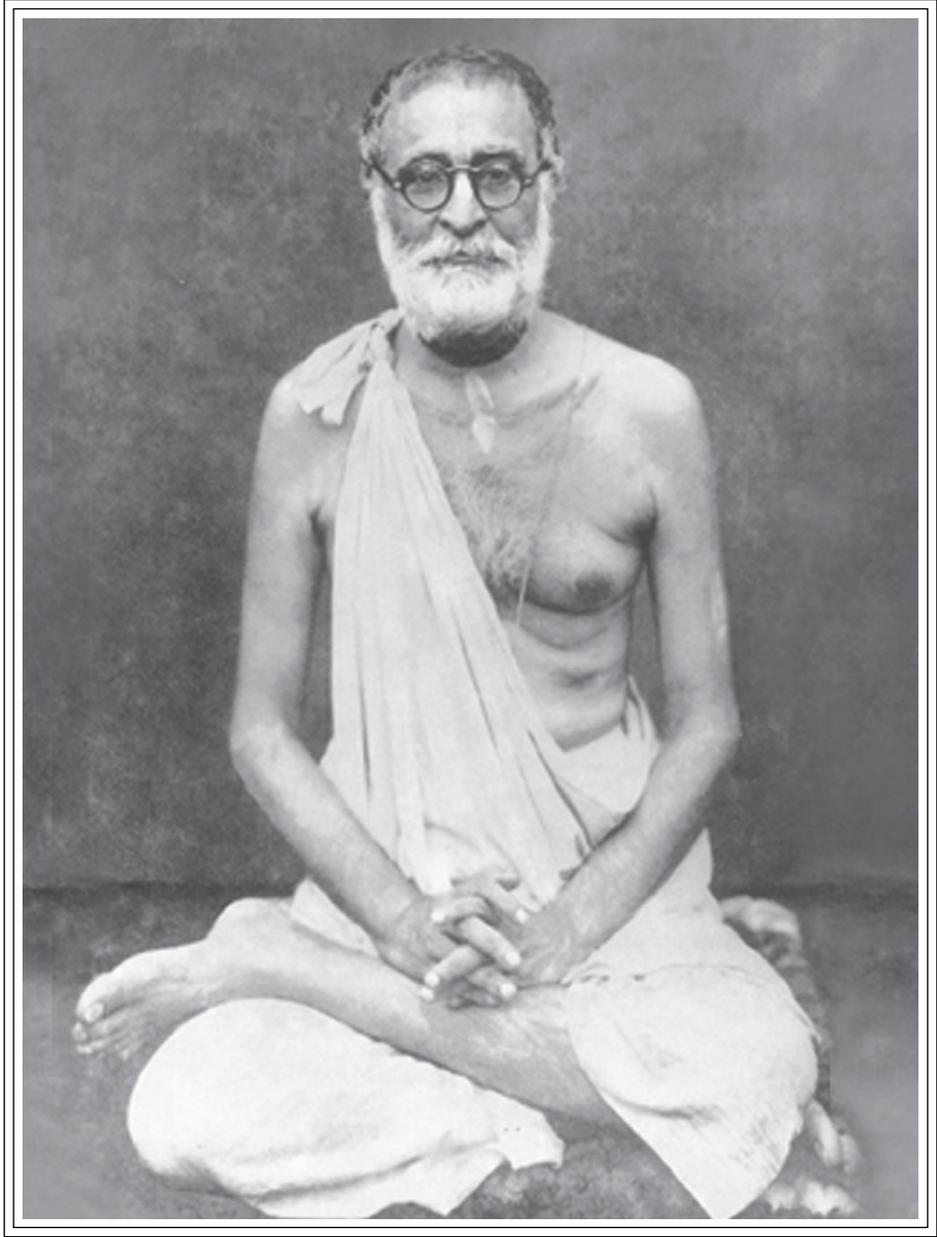
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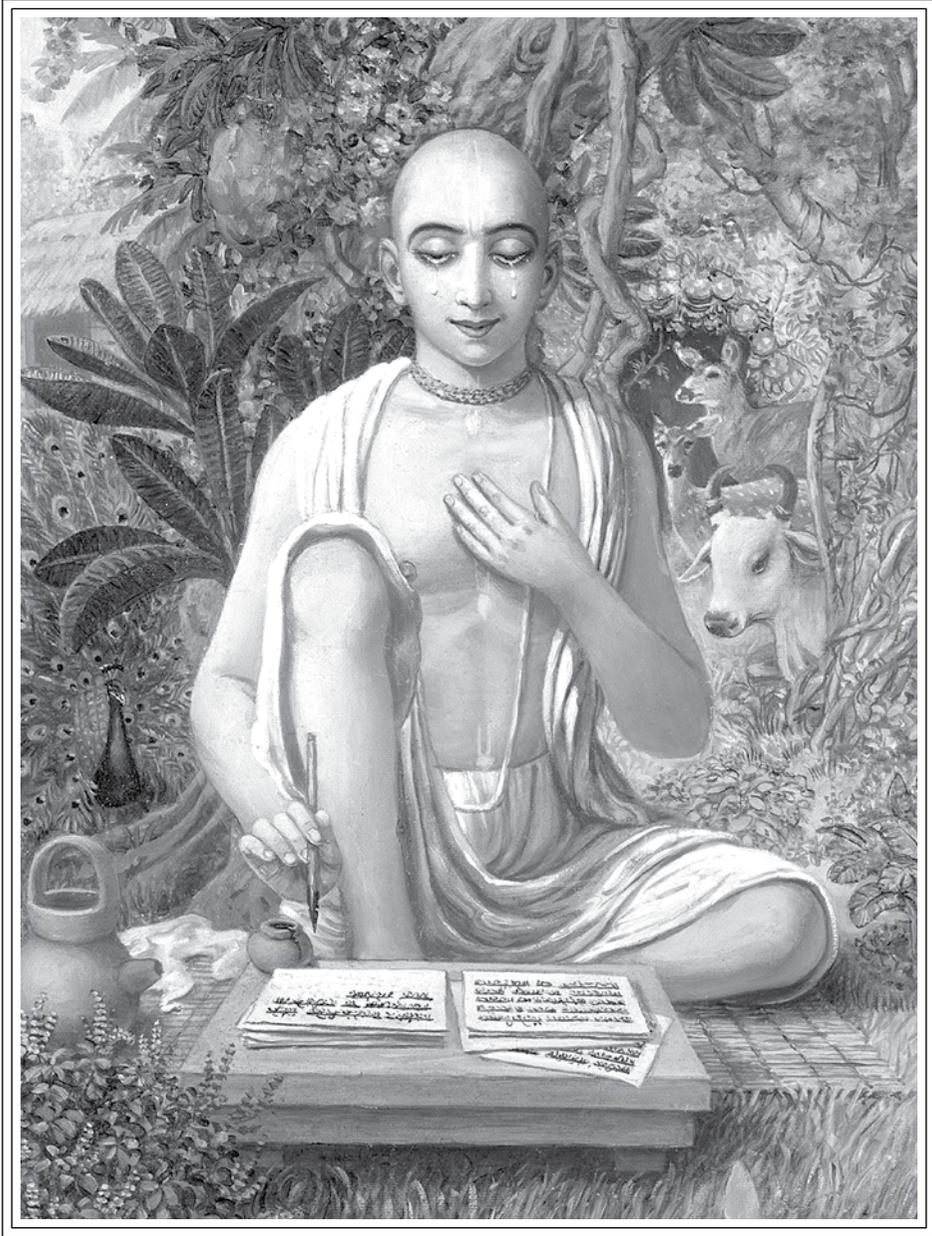
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Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja



nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī
Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda



The Crest Jewel of Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas
mahā-mahopādhyāya
Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura

Introduction

(to the Hindi edition)

It brings me boundless joy that today, by the causeless mercy and inspiration of my most worshipful *gurupāda-padma*, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja*, we are presenting, for his pleasure, this edition of *Mādhurya-kādambinī*, a text written by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the highly exalted crown jewel of Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. In this text, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has presented, in faithful adherence to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, a beautiful deliberation on the sequence of *sādhana-bhakti*: *śraddhā*, *bhajana-kriyā*, *anartha-nivṛtti*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti* and *bhāva*, or *rati*.

Life history of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura took his divine birth in a family of *brāhmaṇas* from the Raḍhīya community of the Nadiyā district in West Bengal. He was celebrated by the name Hari-vallabha and had two elder brothers, Rāmabhadra and Raghunātha. During his childhood, he completed his study of grammar in the village of Devagrāma. He then studied devotional scriptures at the home of his spiritual master in the Śaiyadābād village of the Murśidābād district. While living in Śaiyadābād, he wrote *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī-kiraṇa* and *Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā*. Soon after, he renounced household life and went to Vṛndāvana, where he wrote many other books and commentaries.

After the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the six Gosvāmīs of Vraja, the current of unalloyed devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*) continued to flow by the influence of three great personalities: Śrī Narottama

dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Śrī Śyāmānanda Prabhu. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is fourth in the line of disciplic succession coming from Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

A disciple of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaṅgā-nārāyaṇa Cakravartī Mahāśaya, lived in Bālūcara Gambhilā in the Murśidābād district. He had a daughter named Viṣṇu-priyā but no sons, so he adopted a devotee named Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caraṇa. Kṛṣṇa-caraṇa was the youngest son of another disciple of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, named Rāmakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭācārya, who was from the Vārendra community of *brāhmaṇa* families. Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caraṇa’s disciple was Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa Cakravartī, the spiritual master of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura.

In *Sārārtha-darśinī*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he has written the following verse at the beginning of *Rāsa-pañcādhyāyī*, the five chapters of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa* dance with the *gopīs*:

*śrī-rāma-kṛṣṇa-gaṅgā-caraṇān natvā gurūnuru-premnaḥ
śrīla-narottama-nātha śrī-gaurāṅga-prabhuṁ naumi*

Here, the name “Śrī Rāma” refers to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s spiritual master, Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa; “Kṛṣṇa” refers to his grand-spiritual master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa-caraṇa; “Gaṅgā-caraṇa” refers to his great grand-spiritual master, Śrī Gaṅgā-caraṇa; “Narottama” refers to his great-great grand-spiritual master, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura; and the word “Nātha” refers to Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura’s spiritual master, Śrī Lokanātha Gosvāmī. In this way, he offers obeisances to all those in his disciplic succession up to Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Refuting the opinions of the atibāḍī Rūpa Kavirāja

Hemalatā Ṭhākuraṇī was the learned Vaiṣṇavī daughter of Śrīnivāsa Ācārya. Once, an estranged disciple of hers named Rūpa Kavirāja concocted his own doctrine, which opposed the philosophical conceptions of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. He taught that the position of *ācārya* could only be occupied

by one in the renounced order, never by a householder. Rūpa Kavirāja's aim was to completely disregard the necessity of following *vidhi-mārga* (the path of regulated devotional practice) and to propagate a so-called *rāga-mārga* (doctrine of spontaneous attraction) that was undisciplined and disorderly. His new doctrine stated that one could abandon the practices of hearing and chanting and practise *rāgānuga-bhakti* by remembrance alone. For this, Hemalatā Ṭhākuraṅgī ensured that Rūpa Kavirāja was expelled from the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community. Since that time, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have known him as an *atibāḍī*, a person from one of the eleven unauthorized *sahajiyā* communities that concoct their own method of devotional service.

Fortunately, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura was present at this time, and he refuted Rūpa Kavirāja's false conclusions in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on the Third Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīla Cakravartī proved unequivocally that qualified householder descendants of an *ācārya* may act as *ācārya*. He said that it is unlawful and contrary to the statements of scripture for unfit descendants of *ācārya* families to adopt the title "Gosvāmī" out of greed for disciples and wealth.

Householder disciples in the line of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu's son Vīrabhadra and descendants of the rejected sons of Śrī Advaita Ācārya award and accept the title "Gosvāmī", an action considered improper by Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. Although Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura acted as an *ācārya*, in order to instruct the foolish and unfit descendants of *ācārya* families of modern times, he personally never used the title "Gosvāmī".

Protecting the honour of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sampradāya through Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa

When Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura became very old, he spent most of his time in a semi-conscious state, deeply absorbed in *bhajana*. During that time, a debate broke out in Jaipur between the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and other Vaiṣṇavas who supported the doctrine of *svakīyāvāda*, or the Lord's pastimes of wedded love.

The Vaiṣṇavas from the antagonistic camp had led King Jaya Singh II of Jaipur to believe that the worship of Śrīmatī Rādhikā with Śrī Govindadeva is not supported by the scriptures. Their contention was that Śrīmatī Rādhikā's name is neither mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* nor in the *Viṣṇu Purāna*, and that She was never married to Śrī Kṛṣṇa according to Vedic injunctions.

The antagonistic Vaiṣṇavas further objected that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas did not belong to a recognized *sampradāya*, or line of disciplic succession. From time immemorial, there have been four Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*: (1) the Śrī *sampradāya* (disciplic succession headed by Lakṣmī-devī, the goddess of fortune), (2) the Brahma *sampradāya* (the disciplic succession headed by Lord Brahmā), (3) the Rudra *sampradāya* (the disciplic succession headed by Lord Śiva) and (4) the Sanaka (Kumāra) *sampradāya* (the disciplic succession headed by Sanaka-kumāra, the eldest of the four sons of Brahmā).

In this age of Kali, the principal *ācāryas* of these four *sampradāyas* are, respectively, (1) Śrī Rāmānuja, (2) Śrī Madhva, (3) Śrī Viṣṇusvāmī and (4) Śrī Nimbāditya. The antagonistic Vaiṣṇavas said that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas were outside these four *sampradāyas* and therefore without pure lineage. Further, they argued that because Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas did not have their own commentary on *Brahma-sūtra* (also known as *Vedānta-sūtra*, the philosophical treatise written by Vyāsadeva, which consists of succinct aphorisms that embody the essential meaning of the Upaniṣads), they could not be regarded as a genuine Vaiṣṇava sect belonging to any genuine disciplic succession.

Mahārāja Jaya Singh knew that the prominent Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* of Vṛndāvana were followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and he invited them to Jaipur to take up the challenge of the Śrī Rāmānuja Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura was very old at the time and fully absorbed in the transcendental bliss of *bhajana*, so he sent his student Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa to address the Jaipur assembly. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Vedāntācārya Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, the crown jewel of the assembly of learned scholars and the greatest among exalted teachers of Vedānta, left for Jaipur, accompanied by Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura's disciple Śrī Kṛṣṇadeva.

The caste *gosvāmīs* had forgotten their own connection with the Madhva *sampradāya* and disrespected the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas' doctrinal view, saying it has no connection with Vedānta. This caused considerable disturbance to the true Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, however, used irrefutable logic combined with powerful scriptural evidence to prove the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* to be a pure Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* in the line of Śrī Madhvācārya, called the Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya-Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kavi Karpūra and other previous *ācāryas* also accepted this as fact. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas accept *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the natural commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*. For this reason, no one in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* had written a separate commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*.

The name of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the personification of the pleasure-giving potency (*hlādinī-śakti*) and the eternal beloved of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is mentioned in various Purāṇas. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is referred in a very concealed and mystical manner in various places throughout *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, particularly the Tenth Canto in connection with descriptions of the Lord's Vṛndāvana pastimes. Only *rasika* and *bhāvuka* devotees conversant with the conclusions of the scriptures can understand this confidential mystery.

In the learned assembly in Jaipur, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa refuted the arguments and doubts of the opposing party, and they were silenced by his presentation. He established that the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas are in the disciplic succession of Śrī Madhvācārya. Despite his victory, however, the contesting party did not accept the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* to be of pure Vaiṣṇava lineage, because the Gauḍīyas had no commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*. Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa therefore composed the famous Gauḍīya commentary, *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya*. Once again, the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda commenced in the temple of Śrī Govindadeva, and the validity of the Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya* was firmly established.

It was only on the authority of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura that Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa composed *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya* and proved the connection of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas with the Madhva *sampradāya*. There is no

scope for any doubt in this regard. This accomplishment of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, performed on behalf of the *sampradāya*, will remain inscribed in golden letters in the annals of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Attaining the meaning of the *kāma-gāyatrī* by the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhikā

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has described a special event in *Mantrārtha-dīpikā*, a book personally compiled by him. Once, while studying and teaching Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, he came upon a verse describing the meaning of the *kāma-gāyatrī-mantra*:

kāma-gāyatrī-mantra-rūpa, haya kṛṣṇera svarūpa
sārdha-cabbīsa akṣara tāra haya
se akṣara 'candra' haya, kṛṣṇa kori' udaya
tri-jagat kailā kāma-maya

Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya-līlā 21.125)

The *kāma-gāyatrī* is identical with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this king of *mantras*, there are twenty-four-and-a-half syllables, and each syllable is a full moon. This aggregate of moons causes the moon of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to rise and fills the three worlds with *prema*.

This verse establishes that the *kāma-gāyatrī* is composed of twenty-four-and-a-half syllables, but despite deep deliberation, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura could not ascertain which syllable in the *mantra* was the half-syllable. He scrutinized grammar books, Purāṇas, Tantras, scriptures dealing with drama and rhetoric and other great texts. Among the vowel and consonant groups of Śrī *Harināmāmṛta-vyākaraṇa*, the Sanskrit grammar methodology of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, he found mention of only fifty letters. He also studied the arrangement of letters (*māṭṛkā*) in texts such as *Māṭṛkānyāsa*, and in the *Rādhikā-sahasra-nāma-stotra* in the *Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa*, he found that Vṛndāvaneśvarī Śrīmatī Rādhikā is also called

“Pañcāśad-varṇa-rūpiṇī”, one whose form is composed of fifty syllables. In all the literatures he studied, however, he found mention of only fifty vowels and consonants. There was no mention of any half-syllable.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s doubt increased. He wondered whether Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī had made a mistake in his writing. Of course this could not have been possible, as Śrīla Kavirāja is omniscient and therefore free from material defects such as falling into illusion or error.

If the fragmented letter “t” (the final letter of the *kāma-gāyatrī*) were taken as the half-syllable, then Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī would be guilty of the fault of disorder, for in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 21.126–128)* he has given the following description:

*sakhi he, kṛṣṇa-mukha—dvija-rāja-rāja
kṛṣṇa-vapu-simhāsane, bosī’ rājya-śāsane,
kare saṅge candrera samāja

dui gaṇḍa sucikkāṇa, jini’ maṇi-sudarpaṇa,
sei dui pūrṇa-candra jāni
lalāṭe aṣṭamī-indu, tāhāte candana-bindu,
sei eka pūrṇa-candra māni

kara-nakha—cānder hāṭa, vaṁṣīr upar kare nāṭa,
tāra gīta muralīra tāna
pada-nakha candra-gaṇa, tale kare nartana,
nūpurera dhvani jāra gāna*

In these lines, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s face as the first full moon; His cheeks are two full moons; the dot of sandalwood on the upper portion of His forehead is the fourth full moon; and just below this is the moon of the eighth day (*aṣṭamī*), in other words, a half-moon. According to this description, the fifth syllable is a half-syllable. Yet if the fragmented “t”, the final letter in the *kāma-gāyatrī-mantra*, is seen to be a half-syllable, then the fifth syllable cannot be seen as such.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura was in a profound dilemma because he could not decipher the mysterious half-syllable. He concluded that if the syllables would not reveal themselves, he would be unable to behold the worshipful deity of the *mantra*. He decided that if he could not obtain the audience of the revered deity of the *mantra*, it would be better to die. Thinking this way, he set out at night to the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa to give up his life.

After the second division of the night had passed, Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura fell into light sleep. At that time, the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, appeared before him. “O Viśvanātha, O Hari-vallabha,” She said affectionately, “do not lament. What Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has written is the absolute truth. By My grace, he knows all the inner sentiments of My heart. Have no doubt about his statements. The *kāma-gāyatrī* is a *mantra* to worship My dearly beloved and Me, and We become revealed to the devotees through the syllables of this *mantra*. No one can know Us without My kindness. The half-syllable is described in the book *Varṇa-āgama-bhāsvat*. It was after consulting this text that Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja determined the actual identity of the *kāma-gāyatrī*. Study this book and broadcast its meaning for the benefit of all faithful people.”

When he heard this instruction from Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī Śrīmatī Rādhikā Herself, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura arose, calling out in great lamentation, “O Rādhā, O Rādhā!” After regaining composure, he proceeded to carry out Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s order.

According to Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s indication, the letter “ya” preceding “vi” in the *mantra* is considered a half-syllable, and all the other syllables are full syllables, or full moons.

Thus, by Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s mercy, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura became acquainted with the deep meaning of the *mantra*. He attained the direct audience of his worshipful deity, and in his internal, perfected spiritual body (*siddha-deha*), he was able to participate in the Lord’s eternal pastimes as His loving associate. He established the deity of Śrī Gokulānanda on the

bank of Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and while residing there, he experienced the sweetness (*mādhurya*) of the eternal pastimes of Śrī Vṛndāvana. It was at this time that he wrote his *Sukha-vartinī* commentary on Śrīla Kavi Karṇapūra's *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campū* and stated therein:

rādhā-parastīra-kuṭīra-vartinah
prāptavya-vṛndāvana-cakravartinah
ānanda-campū-vivṛti-pravartinah
sānto-gatir me sumahā-nivartinah

I, Cakravartī, completely leave aside all other things and only desire to attain Śrī Vṛndāvana. Residing in a simple hut on the bank of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the topmost place of Śrī Rādhā's pastimes, I write this commentary on *Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campū*.

In his old age, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura spent most of his time in either a fully internal state or in a semi-conscious state, deeply absorbed in *bhajana*. His principal disciple, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, took over the responsibility of teaching the scriptures.

Re-establishing the doctrine of *parakīya*

When a slight decline in the influence of the six Gosvāmīs in Śrī Vṛndāvana took place, a controversy arose around the doctrine of wedded love (*svakīyāvāda*) versus the doctrine of paramour love (*parakīyāvāda*). To dispel misconceptions regarding *svakīyāvāda*, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura wrote *Rāga-vartma-candrikā* and *Gopī-premāmṛta*, both of which are replete with scriptural philosophical conclusions. Thereafter, in his *Ānanda-candrikā* commentary on the verse *laghutvam atra yat proktam*, of *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* (1.21), he showed that the theory of *svakīyāvāda* was fallacious, and with scriptural evidence and irrefutable logic, he established the conception of *parakīya*. Further, in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he gave strong support to *parakīya-bhāva*.

Once, certain scholars opposed the conclusions of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura on worship in the mood of *parakīya*. When he defeated them with superior erudition and sound reasoning, they resolved out of envy to kill him. They knew that Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura would circumambulate Śrī Vṛndāvana early each morning, so they hid in a dark, dense grove and waited for him to walk by. As his adversaries watched him approach, he suddenly disappeared, and in his place, a beautiful young girl of Vraja appeared, picking flowers with her friends.

The scholars asked that girl, “O *lālī* (young girl), just a moment ago a great personality was coming this way. Where has he gone?” The girl replied, “I saw him, but I do not know where he has gone.” The sight of her astonishing beauty, sidelong glances, graceful manner and gentle smile captivated the assembly of scholars. All the impurities in their minds were removed and their hearts melted. They asked the girl who she was, and she replied, “I am a maidservant of my mistress, Śrīmatī Rādhikā. She is presently at Her in-laws’ house at Yāvaṭa. She has sent me here to pick flowers.”

Having spoken thus, the girl disappeared, and in her place the scholars saw Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura once again. The scholars fell at his feet and prayed for forgiveness, and Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura forgave them all. There are many such astonishing occurrences in the life of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura. In this way, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura refuted the theory of *svakīyāvāda* and established the truth of pure *parakīya* – an achievement of great import for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura not only protected the integrity of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *dharma*, but he also re-established its influence in Śrī Vṛndāvana. Anyone who evaluates this accomplishment will be struck with wonder at his uncommon genius. Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* have composed the following verse in praise of his extraordinary work:

*viśvasya nātha rūpo ’sau / bhakti-vartma-pradarśanāt
bhakta-cakre vartitatvāt / cakravarty ākhyaya bhavat*

He is known by the name Viśvanātha, lord of the universe, because he indicates and illuminates the path of *bhakti*; and he is known as Cakravartī because he always remains within the assembly of pure devotees. Therefore, his name is Viśvanātha Cakravartī.

In about 1754 in Vṛndāvana, on the fifth day of the bright fortnight in the month of Māgha (January–February), when Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura was approximately one hundred years old, he left this material world, deeply absorbed in internal consciousness. His *samādhi* stands today next to the temple of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda in Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana.

The glories and legacy of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

Following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura composed an abundance of transcendental literature on *bhakti*, thereby establishing in this world the innermost desire of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s heart. He also refuted faulty *siddhānta* opposing genuine *rūpānuga* conceptions and is thus revered in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society as an illustrious *ācārya* and an authoritative, self-realized soul. He is renowned as a great transcendental philosopher, a poet and a *rasika* devotee.

The Vaiṣṇava poet Kṛṣṇa dāsa has written the following lines in the conclusion of his translation of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s *Mādhurya-kādambinī*:

*mādhurya-kādambinī-grantha jagat kailo dhanya
cakravartī-mukhe vaktā āpani śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya*

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has blessed the whole world by writing *Mādhurya-kādambinī*. In reality, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu has spoken this work through the mouth of Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura.

*keho kahen-cakravartī śrī-rūper avatāra
kathina je tattva saral korite pracāra*

Some say Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura is an incarnation of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. He is expert in the art of describing complex truths in a way that is easy to understand.

*ohe guṇa-nidhi śrī-viśvanātha cakravartī
ki jānibo tomār guṇa mui mūḍha-mati*

O ocean of mercy, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, I am a foolish person, so how can I understand your qualities? (Therefore, kindly reveal your transcendental qualities within my heart. This is my prayer at your lotus feet.)

Few Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava ācāryas have written as many books as Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura. The following adage regarding three of his books is popular among Vaiṣṇavas to this day: “*kirāṇa-bindu-kaṇā, ei tina niye vaiṣṇavapanā* – having attained a proper understanding of these three books, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī-kirāṇa, Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu* and *Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā*, one can claim to be a Vaiṣṇava.”

Below is a list of his books, commentaries and prayers, which comprise a storehouse of incomparable wealth of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava devotional literature:

(1) *Vraja-rīti-cintāmaṇi*; (2) *Camatkāra-candrikā*; (3) *Prema-sampuṭa (khaṇḍa-kāvya)*; (4) *Gītāvalī*; (5) *Subodhinī (Alankāra-kaustubha ṭikā)*; (6) *Ānanda-candrikā (Ujjvala-nīlamanī ṭikā)*; (7) *Ṭikā on Śrī Gopāla-tāpanī*; (8) *Stavāmṛta-laharī*, “Waves of Nectarean Prayers”, which includes *Śrī Gurutattvāṣṭaka, Mantra-dāṭṭ-guror-aṣṭaka, Parama-guror-aṣṭaka, Parātpara-guror-aṣṭaka, Parama-parātpara-guror-aṣṭaka, Śrī Lokanāthāṣṭaka, Śrī Śacīnandanāṣṭaka, Śrī Svarūpa-caritāmṛta, Śrī Svapna-vilāsāmṛta, Śrī Gopāla-devāṣṭaka, Śrī Madana-mohanāṣṭaka, Śrī Govindāṣṭaka, Śrī Gopināthāṣṭaka, Śrī Gokulānandāṣṭaka, Svayaṁ-bhagavad-aṣṭaka, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍāṣṭaka, Jagan-mohanāṣṭaka, Anurāga-vallī, Śrī Vṛndā-devyaṣṭakam, Śrī Rādhikā-dhyānāmṛta, Śrī Rūpa-cintāmaṇi, Śrī Nandīśvarāṣṭaka, Śrī Vṛndāvanāṣṭaka,*

Śrī Govardhanāṣṭaka, Śrī Saṅkalpa-kalpa-druma, Śrī Nikuñja-virudāvalī (virut-kāvya, laudatory poetry), Surata-kathāmṛta and Śrī Śyāma-kuṇḍāṣṭaka; (9) Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta-mahākāvya; (10) Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā; (11) Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi-kiraṇa; (12) Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu; (13) Rāga-vartma-candrikā; (14) Aiśvarya-kādambinī (unavailable); (15) Mādhurya-kādambinī; (16) Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu ṭikā; (17) Dāna-keli-kaumudī ṭikā; (18) Śrī Lalita-mādhava-naṭaka ṭikā; (19) Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta ṭikā (incomplete); (20) Brahma-saṁhitā ṭikā; (21) Śrīmad Bhāgavad-gītā Sārārtha-varṣiṇī-ṭikā and (22) Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Sārārtha-darśinī-ṭikā.

My most worshipful spiritual master, *om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja*, is the protector of the Gauḍīya *sampradāya* and the founder-*ācārya* of the Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and the Gauḍīya Maṭhas under its jurisdiction. He is the lion-like spiritual preceptor who guides others by his own example (*ācārya-kesarī*). Apart from composing his own books, he has republished in the Bengali language the books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and other previous *ācāryas*. Today, by his hearty desire, encouragement and causeless mercy, the translations of books such as *Jaiva-dharma*, *Śrī Caitanya-sikṣāmṛta*, *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu*, *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi-kiraṇa*, *Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā*, *Śrī Gīta-govinda*, *Bhajana-rahasya*, *Gauḍīya Gīta-guccha*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavad-gītā*, *Śrī Veṅu-gīta*, *Bhakti-tattva-viveka*, *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā*, *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā*, *Rāga-vartma-candrikā*, *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, *Gauḍīya-kaṇṭhahāra*, *Śrī Prema-samputa*, and other important works have been and continue to be translated and printed in Hindi, the national language of India.

I have complete faith that those who thirst for *bhakti*, especially those who are practitioners of *rāgānuga-bhakti* and eager to attain *vraja-rasa*, will receive this book with great reverence, and that faithful people who study this book will attain the qualification to attain the wealth of *prema* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Mādhurya-kādambinī

Finally, may the condensed form of Bhagavān's compassion, my most worshipful *śrī śrīla gurupāda-padma*, shower his mercy upon me, so that I may attain even more of that service which fulfils his innermost desire. This is my humble prayer at his lotus feet, which bestow *prema*.

Alam iti vistāreṇa – everything that needed to be said has now been said.

Praying for a particle of the mercy
of Śrī Hari, Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas

Humble and insignificant,
Tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu Śrī Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa

The appearance day of Śrī Madhvācārya

2 October 2006

520 Caitanyābda

Editors' Preface

All glories to our beloved Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and to our illustrious *guru-paramparā*. By their boundless grace, this English edition of *Mādhurya-kādambinī* is being published.

In this preface, we would like to inform the reader of certain features of this edition.

Chapter titles

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura refers to the chapters of *Mādhurya-kādambinī* as “showers”, listing them by number (e.g. First Shower of Nectar). The closing words that end each chapter also provide the Sanskrit title for that chapter. For example, the First Shower of Nectar is entitled “*Bhakteḥ sarvotkarṣa* – Pre-eminence of *bhakti*”.

In this edition, the translation of the chapter titles is presented on the chapter title page. That page also presents the stage of *bhakti* discussed in that chapter (from the Second Shower of Nectar onward). We have presented this information in smaller point size, as it is an addition by the English editors.

Sanskrit transliteration in bold

Each of the sections within each Shower of Nectar begins with a Roman transliteration of the original Sanskrit prose by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Sometimes, parts of this transliteration appear in bold and in quotation marks (e.g. “*brahma pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā*”). This denotes a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* or another scripture that Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is quoting to corroborate his presentation.

Sections and subsections

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura presented *Mādhurya-kāḍambinī* in eight Showers of Nectar (“*amṛta-vṛṣṭi*”), and he numbered sections within each Shower according to topic. These sections are referred to as “texts” in this English edition. In the Hindi edition and also herein, these texts are further divided and subtitles added, to facilitate the easy location of these vital topics.

Square brackets

- (1) Within the *Piyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti*, square brackets indicate an insertion by the editors to ensure full clarity. Within the *Bhāvanuvāda*, some of these insertions come from Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja’s Bengali translation of *Mādhurya-kāḍambinī*.
- (2) When square brackets precede a verse translation, they provide information that is not directly in the verse (e.g. “[Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:]”).
- (3) When the translation of a Sanskrit term is particularly lengthy, it is in square brackets so that it is not confused with material in parentheses in the Hindi edition.

Parentheses

- (1) Parentheses are used to provide a Sanskrit term – e.g. “supremely compassionate (*parama-karuṇa*)” – or to translate a Sanskrit term – e.g. “*bhajana* (devotional absorption)”.
Where the text itself directs the reader’s attention to a Sanskrit term, name, word, etc., its English translation is placed in quotation marks. E.g. the words *ati-bhāgyena* (“extreme good fortune”).
- (2) Phrases and sentences that appear in parentheses in the Hindi edition are also in parentheses in this edition.

Glossary – Section Index

The glossary provides simple definitions of common Sanskrit terms, referring the reader to the various sections where the term has been used. (E.g. “*niṣṭhā* – Fixed, unwavering faith. [3.4c-f]”. In other words, Shower 3, text 4, sections c and f.).

Verse Index

This contains not only verses that are presented prominently, but also verse fragments quoted within the text.

Fold out chart

Naturally, it is impossible to adequately graph the development of the transcendental vine of devotion. At the same time, an image is helpful in giving a general overview of its stages and aspects. The chart contains both Sanskrit terms and their English equivalents.

* * *

We pray that Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, our *guru-varga* and the global family of swan-like Vaiṣṇavas will be pleased with our humble efforts. We are merely conditioned souls, prone to the four defects, while the conceptions of our *guru-varga* are perfect and the most elevated. We hope they are properly represented herein. On the order of Śrīla Gurudeva, we have prepared this first English edition. We beg the respected reader to kindly forgive us for any inadvertent errors.

Aspiring to serve Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas,
The publication team of the first English edition

23 August 2018
the disappearance day of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

Mādhurya-kādambinī

The Publication team:

The numerals below denote the specific Showers each contributor worked on. If there is no numeral next to a person's name, it means that they contributed to all eight Showers in the capacity listed.

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First Shower of Nectar

Pre-eminence of Bhakti



Text 1

Prayer to obtain divine blessings (Maṅgalācaraṇa)

*hr̥d-vapre nava-bhakti-śasya-vitateḥ sañjīvanī svāgamā-
rambhe kāma-tapartu-dāha-damanī viśvāpagollāsini |
dūrān me maru-śākhino 'pi sarasī-bhāvāya bhūyāt prabhu-
śrī-caitanya-kṛpā-niraṅkuśa-mahā-mādhurya-kādambinī || 1 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: The mercy of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu is like a limitless, uncontrolled cloud bank of extraordinary nectar (*mahā-mādhurya*) that falls like rain on the heart of the *sādhaka*. The shower of His mercy fully bestows vitality upon the crops of the ninefold limbs of devotion such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* that have been freshly sown in the field of the *sādhakas'* heart. Even the first appearance of the cloud bank of Mahāprabhu's mercy dispels the virulent, burning sensation felt during the summer season – the various material desires for one's own enjoyment – and makes jubilation swell within the heart of all devotees throughout the universe, like rivers swelling from rainfall. May that unrestrained and unlimitedly powerful cloud bank of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's sweet mercy, the influence of which is felt even from a great distance, fill me, a dry, lifeless tree in the desert, with life-giving *rasa*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti:

*namah om viṣṇu-pādāya / ācārya-simha-rūpiṇe
śrī-śrīmad-bhakti-prajñāna- / keśava iti nāmine*

*atimartya-caritrāya / svāśritānām ca pāline
jīva-duḥkhe sadārtāya / śrī-nāma-prema-dāyine*

*gaurāśraya-vigrahāya / kṛṣṇa-kāmaika-cāriṇe
rūpānuga-pravarāya / vinodeti svarūpiṇe*

viśvasya nātharūpo 'sau / bhakti-vartma-pradarśanāt
bhakta-cakre vartitatvāt / cakravarty ākhyayābhavat
śrī-caitanya-mano 'bhīṣṭam / sthāpitam yena bhūtale
svayam rūpaḥ kadā mahyam / dadāti sva-padāntikam
vāñchā-kalpa-tarubhyaś ca / kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo / vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ
namo mahā-vadānyāya / kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya- / nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ
he kṛṣṇa karuṇā-sindho / dīna-bandho jagat-pate
gopeśa gopikā-kānta / rādhā-kānta namo 'stu te
tapta-kāñcana-gaurāṅgi / rādhe vṛndāvaneśvari
vṛṣabhānu-sute devi / praṇamāmi hari-priye

Again and again I offer my respectful prostrated obeisances at the lotus feet of my *gurudeva*, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī*, who is an ocean of causeless mercy; unto the lotus feet of *jagad-guru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda*; to *Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura*; to the highly exalted preceptor *Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura*, who is the greatest *rasika-ācārya* (spiritual preceptor expert in relishing transcendental emotions); to *Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī*, who is *Śrīman Mahāprabhu's* most intimate associate; and to the most magnanimous *Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari*, who is *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself*, resplendent with the mood and lustre of *Śrīmatī Rādhikā*.

Thus, praying to all of them for their mercy, I am beginning the *bhāvānuvāda* (translation revealing the author's intent) of *Mādhurya-kādambinī* and the commentary entitled *Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti*.

In order to reveal to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society the intrinsic nature of pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*), the sequence of its appearance, *bhakti's* self-manifesting nature and her unfathomable glories, he who is most

worshipful and the best among the *rasika* Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, has composed this unparalleled, sacred volume entitled *Mādhurya-kādambinī*. Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura is one of the prominent and effulgent pillars in the line of the *śrī rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, or spiritual preceptors in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s most favoured object of mercy, has described in his sacred text *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* the steps in the sequence of the process of devotion to the Supreme Lord (*bhakti*), from the initial stage of faith (*śraddhā*) all the way to the attainment of love of God (*prema*). The practitioners of *bhakti* who accept these steps, beginning with the stage of *śraddhā*, can easily enter the kingdom of *prema*.

That sequence is:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu- / saṅgo ’tha bhajana-kriyā
tato ’nārtha-nivṛtṭiḥ syāt / tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ*

*athāsaktis tato bhāvas / tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premnaḥ / prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.15–16)

Faith (*śraddhā*) first awakens in the heart of the practitioner of *bhakti*. As a result, a desire for the association of saintly persons (*sādhu-saṅga*) awakens, followed by a propensity to practise their teachings (*bhajana-kriyā*). After that comes the stage in which obstacles to devotion are cleared (*anārtha-nivṛtṭi*). Subsequently, firm faith (*niṣṭhā*) in *bhajana* (devotional absorption) awakens, followed by the awakening of transcendental relish (*ruci*). Thereafter, intense attachment (*āsakti*) awakens to Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the object of one’s *bhajana*. Surpassing even this is the awakening of transcendental emotion (*bhāva*), which is the very form of pure existence (*śuddha-sattva*), and then pure love of God (*prema*) arises. The sequence in which pure, loving devotion (*prema-bhakti*) awakens within the heart of the practitioner of *bhakti* has been delineated in this way.

In this sacred text, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has presented, in a natural and explicit manner, the symptoms of every stage in the development of *bhakti* – from *śraddhā* all the way to the appearance of *prema* – as well as explaining obstacles such as offences that must be abandoned along the way. This great literature is likened to a lantern that illuminates the path for the practitioner of *bhakti* (*bhakti-sādhaka*). There is no scope for even the slightest doubt about this. By practically following this sacred text, the non-duplicitous practitioner will certainly be able to perceive his own stage of *bhakti*, his deficiencies therein, and what further actions he must take to advance along the path of *bhakti*. Moreover, an increasing ability and inclination will awaken in his heart to advance in the kingdom of *bhakti*.

Found within this prayer to obtain divine blessings, the first verse in this great literature by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who is the spiritual master of the whole world and therefore most worshipful, is his supplication to obtain the causeless mercy of his own worshipful deity, the embodied form of *rasarāja-mahābhāva*, Śrī Caitanyadeva, who is identical with Śrī Kṛṣṇa but adorned with the radiant complexion and mood of Śrī Rādhā.

The mercy from the ocean of compassion, Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari Himself, has been called the unrestrained *mādhurya-kādambinī*. A series of connected clouds filled with water is called a *kādambinī*. Hence, the meaning of the title *Mādhurya-kādambinī* is “a row of clouds that pour rain in the form of sweet nectar (*mādhurya*)”. For this reason, the author has entitled this book *Mādhurya-kādambinī*.

In *Ujvala-nīlamaṇi* (11.19), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written, “*mādhuryam nāma ceṣṭānām sarvāvasthāṣu cārutā – mādhurya* means ‘possessing unequalled beauty and charm and an unprecedented nature in all conditions, in all circumstances and in all activities’.”

Thus, the topmost *mādhurya* is the form of all sweetness, Svayam Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī elaborates on this subject in his *Laghu-toṣaṇī* commentary on verse 10.12.11 of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*bhagavāṁs tāvad asādhāraṇa-svarūpaiśvarya-mādhuryas tattva-viśeṣaḥ |
tatra svarūpaṁ paramānandaiśvaryam asamorddhānanta-svābhāvika-
prabhutā mādhuryam asamorddhatayā, sarva-manoharaṁ svābhāvika-
rūpa-guṇa-lilādi-sauṣṭhavam |*

That particular, unique conclusive Truth (*tattva*) whose intrinsic form (*svarūpa*), divine majesty (*aiśvarya*) and sweetness (*mādhurya*) are all most extraordinary is known as Bhagavān. The intrinsic form of Parabrahma (the Supreme Spirit) is certainly the zenith of divine rapture (*paramānanda*). His unsurpassed and unlimited absolute authority is indeed His *aiśvarya*. The excellence of His beautiful form, qualities, pastimes and so forth, which are innately all-attractive, is His factual *mādhurya*.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, also, has established this perfect conclusion in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 21.110)*: “*mādhurya-bhagavattā-sāra* – the essence of the quality of Godhead is *mādhurya*.”

It is only by the causeless mercy of the transcendent, personal form of ultimate magnanimity, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyadeva, that it has become known to the whole world that the essence of Godhood (*bhagavattā*) is founded upon *mādhurya*. According to the opinion of all the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* of ancient times, *aiśvarya* (divine majesty) is the essence of Godhead. However, based upon the verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the faultless essence of authoritative evidence and the crown jewel of all revealed scriptures, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His favoured objects of mercy, the Gosvāmīs, have concluded that *mādhurya*, in fact, is the foundation of the original form of Godhood.

Although the essential nature (*svarūpa*) of every *avatāra* of Godhead is in truth non-different, still [scripture states] “*gūḍhaṁ paraṁ brahma manuṣya-līṅgam* – Parabrahma Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is hidden in a human-like form, is directly the embodiment and the transcendent personal form of *mādhurya*” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.10.48*), and “*raso vai saḥ* – He is

rasa” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7.1). Not only this, He is the intrinsic object of every kind of *rasa*, and He is the supreme connoisseur of *rasa* (*rasika-śekhara*). The pinnacle of development of the various *rasas* is not observed in any of Bhagavān’s forms apart from Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Only this Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the emporium of all transcendental *rasa*, *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*. In Him, all *rasas* are seen to be generated and developed to their furthest limit.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s four extraordinary *mādhurīs* (aspects of sweetness). These sweetnesses cannot be found in any other of Bhagavān’s forms. They are the sweetness of His pastimes (*līlā-mādhurī*), the sweetness of His love (*prema-mādhurī*), the sweetness of His flute-song (*veṇu-mādhurī*) and the sweetness of His beauty (*rūpa-mādhurī*). These four *mādhurīs* are perceivable in their ultimate completeness only in Vraja-vihārī Śrī Kṛṣṇa. “*Caturddhā-mādhurīs tasya vraja eva virājate* – His four *mādhurīs* always shine forth solely in Vraja” (*Laghū-bhāgavatāmṛta*).

This book is also like a row of clouds that pour down the rain of Kṛṣṇa’s above-mentioned *mādhurīs*. For this reason, too, the author has named this sacred text *Mādhurya-kādambinī*.

On another note, *mādhurya-tattva* (the conclusive truth about absolute sweetness) is extremely difficult to realize and is therefore completely confidential. Besides receiving the causeless mercy of those who actually relish these *mādhurīs* – that is, the mercy of Bhagavān or His devotees – there is no other way they can be relished.

*prema-rasa-niryāsa korite āsvādana
rāga-mārga-bhakti loke korite pracāraṇa*

*rasika-śekhara kṛṣṇa parama-karuṇa
ei dui hetu haite icchāra udgama*

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

The meaning of this verse is as follows: As well as being the supreme connoisseur of *rasa* (*rasika-śekhara*), Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is also supremely compassionate (*parama-karuṇa*). At the dawn of this present Kali-yuga, that same Śrī Kṛṣṇa again came to this world. As the supreme connoisseur of *rasa*, His purpose was to taste the essence of *prema-rasa*, and as the most compassionate, His purpose was to distribute the path of spontaneous devotion (*rāga-mārga-bhakti*) to the whole world. He therefore accepted the divine mood and golden complexion of *mahābhāva-svarūpiṇī* (the embodiment of the most exalted divine love), Śrīmatī Rādhikā Herself, and thus appeared in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

[In this form,] Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally tasted His own four extraordinary *mādhurīs* to the furthest limit and drowned the whole world in a flood of His *prema*. Therefore, at the beginning of this book, in the revered author's prayerful invocation verse to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, his own worshipful deity, he has referred to the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as “*niraṅkuṣa-mahā-mādhurya-kādambinī* – the unrestrained cloud bank of great sweetness”.

During the monsoon season, a row of clouds, heavy with water, spreads throughout the sky, rendering the earth awash with its rainfall. Just as that row of clouds has no preference for either high land or low, pure land or impure, pious land or impious, similarly, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's unbridled mercy has left behind all kinds of rules and prohibitions. Without considering who is qualified to receive it and who is not, His mercy has offered *prema* to all the living entities in the entire universe, thus making them blessed.

*caitanyāvatāre bahe premāmṛta-banyā
saba jīva preme bhāse, pṛthivī hailo dhanyā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 3.254)

At the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's descent, there was such a flood of the nectar of *prema* that it drowned the living entities throughout the world. In this way, the earth became fortunate.

*uchalilo prema-banyā caudike beḍāya
strī, vṛddha, bālaka, yuvā, sakali ḍubāya*

*sajjana, durjana, paṅgu, jaḍa, andha-gaṇa
prema-banyāy ḍubāilo jagatera jana*

*jagat ḍubilo, jīvera hailo bija nāśa
tāhā dekhi' pāñca-janer parama ullāsa*

*jato jato prema-vṛṣṭi kare pāñca-jana
tata tata bāḍe jala, vyāpe tri-bhuvana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.25–28)

In all four directions, the flood of *prema* swelled, immersing all within it – women, old men, children and young men. In this way, it inundated the whole world, drowning all – the genteel, the miscreants, the crippled, the disabled and the blind. When the five personalities comprising the Pañca-tattva beheld all the living entities of the world thus submerged, and the seed of those living entities' material existence completely destroyed, their jubilation knew no bounds. As the Pañca-tattva continue to cause showers of *prema* to fall, the deluge continues to expand, and is thus spread throughout the three worlds.

In this way, during His manifest presence, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu granted the gift of pure love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prema*) by the influence of His unbridled mercy, even to those who performed no spiritual practice, and made the entire universe fortunate. “*Kṛṣṇa-prema haya yāñra dūra daraśane – by beholding Mahāprabhu and His devotees, even from a distance, one attains kṛṣṇa-prema*” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya-līlā* 16.121). However, when He is not manifest, people only attain *prema* through *sādhana-bhajana* (the practice of devotional service). Nevertheless, the rain cloud of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's mercy thoroughly nourishes a practitioner's *sādhana-bhakti* in such a way as to cause *prema-bhakti* to quickly awaken in him.

In this invocation verse, the revered author has described the mighty influence of the unrestrained *mahā-mādhurya-kādambinī*. Its first influence is *hr̥d-vapre nava-bhakti-śasya-vitateḥ sañjivanī*. That is, the rain clouds of Mahāprabhu’s mercy thoroughly bestow life-giving energy upon the new sprouts of *bhakti*, or upon the nine aspects of *bhakti* (*navadhā-bhakti*) that have awakened in the soil of the *sādhaka*’s heart.

Like a nectarous shower, the rainfall from a row of monsoon clouds rejuvenates crops such as corn, though surely some seed or root – something of it – must have already existed. However, Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s mercy in the form of the row of rain clouds itself plants seeds of *bhakti* in the heart of the living entities – hearts that are barren and devoid of seed-like or root-like *bhakti-saṁskāras* (impressions in the heart made from the previous performance of *bhakti*). Then, it not only makes those seeds sprout, form fresh shoots and bloom with flowers, but it makes the fruit of *prema* appear. Upon obtaining the fully ripened fruit of *prema*, the life of the living entity becomes successful and blessed.

Here, the meaning of *hr̥d-vapre* is “the field of the heart”. The heart is the birthplace of *bhakti*, the foundation. That place from which longings arise and into which they again merge is called “the heart” (*hr̥daya*). Despite the heart being inert and incognizant, it possesses, by the will of Bhagavān, the potential for pure, cognizant *bhakti* to arise within it. A pure heart is like a fertile field, but just as barren, pebbly or rocky soil cannot yield any crops, so *bhakti* cannot appear in a heart that is hardened by argument, doubt and reductionism.

Ordinary practical knowledge may appear by means of mundane intelligence, but such intelligence is not the birthplace of *bhakti*. Thus it is seen that an unintelligent child who has no knowledge may go on to become a person of absolute faith or a high-class devotee, as a natural consequence of his *saṁskāras*, either from his past lives or from his recent activities. Conversely, a greatly intelligent person may be an atheist. Thus it is certainly the heart that is the birthplace of *bhakti*, not the mind or intelligence. This is the purport of the words *hr̥d-vapre*.

Here the words *nava-bhakti* should be understood either as *nava-udita* (“newly awakened”) tender devotion or as *navadhā-bhakti* (“the ninefold system of *bhakti*”), which begins with *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* and which has been described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.23):

śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ / smaraṇam pāda-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dāsyam / sakhyam ātma-nivedanam

The ninefold system of *bhakti* is comprised of hearing about, chanting and remembering Bhagavān’s names, forms, qualities and pastimes; serving His feet; worshipping Him; praying to Him; being His servant; being His friend; and submitting one’s very self to Him.

Despite there being many other limbs of devotional service, *navadhā-bhakti* is truly the best *sādhana* to bring about the awakening of *prema*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself has said:

bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava-vidhā bhakti
‘kṛṣṇa-prema’, ‘kṛṣṇa’ dite dhare mahā-śakti

tā’ra madhye sarva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana
niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.70–71)

Of the various processes of *bhajana*, nine types of *bhakti* are the best, for they have the great potency to bestow *kṛṣṇa-prema* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Out of these nine practices, chanting the names of Bhagavān (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*) is best of all. If one performs *nāma-saṅkīrtana* free from offences, he will certainly attain the most valuable wealth of *prema*.

The very life-energy of this ninefold practice of *bhakti* comes from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mercy, which is likened to a charming row of clouds. The nine kinds of *bhakti* just mentioned are endowed with the great power to cause pure love for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-prema*) to appear, as well as to grant service

to Him. Among these nine practices, Bhagavān’s *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is best of all. If one performs *nāma-saṅkīrtana* while avoiding *anarthas* such as offences, that *nāma-saṅkīrtana* will very quickly and easily grant the enormous wealth of *prema*. This is because the name of the Lord and the Lord who is addressed by His name (*nāma* and *nāmī*) are constitutionally identical.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was the very first to bestow the completely novel gift of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* upon the world. He has personally proclaimed, “*param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* – may the congregational chanting of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s holy name be supremely triumphant!” (*Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* 1) and “*nava-vidhā-bhakti pūrṇa nāma haite haya* – *navadhā-bhakti* is perfectly accomplished by uttering the holy name of Śrī Bhagavān” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 15.107). Moreover, it is mentioned that in the absence of *śrī harināma*, the aforementioned ninefold practice of *bhakti* is incomplete. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally practised *śrī harināma-saṅkīrtana* and also propagated it everywhere, and by doing so, He instructed all living entities in the universe to do the same. In this way, through *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, He has rendered *navadhā-bhakti* complete and capable of granting the fruit of *prema*.

Hence, the revered author describes Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mercy as the *mahā-mādhurya-kādambinī*, which causes the life energy to flow through the crop-like ninefold system of *bhakti*.

Here a question may arise: As long as there exists an impulse within the field of the *sādhaka*’s heart to selfishly enjoy, continuously broiling him in intense passion, where is there any possibility of the extremely soft and delicate disposition to engage in devotional service awakening?

In reply, the most worshipful author describes a second mighty influence of the cloud bank of intense sweetness (*mahā-mādhurya-kādambinī*), which is the embodiment of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mercy: *svāgamārambhe kāma-tapartu-dāha-damanī*.

The meaning of these words is as follows. When a row of rain clouds fills the sky, even before rainfall, a pleasant, cooling breeze begins to blow.

Simply by that, the fierce heat of summer is easily dissipated, and the bodies of all living entities become nicely cooled, both within and without. The flames of the three kinds of miseries born of the lustful impulses within the *sādhaka*'s heart are millions upon millions of times more blazing than the severe heat of summer. However, like the breeze before the rain, the initial influence of the cloud bank of Śrī Caitanya's mercy, even before a downpour, refreshes and cools the *sādhakas* scorching in the flames of sensual desire, both externally and internally. Not to speak of material desires and impulses, it dispels even a scent of the desire for liberation from the heart of the *sādhakas* and fills it with the affectionate desire to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Aho, glorious is the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu!

*na yogo na dhyānam na ca japa-tapas-tyāga-niyamo
na vedā nācāraḥ kva nu vata niṣiddhādhyuparatih
akasmāc-caitanye 'vatarati dayā-sāra-hṛdaye
pumārthānām mauliṁ param iha mudām luṅṭhati janah*

Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta (6)

Those people who do not have even one iota of a connection with *yoga*, meditation (*dhyāna*), the uttering of *mantra* (*japa*), penance (*tāpa*), renunciation (*tyāga*), adherence to codes of conduct (*niyama*), recitation of the Vedas, proper behaviour (*sadācāra*) and who – alas, alas! – do not even desist from forbidden, sinful actions, are today, due to the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, whose heart is full of the essence of compassion, clapping their hands together and plundering the crest jewel of all goals of life, *mahā-prema*, which Brahmā, Śiva, Nārada and others ardently seek.

In extreme jubilation, the revered and worshipful author describes the third awe-inspiring, mighty influence of the cloud bank of Śrī Caitanya's mercy: *viśvāpagollāsini*.

During a downpour in the rainy season, a row of dense clouds fills the rivers with profuse rain, causing them to swell with big currents. Those

rivers submerge both their banks with flooding waters and rush forth with tremendous power to meet the ocean. Likewise, at the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s descent, the shower of the great *mādhurya-kādambinī* of His mercy rained upon the entire universe through the performance of *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma-sankīrtana*. Thus, within the universe, the river-like devotees were flooded with *prema*, causing intense waves of *sāttvika* and *vyabhicārī* ecstasies to arise within them. Everyone throughout the universe was carried away by this flood of *prema*, swept along with great force in the mighty rapids toward the ocean of completely ambrosial *rasa*, the ocean of *śrī kṛṣṇa-prema*.

The most munificent Śacīnandana Śrī Gauraharī and His dear most companions bestowed *prema* – nay! – not bestowed, recklessly distributed *prema*, such that there was a mighty flood. In that flood, those who were worthy recipients and those who were not, both women and men, children and youth, gentlemen and rogues, the lame, the crippled and the blind, were all drowned. Even the ferocious animals in the forests, as well as the Māyāvādīs, adherents of the path of fruitive action, false logicians, blasphemers and hypocrites – who resemble tigers, lions, bears and so forth – could not remain unaffected. The effects are perceived throughout the world even today. In alcohol-addicted, carnivorous, atheistic, materialistic nations, thousands and thousands of men and women and young boys and girls with *tulasī* beads around their necks and divine *tilaka* upon their foreheads are, with both hands raised, being carried by the waves of “*hare kṛṣṇa, hare rāma*”. This indeed is all the directly perceivable result of the *mādhurya-kādambinī*, the form of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s mercy.

Presenting himself as utterly insignificant and worthless, the revered author, at the end of this invocation verse, is praying for Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s causeless mercy: “*dūrān me maru-sākhino ’pi sarasī-bhāvāya bhūyāt... – May the unbridled cloud bank of great sweetness (mahā-mādhurya-kādambinī), the form of the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, even from far away make my heart, which is like a dry tree in the arid desert, flow with rasa.*”

During a downpour in the monsoon season, heavy clouds blanket the earth and shower torrents of rain upon her. In the desert, however, this kind

of rainfall does not occur; only a tiny vestige of cloud barely drizzles once in a while, and even then in the distance. Due to his mood of utter lowliness, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura thought of himself as a dry, withered tree in the desert soil very far¹ from the cloud bank of Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s mercy. Hence his prayer: “O immensely influential *mādhurya-kādambinī*, you are the embodiment of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mercy. Even though you are situated a great distance away, and even though I am a dry-hearted, dull-headed and extremely worthless soul, still I beseech you to infuse this withered soul with *bhakti-rasa* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *madhura-rasa* – and saturate him.”

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s most favoured object of mercy, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who is wealthy with *prema* and most elevated in every respect, is giving instructions on the method of *nāma-sādhana* (the practice of chanting the holy name), which bestows *nāma-prema* (pure love for the holy name). Such a prayer exhibits the natural humility that is characteristic of Vaiṣṇavas and that befits them. *Prema* cannot exist without humility, and humility cannot exist without *prema*. If the practitioner ardently longs for *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa* (the sweet humours of devotion to Kṛṣṇa), he must have natural feelings of humility and insignificance. But such humility is impossible without the mercy of the most munificent Śrī Caitanyadeva.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu personally told both Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda:

je-rūpe loile nāma, prema upajaya

tāra lakṣaṇa-śloka śuno, svarūp-rāma-rāya

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 20.20)

O Svarūpa Dāmodara, O Rāya Rāmānanda, hear the criterion that is symptomatic of one engaging in the process of *śrī harināma*, by which *prema* becomes awakened in the heart:

1 Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is referring to his appearing in this world many years after Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s disappearance.

*trṇād api sunīcena / taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena / kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam (3)

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 20.21)

This means that if one cherishes a desire to obtain *kṛṣṇa-prema*, it is imperative to always and forever perform *śrī harināma-saṅkīrtana*, feeling even more insignificant and worthless than grass, following the kind and tolerant manner of a tree, expecting no respect for oneself and giving proper and due honour to others.

Text 2

Special prayer to obtain divine blessings

*bhaktiḥ pūrvaiḥ śritā tām tu | rasam paśyed yad-ātta-dhīḥ |
tam naumi satatam rūpa- | nāma-priya-janam hareḥ || 2 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: The most elevated saints (*mahājanas*) of former times also accepted the shelter of Bhakti-devī. Now, however, by the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s most dear associate, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, people who have obtained real intelligence are directly perceiving *bhakti* in its form of *bhakti-rasa*. I offer my heartfelt obeisances unto Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī again and again.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The essential nature of the living entity is that of a servant of Kṛṣṇa. However, since time without beginning, he has forgotten Bhagavān and has thus been swallowed up by the deluding potency (*māyā*). Consequently, he has fallen into the cycle of birth and death and is burned by the three kinds of torment. Sometimes, as a result of his own deeds, he becomes a demigod in the heavenly kingdom or a ruler on earth, and sometimes he becomes a subject. Sometimes he is in the priestly class (*vipra*) and sometimes

in the artisan class (*śūdra*). Sometimes he is happy and sometimes he is sad. Sometimes he takes birth in species of plants, sometimes as an aquatic, sometimes as a bird or beast, and sometimes in the demoniac *daitya* or *dānava* races. He wanders throughout so many species in his search for happiness, yet nowhere does he find actual happiness. When the supremely compassionate Bhagavān observes His own dear living entity's wretched condition, His heart melts. He descends in the form of the timeless Vedic scriptures, He manifests in His various forms – His own personal *avatāras* – and He has His own dear companions descend to the world as *ācāryas* (exemplary teachers). In this way, by giving instructions on *bhakti*, He bestows eternal happiness upon the forgetful, stray living entities and engages them in service to Him.

Indeed, only devotion to the Supreme Lord (*bhagavad-bhakti*) can make the averse and unhappy living entities eternally fulfilled, because by this, they attain Him. The Vedas, Śrutis, Smṛtis, Purāṇas and so forth enunciate this perfect conclusion in unison. It is never possible for the living entity to secure his permanent auspiciousness through fruitive work (*karma*), the pursuit of knowledge (*jñāna*), mysticism (*yoga*), penance (*tapa*) and other processes.

bhaktir evainam nayati / bhaktir evainam darśayati
bhakti-vaśaḥ puruṣo / bhaktir eva bhūyasī

from *Māthara-śruti*
quoted in *Madhva-bhāṣya* (sūtra 3.3.53)

It is only *bhakti* (devotion) that brings the living entity close to Bhagavān. *Bhakti* alone enables the living entity to see Bhagavān face to face. That Supreme Person, Bhagavān, is actually controlled by *bhakti*; *bhakti* is superior to all else.

yasya deve parā bhaktir / yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ / prakāśante mahātmanāḥ

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23)

All the confidential purports of the Vedas are fully revealed to that great soul who has the same transcendental devotion to his *gurudeva* as he has to Śrī Bhagavān.

ānandamayo 'bhyāsāt

Vedānta-sūtra (1.1.12)

The word *ānandamaya* (“replete with bliss”) used in Vedic literature must refer to the Supreme Spirit, for it is repeatedly used to describe Him.

sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo / yato bhaktir adhokṣaje

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.6)

The topmost *dharma* of human life is devotion to the transcendent Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*bhagavān brahma kārtsnyena / trir anvīksya manīṣayā
tad adhyavasyat kūṭa-stho / ratir ātmany ato bhavet*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.2.34)

[How can there be any benefit for the living entities who, oblivious to the Lord, have fallen into the cycle of repeated birth and death in material existence? Preoccupied with this question,] Śrī Brahmā, who knows the fundamental truths regarding the Lord, thought long to find a solution. With resolute attention, he scrutinized all the Vedas three times, and by his intelligence, he concluded that the topmost perfection of religion is that by which one can obtain exclusive love for Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supersoul of all existence.

Through scriptural statements such as these, the immutable, perfect conclusion is being thoroughly established: It is only by *bhagavad-bhakti* that the living entity’s distress completely ceases and he obtains actual happiness. This *bhakti* does not rely upon any practice (*sādhana*) such as fruitive work

(*karma*), mysticism (*yoga*), or the pursuit of knowledge (*jñāna*) to manifest, nor does it ever rely upon place, time or eligibility. *Bhakti*, akin to the all-powerful, self-manifesting *bhagavat-tattva*, is a self-manifesting, all-powerful truth. This is affirmed because she, *bhakti*, is none other than a special function of Bhagavān's internal potency (*svarūpa-śakti*). Hence, the exalted souls who know this secret have taken full, exclusive shelter of *bhakti* and have propagated it.

In truth, a *mahājana* is exclusively one who has accepted the shelter of supremely pure devotion to Bhagavān. Among these exalted souls, Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* such as Śrī Nārada, Śrī Prahlāda, the Pāṇḍavas, Śrī Uddhava, Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Śrī Yamunācārya, Śrī Nātha Muni, Śrī Godā-devī, Śrī Rāmānujācārya and Śrī Madhvācārya have all accepted exclusive shelter of *bhakti*. Through their personal behaviour and precepts, they have proclaimed *bhakti*'s greatness throughout the world. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, who is well-versed in all scriptures and fully conversant with *rasa*, realized this esoteric mystery. By the term *mahājanas* [in Text 2 above], he is referring to the foremost *bhaktas* of previous times, like Śrī Nārada.

However, before the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, it was not even known that *rasa* is the intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) of *bhakti*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the special object of the supremely compassionate *rasika-śekhara* Śrī Caitanyadeva's mercy, composed sacred literatures like *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, which established for the first time that *rasa* is the intrinsic nature of *bhakti*.

The most fortunate persons in the world are those who have obtained real intelligence from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, are experiencing the *rasa-svarūpa* of *bhakti* and are causing others to experience it as well.

Only by the mercy of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is it possible to directly realize that the intrinsic form of *bhakti* is *rasa*. If we were to go on deliberating upon these words of our most worshipful Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, then this book would become considerably more voluminous. Hence, it is sufficient simply to mention here that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is

rasika-śekhara Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. As *rasika-śekhara* (the topmost connoisseur of *rasa*), His purpose was to taste the essence of *mahābhāva-svarūpiṇī* Śrīmatī Rādhikā's sublime, radiantly pure *prema-rasa*, and as *parama-karuṇa* (the most compassionate), His purpose was to distribute the wealth of the path of spontaneous devotion (*rāga-mārga-bhakti*) to the world. For these purposes, He accepted Śrī Rādhā's mood and lustre and descended in the form of Śācīnandana Śrī Gaurahari.

In the previous exceptional Kali-yuga, almost one thousand cycles of the four *yugas* ago, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Gaurāṅga and bestowed this *rasa*-laden *bhakti*, which is rarely attained even by personalities like Śrī Brahmā. Since that particular Kali-yuga, many *avatāras* of Bhagavān and many Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* have advented, but until the recent re-advent of Śrī Gaurāṅga, none of them offered *rasa*-laden *bhakti* to the living entities of this world. Not to speak of bestowing such *bhakti*, they could not even give its true definition.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is the dear companion of Śrī Gaurahari, He who is adorned with Śrī Rādhā's mood and complexion. In the pastimes of Vraja, he is Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, chief among Śrīmatī Rādhikā's intimate maidservants. Indeed, to propagate that *bhakti* of Vraja, laden with *unnatojjvala-rasa* (the most elevated humours of transcendental amour), Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī has descended within Śrī Gaura's pastimes in the form of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. In his *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has unveiled this secret.

As Śrī Bhagavān generated the potency to create in the heart of Grandfather Brahmā at the beginning of creation and thus created this universe, so Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu made His special potency flow in the heart of His own dear Śrī Rūpa and through him propagated the topics of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's transcendental playful pastimes in Vraja, topics that had been lost by the influence of time. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 19.117) it is stated:

*śrī-rūpa-hṛdaye prabhu śakti sañcārīlā
sarva-tattva-nirūpiyā 'pravīṇa' korilā*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu infused the heart of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī with transcendental power and thus made him fully expert and experienced in discerning all *tattva*.

Also, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has written in his *Prema-bhakti-candrikā*:

*śrī-caitanya-mano 'bhīṣṭam' / sthāpitam yena bhūtale
svayam rūpaḥ kadā mahyam / dadāti sva-padāntikam*

When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who has established within this world the mission to fulfil the innermost desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, personally give me shelter at his lotus feet?

To again manifest *vraja-bhakti* saturated with *unnatojjvala-rasa* upon the earth is indeed the innermost heart's desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

By composing fundamental *bhakti* literatures like *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* and by teaching them, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has established the innermost heart's desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in every way. What has emerged from the heart of the poet Śrī Mādhava about the glories of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is indeed deeply moving:

*yañ kali rūpa śarīra na dharata
tañ vraja-prema-mahānidhi kuṭharīka, kon kapāta ughāḍata (1)*

Had Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī not appeared in this age of Kali, who would have opened the doors to the great store-house of *vraja-prema*?

*nīra-kṣīra-hamsana, pāna-vidhāyana, kon pṛthak kari pāyata
ko saba tyaji, bhaji' vṛndāvana, ko saba grantha viracita (2)*

Who but Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī could have extracted the essence of the scriptures in the same way that a swan separates water from milk? Who could have abandoned everything to perform *bhajana* in Vṛndāvana? Who could have written such scriptures?

*jaba pitu vana-phula, phalata nānā-vidha, manorāji aravinda
so madhukara vinu, pāna kon jānata, vidyamāna kari bandha* (3)

He was a honey bee amid varieties of blossoming yellow forest flowers and mind-enchancing lotuses. Without that honey bee, who could have known the art of drinking the nectar present yet confined within those flowers?

*ko jānata, mathurā vṛndāvana, ko jānata vraja-nīta
ko jānata, rādhā-mādhava-rati, ko jānata soi prīta* (4)

Who could have understood the glories of Mathurā and Vṛndāvana? Who could have fathomed the intricacies of Vraja? Who could have understood the love between Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Mādhava? Who could have known that love?

*jākara caraṇe, prasāde sakala jana, gāi gāoyāi sukha pāota
caraṇa-kamale, śaraṇāgata mādho, tava mahimā ura lāgata* (5)

By the mercy of his lotus feet, all souls may sing and inspire others to sing [about the glories of the love of Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava], thereby attaining true joy. [O Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī,] having surrendered at your lotus feet, may this Mādhava dāsa be able to comprehend your unlimited glories.

In times prior to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the symptoms of *bhakti* were delineated in *Śāṅḍilya-sūtra*: “*sā parānuraktir īśvare* – the symptom of *bhakti* is described as deep loving attachment to Parameśvara.”

In *Pañcarātra*, it is said:

*sarvopādhi-vinirmuktam / tat-paratvena nirmalam
hr̥ṣikeṇa hr̥ṣikeṣa- / sevanaṁ bhaktir ucyate*

quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.12)

Absolutely pure service to the master of the senses, Hr̥ṣikeṣa, performed through all one's senses solely for His delight and completely devoid of all external designations, is called *bhakti*.

There is also a description elsewhere in scripture:

ahaituky avyavahitā / yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.12)

This means that the symptom of *nirguṇa-bhakti* is that the mind flows toward the Absolute Supreme Being at every moment, like an unbroken stream of oil.

However, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has presented an incomparable definition of *bhakti* that not only includes all the above-mentioned symptoms but is replete with further special characteristics. His definition is profoundly wonderful and beautiful:

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam / jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu- / śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.11)

That perpetual endeavour for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa that is free from all kinds of desires other than the desire to serve Him; that is not eclipsed by the pursuit of monistic knowledge, fruitive work and so on; that is performed exclusively out of loving affection for Him, through all physical, mental or verbal endeavours and through all emotions, flowing without interruption like an unbroken stream of oil, is called *uttama-bhakti*.

Each and every stage of *bhakti* is included within this definition of *uttama-bhakti*, beginning from *śraddhā*, the first step in *bhakti*, through *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti*, *rati* (or *bhāva*), and beyond this, *prema*, *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*², *mahābhāva*, *rūḍha-bhāva*, *adhirūḍha-bhāva*, *mohana*, and up to *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva*.³

Additionally, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī presented, with great skill, charming poetry and subtle analysis, the devotional proclivity of the heart, beginning with the preliminary steps of *bhakti* – from *śraddhā* to *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti* and then *bhāva* – and the evolutionary sequence of that proclivity through the various transformations of *prema* – from *sneha* to *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*, *mahābhāva* and so on. He delineated *sthāyi-bhāva* (permanent emotion) and gave a beautiful portrayal of the completely miraculous and supremely relishable state of *bhakti-rasa*, which is attained when the *sthāyi-bhāva* combines with the ingredients of *rasa*, such as *vibhāva* [that which stimulates *rati*, one’s inherent relationship with Kṛṣṇa], *anubhāva* [visible actions that illustrate the spiritual emotions situated within the heart], *sāttvika-bhāva* [eight symptoms of spiritual ecstasy arising exclusively from *viśuddha-sattva*] and *vyabhicārī-bhāva* [the internal transitory emotions, which arise like waves from the ocean of the *sthāyi-bhāva*, enhance it and then plunge once again into the *sthāyi-bhāva*]. A beautiful glimpse of all this can be found in his celebrated composition *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

Being empowered by Śrīman Mahāprabhu’s mercy, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī also proved that the spotless and exceedingly purifying Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava method of *bhajana* is established on a very strong *rasa*-laden foundation. His composition has, on its own merit, become unfadingly immortalized in the history of *bhakti* literature. It is considered the encyclopaedia of all conclusive truths regarding *bhakti-rasa* and is revered as the finest, fully ripened fruit of the wish-fulfilling tree of Gauḍīya *rasa*-literature. The *ācāryas* prior to him were unable to so

2 The word *bhāva* is often used synonymously with *rati*, but here it refers to a certain stage of advanced *prema*. –Ed.

3 For an explanation of these terms, please refer to Shower 8, Text 5a. –Ed.

comprehensively analyze *bhakti-rasa-tattva* and certainly could not establish *bhakti* as *rasa-svarūpa* (the very nature of transcendental loving mellows).

In the *kalpa* (day and night of Lord Brahmā) that had elapsed since the last advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, accounts of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's loving pastimes had all but vanished. At the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's manifest presence, by His inspiration and mercy, the potency of mercy flowed through Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī by which he recovered those revelations and again established them within this world, thus fulfilling the deep desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

*vrndāvanīyām rasa-keli-vārtām
kālena luptām nija-śaktim utkaḥ
sañcārya rūpe vyatanot punaḥ sa
prabhur vidhau prāg iva loka-sṛṣṭim*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 19.1)

At the beginning of creation, by making His own potency flow through the heart of Brahmā, Śrī Bhagavān created and expanded the worlds. In the same way, by eagerly making His own potency flow through the heart of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu again expounded and spread throughout the world the playful *rasa*-laden topics of Vraja, which had been forgotten over time.

The purport is that in one day of Brahmā there are fourteen *manvantaras*, reigns of Manu. Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears in the seventh *manvantara* at the end of the Dvāpara-yuga, in the twenty-eighth *catur-yuga* (cycle of four ages) and enacts His pastimes in Vraja. And about five thousand years after that, in Kali-yuga, He accepts the mood and lustre of Śrī Rādhā and appears in the form of Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari, tasting the sweetness of Śrī Rādhā's *prema* and propagating *vraja-prema*.

Vraja-prema was last disseminated in the *kalpa* prior to this, at the time of Śrī Gaura's *līlā*. For one day and night of Svayambhū Brahmā, or

almost eight thousand *yugas* (ages), this *vraja-prema* vanished, because apart from Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva, there is no *avatāra* of Bhagavān or *ācārya* who could propagate the highly esoteric and secret *prema* of Vraja. Throughout the very long period during which these esoteric discourses on the playful *rasa* of Vraja remained forgotten, Śrī Caitanyadeva’s eagerness to propagate them intensified to the utmost limit. That is why He channelled His potency through the heart of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

*śrī-rūpa-hṛdaye prabhu śakti sañcārīlā
sarva-tattva-nirūpiyā ‘pravīṇa’ korilā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (19.117)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu infused the heart of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī with transcendental power and thus made him fully expert and experienced in discerning all *tattva*.

The author, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, concludes by explaining that the *rasa-svarūpa* of *bhakti* can only be experienced by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s mercy, and that without his mercy, there is no possibility of entering *bhakti*. This is the highest truth.

Text 3

3a ~ Śrī Bhagavān, the intrinsic form of rasa, is the shelter even of brahma, & He descends of His own accord

iha khalu paramānanda-mayād api puruṣād “brahma pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā” iti brahmato ’pi parātparo—“raso vai saḥ | rasam hy evāyam labdhvānandī bhavati” iti śrutyā sūcyamāno “mallānām aśanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smaro mūrtimān” iti sarva-vedānta-sāreṇa nikhila-pramāṇa-cakravartinā śrīmad-bhāgavatena rasatvena vivriyamāṇaḥ “brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham” iti śrī-gītopaniṣadā ca evāyam iti sammanyamāṇaḥ śrī-vraja-rāja-nandana eva śuddha-sattva-maya-

nija-nāma-rūpa-guṇa-lilāḍhyo 'nādi-vapur eva kam api hetum anapekṣamāṇa eva svecchayaiva jana-śravaṇa-nayana-mano-buddhy-ādīndriya-vṛttiṣv avatarate | yathaiva yadu-raghv-ādi-vamśeṣu svecchayaiva kṛṣṇa-rāmādi-rūpeṇa |

Bhāvānuvāda: In *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.5.1) it is stated, “*brahma pucchaṁ pratiṣṭhā* – It is from the supremely blissful Personality of Godhead, Śrī Bhagavān, that *brahma*, the tail [metaphorically, of Śrī Bhagavān]⁴, obtains its substratum, or basis.” Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān is a far superior truth than *brahma*.

Further on in this same *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (2.7.1), it is also indicated that Parabrahma Bhagavān is composed of *rasa*: “*raso vai saḥ | rasam hyevāyam labdhvānandī bhavati* – Śrī Bhagavān is the very form of *rasa* (*rasa-svarūpa*). Simply upon attaining Him, the living entity becomes endowed with pure rapture.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the essence of all Vedānta and the crown jewel among all sources of knowledge, has described how Parabrahma Bhagavān is full of *rasa* and that none but Śrī Kṛṣṇa is that *rasa-svarūpa*. This is so because, as explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.43.17), He is the object of all twelve *rasas*: “*mallānām aśanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smaro mūrtimān* – Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was simultaneously perceived as thunder by the wrestlers, as the best of men by men, as Cupid personified by women, and so forth.” Moreover, in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (14.27), Śrī Bhagavān has Himself said, “*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham* – I, in fact, am the basis, or shelter, of *brahma*.” By these words, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has personally indicated that He is beyond the highest *tattva* (*paratpara-tattva*) and the embodiment of *rasa* (*rasa-svarūpa*).

The supremely pure existence (*viśuddha-sattva-maya*), the beginningless deity (*anādi-vigraha*) Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara Śrī Kṛṣṇa,

4 The peacock feather exists due to the existence of the peacock, not vice versa. The peacock is the shelter of its feathers (its tail); the tail is not the shelter of the peacock. Similarly, the existence of Bhagavān's impersonal aspect (*brahma*) is due to the existence of the personal aspect of Godhead, Śrī Bhagavān, not vice versa. In comparing Śrī Bhagavān to a bird, He is being celebrated as the shelter, or basis, of *brahma*, His 'tail'. –Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

being adorned with His name, form, qualities and pastimes, is in fact *rasa-svarūpa* (the personification of *rasa*). His infant, childhood and adolescent pastimes all indicate this. Because He is fully independent of all controls and indifferent to any other cause, by His own sweet will He reveals Himself to humans, specifically His *premi-bhaktas*, in the faculty of their heart, in their external senses, like hearing and sight, and in their internal senses, their mind and intellect.

To bestow mercy upon the living entities of this universe and to fulfil the *prema*-laden desires of the *bhaktas*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, although unborn, advents of His own accord as Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Yadu dynasty and as Śrī Rāma in the Raghu dynasty.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: The testimony of Śruti, or the Vedas, is certainly the best of all *śabda-pramāṇa*, authoritative evidence revealed through sound. To reveal *bhakti-tattva* – that divine substance of the principle of Godhead that is beyond inert matter, self-manifest and fully laden with transcendental bliss – Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, quoting evidence from the revealed scriptures, is expressing the faultless and unerring authority of Śruti, or *śabda-pramāṇa*.

That which helps bring about actual knowledge of an object is known as *pramāṇa* (evidence). *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has mentioned four types of *pramāṇa*: revealed Vedic knowledge, direct sense perception, inference and the wisdom of tradition:

*śrutiḥ pratyakṣam aitihyam / anumānam catuṣṭayam
pramāṇeṣv anavasthānād / vikalpāt sa virajyate*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.19.17)

Among all kinds of evidence, four – revealed Vedic knowledge (*śruti*), direct sense perception (*pratyakṣa*), the wisdom of tradition (*aitihya*) and inference (*anumāna*) – enable a person to give up his attachment to the dualities of material nature.

Three of these four kinds of *pramāṇa* – namely, direct sense perception, inference and the wisdom of tradition – may be prone to error. However, there is no possibility of error being present in scriptures spoken by Bhagavān. As the origin of such Śrutis is Svayam Bhagavān Himself, they are devoid of faults arising from misinterpretation, careless or hasty judgment, deception, ill-equipped senses and so on. Also, in *Manu-smṛti* it says:

*pratyakṣaś cānumānaṃ ca / śāstraṃ ca vividhāgamam
trayaṃ suviditaṃ kāryaṃ / dharma-śuddhim abhīpsatā*

It is absolutely compulsory for anyone who wants to know the principle of *dharma* to be conversant in three subjects: direct sense perception, inference, and the Smṛtis that are based on the Vedas and various complementary Vedic literatures.

From among the four kinds of *pramāṇa* previously mentioned, Śrī Madhvācārya has adopted only three:

*pratyakṣe 'ntarbhaved yasmād / aitihiyaṃ tena deśikaḥ
pramāṇaṃ tri-vidhaṃ prākhyāt / tatra mukhyā śrutir bhavet*

Prameya-ratnāvalī (9.2)

Since the wisdom of tradition passed on by word of mouth exists within the *pramāṇa* of direct sense perception, the best of guides Madhva Muni has only acknowledged three types of *pramāṇa*. Among them, revealed Vedic knowledge, or *apauruṣeya-veda-vākya* (Vedic statements with no mortal origin), is certainly considered the principal form of *pramāṇa*.

Nevertheless, our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have acknowledged ten types of *pramāṇa*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has said:

*yadyapi pratyakṣānumāna-śabdārṣopamānārthāpatty-abhāva-
sambhavitihya-ceṣṭākhyāni daśa-pramāṇāni veditāni, tathāpi bhrama-*

*pramāda-vipralipsā-karaṇāpātava-doṣa-rahita-vacanātmakah śabda
eva mūla-pramāṇam |*

Tattva-Sandarbha, Sarva-samvādinī

Although ten kinds of *pramāṇa* are mentioned, (1) *pratyakṣa* – direct perception, (2) *anumāna* – inference, (3) *ārṣa* – the statements of the sages, (4) *upamāna* – comparison, (5) *arthāpatti* – presumption, (6) *abhāva* – absence, (7) *sambhava* – probability, (8) *aitihya* – hearsay, (9) *ceṣṭā* – gesturing and (10) *śabda* – Vedic testimony, only *apauruṣeya-veda* is free from the faults of misinterpretation, error from careless or hasty judgement, the tendency to cheat, ill-equipped senses and so on. Truly, the principal form of evidence is *śabda-pramāṇa*, in the form of the Vedas.

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* also it is said:

*pramāṇera madhye śruti-pramāṇa—pradhāna
śruti je mukhyārtha kahe, sei se pramāṇa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 6.135)

Among all forms of evidence, the evidence of Śruti is the most prominent. Indeed, the primary, direct meaning of any statement of Śruti is certainly the most essential evidence.

We will briefly outline the ten kinds of *pramāṇa*.

(1) Pratyakṣa – direct perception

Information received by means of the five knowledge-acquiring senses, namely, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin, is called *pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*. This type of *pramāṇa* is not completely dependable, because our seeing, hearing or activities may be faulty if we are affected by illness, madness or inattentiveness. The reliability of *pratyakṣa-pramāṇa* depends on the proficiency of the senses, among other factors. In the absence of the

proficiency of the senses, one cannot gain actual knowledge of an object by means of *pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*.

At times, there are flaws in our knowledge of objects that are seen with the eyes, heard with ears, or gained through the faculties of our other senses. For example, when our eyes catch sight of a length of rope, we may mistake it for a serpent, and in seeing an empty oyster shell, we may mistake it for silver.

(2) Anumāna – inference

That which is inferred after observing a particular phenomenon is called *anumāna-pramāṇa*. For instance, by observing smoke, it is to be understood that fire is present. However, this *pramāṇa* is not dependable. Occasionally, smoke is sighted on a mountain even when there is no fire. Sometimes, when water is poured on to fire, smoke rises from it, even though the fire has already been extinguished. So although there is smoke, fire is no longer present. Hence, reliable knowledge of an object does not come from *anumāna-pramāṇa* either.

(3) Ārṣa – statements of the sages

The assertions of the enlightened *ṛṣis* are called *ārṣa-pramāṇa*. However, upon some deliberation, it becomes evident that the opinions of the numerous sages vary, and therefore, their statements are not always authoritative. The *Mahābhārata* mentions:

*tarko 'pratiṣṭhaḥ śrutayo vibhinnā
nāsāv ṛṣir yasya mataṁ na bhinnam*

Mahābhārata (Vāna-parva 313.117)

Logical reasoning is never conclusive, and unless someone's opinions about the many different sections of the Vedas do not diverge from the opinions of others, he will never become famous as a great sage (*ṛṣi*).

There are many kinds of ṛṣis, and along with them are their distinct theories. Thus their theories are not always dependable.

(4) Upamāna – comparison

Upon examining one object, the knowledge that arises about a second, similar object is called *upamāna-pramāṇa*. For instance, salt crystals happen to be white, so someone may say that alum crystal is just like salt crystal. However, this is not a complete understanding of alum crystals, which have qualities distinct from those of salt crystals. Hence, *upamāna-pramāṇa* is also not completely dependable.

(5) Arthāpatti – presumption

An inescapable inference about an extremely well-known phenomenon, or in other words, the logical, inferred cause that is accepted when no other observable cause of a phenomenon is found, is called *arthāpatti*. For instance, if a man does not eat in the day, he will not be seen eating. At the same time, it is apparent that the man is quite healthy and strong. So, if he does not eat in the daytime, then surely he must eat at night. Such *pramāṇa* is called *arthāpatti*. However, this *arthāpatti-pramāṇa* is not dependable either, because by the mercy of a particular demigod or by utilizing special herbs, a man may still remain healthy and stout even after passing some days without any food.

(6) Abhāva – absence

An object that is not in proximity to the eyes, ears or other knowledge-acquiring senses, or an object that is far away from them, cannot be perceived by the senses. That is why this type of *pramāṇa* has been called *abhāva*, “proof by absence”. For instance, someone on one side of a high wall will not be able to see an object lying on the other side. That is why some refer to this non-perception as *abhāva-pramāṇa*.

(7) Sambhava – probability

“The number 100 is surely to be found somewhere within thousands of numbers.” The notion of any such likelihood, when it arises within the intelligence, is called *sambhava-pramāṇa*.

(8) Aitihya – tradition

This refers to traditional, historical accounts or rumours, the source of which can no longer be traced. Hearing through the grapevine about whatever is largely acceptable in society is called *aitihya-pramāṇa*.

(9) Ceṣṭā – gesturing

The *pramāṇa* by which one’s knowledge of an object or of quantities, measurements and so forth, that is attained by seeing, for example, numbers of fingers raised, is called *ceṣṭā-pramāṇa*. In ascertaining the Absolute Reality, neither *aitihya* nor *ceṣṭā* have any authority.

(10) Śabda – Vedic testimony

The dictums of the scriptures that were not authored by man (*apauruṣeya-śāstra-vacana*) are called *śabda-pramāṇa*. They also go by the name *āpta-vacana* (“authoritative, or reliable, declarations”).

Writings that were originally composed by certain exceptional individuals are called *pauruṣeya-śāstra* (“scriptures originating from man”), while those that have not been written by any such mortal, but manifested by Bhagavān, are called *apauruṣeya-śāstra* (“scriptures not originating from man”). In the latter, misrepresentation, error from careless or hasty judgement, deception or deceitful ambition, mistakes and so on, either from inattentiveness of the mind or from incompetence of the senses, do not exist. There is no possibility of any imperfection or any mistake anywhere in the words of Śrī Bhagavān or in the words of the Vedas, because Bhagavān is all-knowing, all-powerful, overflowing with auspiciousness, and the supreme abode of

compassion. Consequently, as these words are devoid of all faults, *śabda-pramāṇa* has been celebrated as the best evidence of all and unerring. *Śabda-pramāṇa* is the self-evident *pramāṇa*, dependable and itself independent. Therefore, to know the transcendent, *rasa*-laden Absolute Truth, *śabda-pramāṇa*, that is, the *pramāṇa* of the Vedas, is unquestionably the best of all *pramāṇas*.

Here, the following question may be asked: “Which scriptures are *śabda-pramāṇa*, or *apauruṣeya-śāstra*?” In answer to this it has been said:

*ṛg-yajuḥ-sāmātharvās ca / bhāratam pañcarātrakam
mūla-rāmāyaṇam caiva / śāstram ity abhidhīyate*

*yac cānukūlam etasya / tac ca śāstram prakīrtitam
ato 'nya grantha-vistāro / naiva śāstram kuvartma tat*

Skanda Purāṇa,
quoted by Śrī Madhvācārya
in his commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* (2.1.6)

The four Vedas – namely, *Rg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma* and *Atharva* – the *Mahābhārata*, the original *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Pañcarātra* are all bona fide, eternal scriptures (*sat-śāstra*). Literatures that are in line with these have also been included within *sat-śāstra*. Those literatures disparate with these are not counted as *śāstra*.

*evam vā are 'sya mahato bhūtasya niḥśvasitam etad yad ṛg-vedo
yajur-vedaḥ sāma-vedo 'tharvāṅgirasa, itihāsaḥ purāṇam*

Maitreya Upaniṣad (6.32)
Bṛhad-āranyaka Upaniṣad (2.4.10)

O Maitreya, the *Rg Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Atharva Veda*, the classic Vedic histories – *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* – and the eighteen Purāṇas headed by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are all the exhalation of the all-pervading Parabrahma. In other words, they have been manifested from His breath.

Hence, they were not authored by any man. Because they emanated from the exhalation of Bhagavān, they are called *apauruṣeya-śāstra*.⁵ Such literatures are called *śabda-pramāṇa*, and through them, complete knowledge of the inherently substantial nature of *para-tattva-vastu*, the truly abiding reality, Parabrahma Bhagavān, can be obtained.

In the present age, Buddhism, atheism, materialism and numerous disparate doctrines devoid of spiritual reality remain in vogue throughout the world. The principal cause of this is disdain for *śabda-pramāṇa*, or an absence of faith in Vedic *śāstras*, and a lack of thoughtful study and reflection thereof. The Vedas are the self-evident *pramāṇa*. Other *pramāṇas* can certainly be authoritative, but only with the help of *śruti-pramāṇa*. However, the statements of Śruti, the self-evident *pramāṇa*, need no help from the other nine *pramāṇas*. Atheism and various other doctrines remain persistently in fashion at present, and this is brought about by disrespect of the Vedas and hostility to Bhagavān. It is from these, in fact, that the misfortune of the world comes about.

Some people inquire that since Buddhadeva is an *avatāra* of Bhagavān, can His words and instructions also be regarded as *pramāṇa*? Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī answers this question in his *Sarva-samvādinī*:

*na ca buddhasyāpīśvaratve sati tad-vākyam ca pramāṇam syād-iti
vācyam | yena śāstreṇa tasya īśvaratvam manyāmahe, tenaiva tasya
daitya-mohana-śāstra-kāritvenoktatvāt |*

The purport of this is that although Buddhadeva is Īśvara, neither his words nor his instructions can be accepted as authoritative. This is because the same *śāstras* that refer to Buddhadeva as Īśvara state that he wrote godless *śāstras* simply to bewilder the demons. Whatever instructions he presented were meant exclusively for confounding the demoniac, not for ascertaining the highest goal (*paramārtha*).

That is why, at the beginning of this sacred text, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura establishes the forthcoming subjects of discussion on

5 These auxiliary texts form part of the Vedic revelation. –Ed.

the basis of Śruti, the best of all *śabda-pramāṇa*. With the words *brahma puccham pratiṣṭhā*, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* presents the bliss-laden Supreme Personality of Godhead (*paramānanda-puruṣa*) as the shelter, or basis, of *brahma* [using the metaphor of] His tail (*puccham*). In this way, the Śrutis have ascertained the excellence of Bhagavān, who is ontologically laden with *rasa* (*rasa-svarūpa*), over *brahma*.

Who is that *rasa-tattva*? That *rasa-tattva* is Svayam Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Śyāmasundara. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the crown jewel among all *śabda-pramāṇa*, states:

*mallānām aśanir nṛṇām nara-varaḥ strīṇām smaro mūrtimān
gopānām sva-jano 'satām kṣiti-bhujām śāstā sva-pitroh śīsuḥ
mrtyur bhoja-pater virāḍ aviduṣām tattvaṁ param yuginām
vṛṣṇīnām para-devateti vidito raṅgam gataḥ sāgrajah*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.43.17)

When Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa entered Kāṁsa's royal arena along with Śrī Baladeva, Kāṁsa's most powerful wrestlers, headed by Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika, sized Him up as possessing a body more unyielding than a lightning bolt. Ordinary men saw Him as the gem of mankind, the damsels perceived Him as Kāmadeva, the god of love, the cowherd people identified Him as their own kind (*bandhu*), other kings saw in Him a stern disciplinarian who dispenses justice, and His mother and father perceived Him as an infant. He appeared to Kāṁsa as the bitter end, to the ignorant as the universal form, to the *yogīs* as the Supreme Truth, and to the Yādavas as their Supreme God.

Everyone present experienced Śrī Kṛṣṇa according to their own *rasa* – as the embodiment of anger [for the wrestlers], amazement [for ordinary folk], amorous love [for the damsels], fraternity and comedy [for the *sakhās*], gallantry [for the notorious kings], nurturance and compassion [for parents], fearfulness [for Kāṁsa], repugnance [for the foolish], neutrality or serenity [for the *yogīs*] and subservience [for the Vṛṣṇis].

In this way, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as *rasa-svarūpa*, the intrinsic form of *rasa*. The Śrutis, also, state, “*raso vai saḥ* – He is that nectarous *rasa*.” And even in *Gītōpaniṣad* Śrī Kṛṣṇa has clearly admitted, “*brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham* – I am, in fact, the basis of *brahma*.” The purport of this is that without Śrī Kṛṣṇa there is no *brahma*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is truly Parabrahma. *Brahma* is the radiant effulgence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s toenails. All *śāstras* intimate Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be *rasa-svarūpa* in this way.

To delight His own *bhaktas* by His playful pastimes, that Parabrahma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, descends to this world. It is actually through Viṣṇu and His other incarnations, who inherently accompany Him by residing in His body, that the task of slaying demons is accomplished. Therefore, it was not Śrī Kṛṣṇa who killed those demons, whose death seems attributable to Him; they were actually slain by Viṣṇu situated within Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, the ocean of all *rasa*; He has no connection with the slaying of demons.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa descends to delight His *bhaktas* with His playful pastimes, to increase their transcendental bliss. While He is manifest, non-devotees do not recognize Him and mistake Him to be an ordinary man. Kāmsa, Jarāsandha, Duryodhana and Kalyavana were all adversaries of Bhagavān and did not grasp that He is Bhagavān. Duryodhana wanted to make Him his prisoner. Jarāsandha assailed Him eighteen times, hoping to strike Him down. Pauṇḍraka Vāsudeva, with two natural arms and two artificial ones, alleged, “I am the real four-armed Vāsudeva. Worship me.” These malevolent, demoniac people cannot understand Kṛṣṇa’s identity.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares in the *Gītā* (4.8), “*paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām, vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām / dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya, sambhavāmi yuge yuge* – I descend to establish religion, to destroy the demons and to protect the devotees.” Nonetheless, the ultimate purpose of His advent is to delight His devotees, to taste *rasa* and to allow others to relish *rasa*. Thus, surely, He descends of His own sweet will. In this manner, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been described as *rasa-svarūpa* (the very form of *rasa*) in the Upaniṣads. But Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not only the embodiment of *rasa*, He is *rasarāja*, the king of *rasa*. He is the intrinsic

form of not just one *rasa*, but of the totality of all *rasas*. He is *rasa* personified. Līlāsūka says, “*śṛṅgāra-rasa sāra sarvasvam* – transcendental amour (*śṛṅgāra*) is indeed the king of *rasa*, or its essence. The deity of *prema* is the *śṛṅgāra-rasa*-laden Vrajendra-nandana Śyāmasundara, Rādhā-kānta.” Jayadeva Gosvāmī, also, says, “*Sakhī*, Śyāmasundara is *śṛṅgāra* personified.” It is for this reason that writers of *rasa-śāstra* say, “*rasaḥ śṛṅgārānāmayaṁ śyāmalaḥ kṛṣṇa-daivataḥ* – The hue of transcendental amour (*śṛṅgāra*) is *śyāma* (the complexion of a fresh monsoon cloud). Śrī Kṛṣṇa is its deity.” It is established by Śruti, Smṛti and so on that just as Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa chooses to descend in the dynasty of the Yadus, and Bhagavān Śrī Rāma in the dynasty of the Raghus, so Bhāgavan also manifests within His *bhaktas*’ hearing, vision, mind, intellect and so on. Therefore, the devotees can identify Him as Bhagavān, while the non-devotees certainly regard Him as an ordinary man.

*ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi / na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau / svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.234)

Therefore, the transcendental names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot be perceived with the gross material senses. They automatically manifest themselves on the tongue and other senses of one in whose heart an eagerness has awakened for the transcendental service of the Lord.

3b ~ Bhakti-devī is self-manifesting

tasya bhagavata iva tad-rūpāyā bhakter api sva-prakāśatā-siddhy-artham eva hetutvānapekṣatā, tathā hi—“yato bhaktir adhokṣaje ahaituky apratihātā |” ity ādau hetuṁ vinaivāvīrbhavatīti tatrārthaḥ | tathaiva “yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau” “mad-bhaktim ca yadṛcchayā” “yadṛcchyaivopacitā” ity ādāv api yadṛcchayety asya svācchandenety arthaḥ | yadṛcchā svairitety abhidhānāt |

Bhāvānuvāda: *Bhakti* is Bhagavān’s own internal energy (*svarūpa-śakti*), and like the omnipotent Lord, *bhakti*, also, is self-manifesting. She manifests herself without relying on any additional cause. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.6) states, “*yato bhaktir adhokṣaje ahaituky apratihātā...*” Here, *bhagavad-bhakti* to *adhokṣaja* Bhagavān, the Supreme Lord who is beyond the approach of the material senses, is said to be causeless (*ahaitukī*) and uninterrupted (*apratihatā*). By this, it is evident that she arises autonomously, without any particular cause. Elsewhere in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.8) it is stated, “*yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau...* – only the mercy of *bhakti*, My own internal energy, yields taste for narrations about My pastimes and so forth.” The words *mad bhaktim ca yadṛcchayā* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.11) mean “the obtainment of *bhakti* to Me is by her own sweet accord (*yadṛcchā*)”. Such statements about the awakening of *bhakti* being independent and without any particular cause also appear in numerous verses such as *yadṛcchayaivopacitā*. In these statements from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and so forth, the word *yadṛcchā* means “acting only in accordance with one’s own sweet will”. Indeed, the meaning of *yadṛcchā* found in the dictionary is *svairitā* (“doing as one pleases, uncontrolled, independent”) or *svecchā* (“of one’s own accord”).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Bhagavān appears of His own accord within the Yadu dynasty as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, within the Raghu dynasty as Śrī Rāma, and so on. And again, only by His own volition does He manifest Himself or is otherwise perceived in the internal and external senses of the devotees. In the same way, *bhakti*, Bhagavān’s self-manifesting internal energy, whose intrinsic nature is composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*), also exhibits herself or is otherwise experienced by her own volition in the internal and external senses of the devotees. She does not depend on any other cause.

Like Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *bhakti*, also, is composed of *sac-cid-ānanda*. This is unequivocally described in *Gopālottara-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (2.95): “*vijñāna-ghana ānanda-ghana-sac-cid-ānandaika-rase bhakti-yoge tiṣṭhati.*” This means

that He who is the condensed form of realized knowledge and bliss, that very Śrī Kṛṣṇa, manifests Himself in *bhakti-yoga*, which is the intrinsic form of *sac-cid-ānanda*. If *bhakti* were not composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss, then it would never be possible for her to captivate Bhagavān.

At this point, a question may be raised: If *bhakti*, being quite the opposite of inert, has the symptom of being self-manifesting and is composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss, then how is she to appear in the *sādhaka*'s inert mind and senses? In answer, it can be said that after a piece of iron is heated intensely within a blazing fire, it obtains qualitative sameness with fire; it takes on the fire's own reddish hue and it acquires the potency to burn. In the same way, by her own power, *bhakti*, who is composed of *sac-cid-ānanda*, manifests even in the material senses of the *sādhaka*, and by destroying the mundanity of those senses, renders them as transcendent as she is.

The *svarūpa* of Parabrahma Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is comprised of *sat* (eternality), *cit* (cognizance) and *ānanda* (bliss). Three energies manifest from these three aspects: *sandhinī* (the energy related to existence) manifests from *sat*, *saṁvit* (the energy related to cognizance) manifests from *cit*, and *hlādinī* (the energy related to pure happiness) manifests from *ānanda*. Just as any one of the three aspects (namely *sat*, *cit* or *ānanda*) cannot be separated from the other two, so also, any one of these three energies (*sandhinī*, *saṁvit* or *hlādinī*) cannot be disassociated from the other two. Moreover, wherever the internal energy (*svarūpa-śakti*) manifests, *sandhinī*, *saṁvit* and *hlādinī* will simultaneously be present there.

Parabrahma Bhagavān, the supreme spiritual entity, is self-manifesting. His spiritual energy (*cit-śakti*) is also self-manifesting, and as such, the functions of His spiritual energy are self-manifesting too. That which is self-manifesting reveals not only itself but all else as well, just as the rising sun reveals both itself and the world.

The special function of the spiritual energy (*cit-śakti*), which is endowed with the attribute of being self-manifesting and through which Parabrahma specifically reveals His own *svarūpa* and the transformations of

His *svarūpa-śakti* (intrinsic spiritual energy), is called *viśuddha-sattva* (pure existence). Although the three energies – *sandhinī*, *saṁvit* and *hlādinī* – coexist within *viśuddha-sattva*, the degree to which each energy is expressed is not the same everywhere. Sometimes these three energies are manifest uniformly, and at other times only one is predominantly expressed.

Hence, where there is a predominance of *hlādinī-śakti*, it is called *hlādinī pradhāna śuddha-sattva* (pure existence predominated by the energy related to pure bliss) or *hlādinī pradhāna svarūpa-śakti* (Bhagavān's intrinsic potency predominated by the energy related to pure bliss).

In the revealed scriptures this has been identified as highly confidential knowledge (*guhya-vidyā*). This secret knowledge has two functions: one is *bhakti* and the other is as the initiator of *bhakti*. Through this confidential knowledge, *prema-bhakti* manifests. Therefore, *bhakti* is intrinsically the special function of the *svarūpa-śakti* predominated by *hlādinī* and is a self-manifesting, spiritual entity. She is not dependent on any other cause for her appearance.

In numerous places, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* explains that *bhakti* manifests without cause and of her own accord.

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo / yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā / yayātmā suprasīdati*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.6)

Only unconditional devotion to the lotus feet of Bhagavān, who is *adhokṣaja* (imperceptible), has been described as the supreme *dharma* of mankind. Such devotion is unconditional – it arises without any cause – and its progress is unimpeded by any material condition.

Also:

*yadṛcchayā mat-kathātau / jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ puṁsān
na nirviṇṇo nāti-sakto / bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhi-dah*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.8)

He who is neither overly renounced nor exceedingly attached to this world, and in whom, by the mercy of My inherently autonomous *bhakti*, faith has been awakened in the narrations of My pastimes and so forth, is qualified for *bhakti-yoga* and thus attains perfection through it.

*asmil loke vartamānaḥ / sva-dharma-stho 'naghaḥ śuciḥ
jñānam viśuddham āpnoti / mad-bhaktim vā yadṛcchayā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.11)

That person who remains firmly established in the observance of his own *dharma*, being sinless even while remaining within his material body, becomes pure. Thereafter, knowledge of *viśuddha-tattva* – that is, knowledge of *bhagavat-tattva* and of his own *svarūpa* (inherent nature) as My servant – awakens in him and he obtains *bhakti* to Me, which is independent and causeless.

Thus, in these verses and others like *yadṛcchayaivopacitā...*, the word *yadṛcchā* signifies “of her own accord” (*svecchā*). In other words, *bhakti* arises of her own, independent sweet will. Thus, *bhakti* has been called causeless (*ahaitukī*). She is self-manifesting, meaning she emerges of her own volition.

It has been said in Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's *Prīti-sandarbhā* (*Anuccheda* 65):

*“bhaktir evainam nayati bhaktir evainam darśayati | bhakti-vaśaḥ
puruṣo bhaktir eva bhūyasī ||” iti śrūyate | tasmād evam vivicyate | yā
caivam bhagavantaṁ svānandena mādayati sā kiṁ lakṣaṇā syād iti,
na tāvat sāṅkhyānām iva prākṛta-sattva-maya-māyikānanda-rūpā,
bhagavato māyānabhibhāvyatva-śruteḥ svatas tṛptatvāc ca | na ca
nirviśeṣa-vādinām iva bhagavat-svarūpānanda-rūpā atīśayānupapatteḥ |
ato natarām jīvasya svarūpānanda-rūpā atyanta-kṣudratvāt tasya |
tato “hlādinī sandhinī samvit, tvayy ekā sarva-samsthitau | hlāda-
tāpa-karī miśrā-tvayi no guṇa-varjite ||” iti śrī viṣṇu-purāṇānusāreṇa*

*hlādiny-ākhyā-tadīya-svarūpa-śakty-ānanda-rūpaivety avasiṣyate
yayā khalu bhagavān svarūpānanda-viśeṣī bhavati, yayaiva tam tam
ānandam anyān apy anubhāvayatīti | atha tasyā api bhagavati sadaiva
vartamānatayātīśāyānupapattes tv evaṁ vivecanīyaṁ śrutārthānyat
hānupapattīyārthāpattī-pramāṇa-siddhatvāt | tasyā hlādinyā eva kāpi
sarvānandātīśāyīnī vṛttir nityaṁ bhakta-vṛndesv eva nikṣīyamāṇā
bhagavat-prīty-ākhyayā vartate | atas tad-anubhavena śrī-bhagavān
api bhakteṣu prīty-atīśayaṁ bhajata iti |*

The purport is that only *bhakti* brings the devotee near to Bhagavān, only *bhakti* grants direct *darśana* of Bhagavān, and only *bhakti* controls Bhagavān. That is why *bhakti* is the principal *sādhana* to attain Bhagavān. In this connection, it is worth deliberating upon the symptom of that *bhakti*, who, by her own bliss, makes Bhagavān intoxicated.

It is being explained here that one cannot consider *bhakti* to be the mundane bliss intrinsic to the material mode of goodness, as held by the *sāṅkhya-vādīs*.⁶ Śruti also establishes this conclusion: Since Bhagavān is complete in Himself and thus self-content, He never becomes attracted by the modes of material nature.

Neither can *bhakti* be described as *bhagavat-svarūpānanda* (the bliss inherent in Bhagavān's very form), which is the doctrine of the impersonal monists (*nirviśeṣa-vādīs*), who experience the bliss of impersonal *brahma*. If that were so, then it would not be possible to establish the greatness of *bhakti* over that bliss. Bhagavān desires the bliss of *bhakti* more than He desires the bliss inherent within Himself.

Bhakti is also not the bliss inherent in the living entity's constitutional nature (*jīva-svarūpānanda*), since that bliss is extremely minute and consequently, Bhagavān cannot become overpowered by it.

6 *Sāṅkhya-vādīs* adhere to the doctrine of elemental enumeration, or *sāṅkhya*, in which material nature is the cause of the bliss of the Supreme Person. –Ed.

It is said in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1.12.69):

hlādinī sandhinī samvit / tvayy ekā sarva-samsthitau
hlāda-tāpa-karī miśrā / tvayi no guṇa-varjite

O Bhagavān, You are the shelter of everything. Three energies intrinsic to Your *svarūpa* – *hlādinī*, *sandhinī* and *samvit* – exist permanently and resplendently within You, the omnipotent Lord. You are devoid of the material modes of nature. Neither mundane joy (*sāttvika*), nor misery (*tāmasika*), nor mixtures thereof (*rājasika*) are present in You.

According to this evidence from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the only bliss that remains [after mundane bliss in the mode of goodness, Bhāgavan’s intrinsic bliss, and the inherent bliss of the living entity] is the bliss arising from Bhagavān’s intrinsic potency (*svarūpa-śakty-ānanda*), named *hlādinī*. This is because it is only through this *hlādinī-śakti* that Bhagavān experiences His own intrinsic bliss. By the ecstasy of this energy, He relishes a special delight. It is through this *śakti* that Bhagavān bestows bliss on the *bhaktas*.

Now a doubt may arise: Since that *hlādinī-śakti* permanently exists within Bhagavān, how can He possibly be overwhelmed by His own *śakti*?

To remove this confusion, the following line of reasoning is to be considered: By the application of *arthāpatti-pramāṇa*, which reconciles any apparent contradictions by making an inference from circumstances, the illogical becomes logical. Accordingly, it is certainly cogent that an experience that increases Bhagavān’s *ānanda* should have some other cause. When that which causes something to happen is absent, and yet that event still occurs, it is to be inferred that there must be another cause at work. This is known as *arthāpatti-pramāṇa*.

For example, Devadatta does not eat during the day, yet he is well-built. Given that he does not eat during the day, it is deduced through *arthāpatti-pramāṇa* that he must necessarily be eating at night. [In this way, the absurd becomes logical.]

Applying the same reasoning, although it is impossible for *hlādinī* to give more bliss to Bhagavān than the bliss existing in His own form, He nonetheless does receive more bliss from her. This seeming contradiction can, however, be resolved by applying *arthāpatti-pramāṇa*. Here, it is to be noted that only *hlādinī-śakti* can give bliss to Bhagavān; no one else can.

Bhagavān is actually experiencing a bliss that is impossible for Him to experience through *hlādinī*. That is, He experiences a bliss He necessarily cannot get from her. Therefore, it is certainly logical that there must be some other cause of His experiencing this *ānanda*. This conclusion is reached in much the same way that it was deduced that Devadatta eats at night. Indeed, it is *hlādinī* in a different form that bestows this profuse *ānanda* upon Bhagavān. This is understood through *arthāpatti-pramāṇa*.

In conclusion, it is none other than the abundant, all-blissful, eternal function of that *hlādinī*, which is impelled in the heart of the *bhaktas*, that is designated as *bhagavat-prīti*, or love for Bhagavān. Thus, when the *svarūpa-śakti* (*hlādinī*), with the assistance of *svarūpa-śakti* (the *bhakta*), attains a special state that reaches the pinnacle of *ānanda*, it is known as the abundant, all-blissful, eternal function of *hlādinī*. Experiencing that affection in the heart of the devotees, Bhagavān reciprocates accordingly, by becoming the object of their affection.

As stated previously, *bhakti* is Bhagavān's *svarūpa-śakti*. Bhagavān's *svarūpa* is comprised of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. Consequently, His spiritual energy has three functions: *sandhinī*, *saṁvit* and *hlādinī*. The energy related to existence (*sattā*) is called *sandhinī*. Through it, Bhagavān maintains the existence of Himself and others. The energy related to knowledge (*jñāna*) is called *saṁvit*. Through it, Bhagavān knows Himself and makes Himself known to others. The energy related to bliss (*ānanda*) is *hlādinī*. Through it, Bhagavān personally experiences *ānanda* and grants *ānanda* to others as well.

3c ~ Bhakti is not caused by any type of pious act

yadṛcchayā kenāpi bhāgyeneti vyākhyāne bhāgyam nāma kim śubha-karma-janyam, tad-ajanyam vā? ādye bhakteḥ karma-janya-bhāgya-janyatve karma-pāratantrye sva-prakāśatāpagamaḥ | dvitīye bhāgyasyānirvācyatvenājñeyatvād asiddheḥ katham hetutvam |

Bhāvānuvāda: At times, certain highly enlightened personalities have also interpreted the word *yadṛcchā* to mean “by the awakening of some good fortune”. But if *yadṛcchā* is interpreted in this way, *bhakti*’s cause is to be considered. Is it brought about by virtuous deeds (*śubha-karma*)? Alternatively, is it caused by the absence of such deeds?

First, if we accept that good fortune is awakened by virtuous acts, then *bhakti* would be subservient to *śubha-karma*. This is contradictory to the self-manifesting nature of *bhakti*. Therefore, that *bhakti* is awakened by good fortune arising from *śubha-karma* cannot be accepted.

Second, if we suppose that the cause of *bhakti* is good fortune arising from the absence of any virtuous action, then the cause of that good fortune becomes indescribable and unknown. Such good fortune, having no known cause, falls into veritable obscurity. How can that which is itself utterly undetermined be the cause of anything else? In other words, how can good fortune that is undetermined be the cause of *bhakti*?

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Through verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the author, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, has established the self-effulgent nature of *bhakti* by explaining that the word *yadṛcchā* is to be interpreted as “of one’s own accord”.

In Śrīdhara Svāmī’s explanation of the word *yadṛcchā*, as used within the previously mentioned *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse beginning *yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau*, he has written, “*yadṛcchayā kenāpi bhāgyodayena* – the word *yadṛcchā* means ‘by the emergence of some good fortune.’” According to this

explanation, to concede that good fortune born of virtuous action is the cause of *bhakti* would be to deprive *bhakti* of her quality of independence, or in other words, of her self-effulgent nature.

If the word *yadr̥cchā* is interpreted to mean “awakening from some good fortune”, then the question arises, what produces that good fortune? One kind of good fortune is awakened through the performance of pious action (*śubha-karma*). If pious action is accepted as the answer to this question, then *bhakti* becomes subordinate to pious action. In that case, *bhakti* would be tainted by the defect of dependence on *karma*, and thus her quality of self-effulgence would be lost. But all the revealed scriptures disclose that *bhakti* is self-effulgent. All the Śrutis and Smṛtis proclaim *bhakti* to be composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*), just as Bhagavān is, and to be a function of the *svarūpa-śakti*. Hence, to consider *bhakti* dependent and thereby reject her self-effulgent quality is an offence born out of disdain for the statements of Śruti.

The second point speaks of this good fortune as being occasioned by an absence of any virtuous action. As such, since the cause of its awakening remains unknown, that good fortune cannot be established in any way. How can that which is itself undetermined be the cause of anything else?

3d ~ Is *bhakti* attained by the mercy of Bhagavān?

*bhagavat-kṛpāiva hetur ity ukte tasyā api hetāv anviṣyamāṇe ’navasthā |
tat-kṛpāyā nirupādhikāyā hetutve tasyā asārvatrikatvena tasmin bhagavati
vaiṣamyam prasajjeta | duṣṭa-nigraheṇa sva-bhakta-pālana-rūpaṁ tu vaiṣamyam
tatra na duṣaṇāvaham pratyuta bhūṣaṇāvaham eva | bhakta-vātsalya-guṇasya
sarva-cakravartitvena sarvopamardakatvenopariṣṭād aṣṭamy-amṛta-vṛṣṭau
vyākhyāsyamānatvāt |*

Bhāvānuvāda: Third, if we accept that Bhagavān’s mercy is in fact the root cause of *bhakti*, then a natural desire arises to investigate the cause

of that mercy, as well as each successive cause, but still one will be unable to reach a final conclusion. Hence, in such deliberation, the problem of indeterminacy arises.

Fourth, if it is accepted that such unconditional, or causeless, mercy (*ahaitukī-kṛpā*) of Bhagavān is in fact the cause of the awakening of *bhakti*, then Bhagavān would appear to be beset with the fault of inequity, since *bhakti* is not observed universally. Bhagavān is impartial, so if His *ahaitukī-kṛpā* is the cause of *bhakti*, then that causeless mercy ought to have been bestowed upon everyone. But this is not what we see. *Bhakti* is not present in everyone. She abides in some and not in others. In that case, it would have to be conceded that Bhagavān’s attitude is not equal to all and is thus tainted by the fault of unfairness, or favouritism. But it cannot even be conceived that such a fault can exist in Bhagavān.

The following question may also arise: Is Bhagavān’s meting out punishment to the wicked and protecting His own *bhaktas* not indicative of inequity? In response, it is said that His doing so does not indicate unfairness. Rather, it is His greatest quality. Among the innumerable qualities present in Bhagavān, His intense affection for His devotees (*bhakta-vātsalya*) reigns supreme, standing as the monarch of all His qualities. This subject will be analyzed fully in the Eighth Shower of this sacred text.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Third, if it is said that actually, the awakening of this good fortune is due to Bhagavān’s mercy, then what is the cause of that mercy? Moreover, what is the cause of that cause? Since no definite conclusion is arrived at by investigating each successive cause, such an investigation is tainted by the fault of infinite regress.

Fourth, if Bhagavān’s causeless mercy is accepted as the cause of the awakening of that good fortune, it is appropriate to suppose that all living entities would have the good fortune of attaining *bhakti*, but this is not seen. Some obtain this good fortune and some do not. This conception is therefore based on the assumption that Bhagavān is tainted by the defect of inequity.

Someone may say that since Bhagavān protects the devotees and slays the demons, He does indeed have the shortcoming of inequity. In response, it is being explained that any inequity observed in Śrī Bhagavān's punishing the wicked and protecting His own devotees is not a fault but rather His greatest ornament. In other words, it is the mark of His most exalted quality. Among all the qualities present in Bhagavān, the quality of affection for His devotees is resplendent above all others.

Indeed, even in the slaying of demons, Bhagavān manifests His immense mercy to them. This is because as the inevitable result of their malevolence toward Śrī Bhagavān and His devotees, their souls [upon leaving their present body] would normally be cast into hell and the like, where they would perpetually experience severe agonies and would not be able to obtain *bhakti*. Therefore, on the pretext of slaying the demons, Bhagavān shows even them unlimited compassion, mercifully granting them liberation (*mukti*), which is extremely rare even for the *yogīs*. The Eighth Shower of this holy text specifically analyses this subject.

3e ~ The mercy of Bhagavān's devotees is the cause of obtaining bhakti

nirupādhikāyās tad-bhakta-kṛpāyā hetutve vastuto bhaktānām api vaiṣamyānucitatve 'pi "prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ"
iti madhyama-bhakta-vaiṣamyasya vidyamānatvād bhagavataś ca sva-bhakta-vaśyatvena tat-kṛpānugāmi-kṛpatve na kiñcid asāmañjasyam | yato bhakta-kṛpāyā hetur bhaktasyaiva tasya hṛdaya-vartinī bhaktir eva | tām vinā kṛpodaya-sambhavābhāvād iti bhakteḥ sva-prakāśatvam eva siddham | ato "yaḥ kenāpy ati-bhāgyena jāta-śraddho 'sya sevane" ity atra ati-bhāgyena śubha-karma-janya-bhāgyam atikrāntena kenāpi bhakta-kāruṇyenetī tattvārtho jñeyah || 3 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: The mercy of the devotees is said to be the cause of *bhakti*. The *bhagavad-bhakta*'s mercy, like the mercy of Bhagavān, is causeless. In this case, also, it is improper to find any defect of inequity, or partisanship, in the mercy of Bhagavān's devotees. Still, the symptoms of a *madhyama-bhakta* (intermediate devotee) are stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.46): "He who adopts the mood of love toward the Lord, fellowship toward the devotees of the Lord, mercy toward the ignorant, and neglect toward the antagonists, is a *madhyama-bhāgavata*." According to these symptoms, inequity is seen in the *madhyama-bhakta*. These qualities are actually the defining qualities of the *madhyama-bhakta*.

Śrī Bhagavān is conquered by His *bhaktas*. Therefore, if His mercy follows the mercy of His *bhaktas*, there is no question of any kind of incongruity. In other words, only by attaining the mercy of the *bhakta* does one attain the mercy of Bhagavān. *Bhakti* forever exists within the heart of the *bhakta*, and therefore, the root cause of the bestowal of the *bhakta*'s mercy upon others is verily the *bhakti* in his heart. Without *bhakti* residing within the *bhakta*, there is no possibility of mercy being awakened for anyone. In this way, the self-manifesting nature of *bhakti* is established.

Hence, in the verse beginning "yaḥ kenāpy *ati-bhāgyena, jāta-śraddho* 'sya sevane – whoever by some extreme good fortune has been invested with faith in service to Bhagavān" (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.14), the words *ati-bhāgyena* invalidate the assertion that any such good fortune is born of pious action (*śubha-karma*). One should know that the absolute meaning of *ati-bhāgyena* is "by the mercy of the *bhaktas*".

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura has delineated the independent and self-manifesting nature of *bhakti*, which, like Bhagavān, is intrinsically eternal (*sat*), all-cognizant (*cit*) and blissful (*ānanda*). Also, he has established that neither good fortune born of any pious action nor Bhagavān's causeless mercy yields *bhakti*. Through sound reasoning,

the author is now establishing the conclusion (*siddhānta*) that *bhakti* is awakened by the mercy of a *bhakta* – a notion which, if accepted, does away with any confusion.

In the same manner that Bhagavān’s mercy is causeless, absolute and purely spiritual, the mercy of the *bhakta* is also causeless, absolute and purely spiritual. This is so because a tiny amount of all of Bhagavān’s qualities are transmitted to His devotees. This has been said in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.75), “*kṛṣṇa-bhakte kṛṣṇer guṇa sakali sañcāre* – all the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa are transmitted to His devotee.”

However small the quantity, innately, those qualities certainly remain unchanged. But still, Bhagavān’s mercy is not seen to be disseminated everywhere. Surely this means that Bhagavān is beset with the fault of inequity. However, the notion that such inequity exists within Śrī Bhagavān is erroneous, inappropriate and the antithesis of the attributes of His intrinsic nature. Likewise, such inequity seems inappropriate in the *bhakta* also, but actually, it accords with the symptoms of the *madhyama-bhakta*. This is the verdict of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.46):

*īśvare tad-adhīneṣu / bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā / yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ*

He who offers his love to Śrī Bhagavān, remains a sincere friend to all Vaiṣṇavas, shows mercy to the innocent and neglects those who are envious of Bhagavān and the Vaiṣṇavas, is a *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava.

Thus, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrī Havi Yogendra, the best of the Navayogendras, has clearly described that the partiality of being merciful toward ordinary, ignorant people and neglectful of those who are inimical toward devotees of the Supreme Lord is the symptom of a *madhyama-bhakta*. Therefore, it is clearly understood that such partiality of the *madhyama-bhaktas* is not harmful for their *bhakti*. Indeed, it is solely by the mercy of *madhyama-bhaktas* that ordinary people attain *bhakti*.

Since Śrī Bhagavān is conquered by His devotee, when His devotee bestows mercy upon someone, Bhagavān’s mercy for that person is also awakened. When this is carefully contemplated, it can be discerned that *bhakti* is forever resplendently abiding within the *bhakta*’s heart. It is solely through this *bhakti* that the *bhaktas* bestow mercy upon common persons and that common persons have attained *bhakti* through them. Therefore, *bhakti* is the only cause of the appearance of *bhakti*. She does not depend on anything else to manifest herself. This has been thoroughly proven. There thus remains no doubt that *bhakti* is never bereft of her independence, or her self-manifesting nature.

With evidence from revealed scripture, the author now further presents how the mercy of the *bhakta* is the cause of *bhakti*.

In the verse beginning with “*yaḥ kenāpy ati-bhāgyena, jāta-śraddho ’sya sevane* – whoever, by some extreme good fortune, has been invested with faith in service to Bhagavān... (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.14),” the words *ati-bhāgyena* (“extreme good fortune”) are actually intended to mean the mercy of a *bhakta*, which far surpasses any good fortune born of pious action (*śubha-karma*). In fact, the good fortune born of the mercy of devotees of Bhagavān is the only thing capable of surpassing good fortune arising from pious action. In the mercy of Bhagavān, inequity may be deemed a flaw, but there is no possibility of partiality being a fault in the mercy of Bhagavān’s devotees (*mahat-kṛpā*). Therefore, humankind obtains *bhakti* only through good fortune in the form of the mercy of these exalted souls, the devotees of Bhagavān.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura thus refutes the interpretation of *kenāpi bhāgyodena* as “mere good fortune” and discloses the true interpretation to be “*yadṛcchā mahat-saṅga* – good fortune born of the mercy of exalted souls”. Raising various points through logic and reasoning, he demonstrates *bhakti*’s quality of being self-manifest.

Text 4

4a ~ Bhagavān's mercy potency is entrusted to the devotee

*na ca bhaktānām kṛpāyāḥ prāthamyāsambhavas teṣām apīśvara-preryatvād
iti vācyam | īśvareṇaiva sva-bhakta-vaśyatām svīkurvatā sva-kṛpā-śakti-
sampradānīkṛta-sva-bhaktena tādrśasya bhaktotkarṣasya dānāt | antaryāminās
ca īśitavyānām svādrṣṭopārjita-bahir-indriya-vyāpāreṣu niyamana-mātra-
kāritve 'pi sva-bhakteṣu sva-prasāda eva dṛśyate | yad uktam śrī-gītāṣu “tat-
prasādāt parām śāntim sthānam” iti | prasādas ca sva-kṛpā-śakti-dānātmakah
pūrvam ukta eva |*

Bhāvānuvāda: An objection may be raised that it is not possible for the mercy of the devotee to exist first, before the mercy of Bhagavān, because the actions of the devotees are inspired by Bhagavān. But this cannot be, because Śrī Bhagavān, who accepts a mood of submission to His *bhaktas*, personally offers His mercy potency to them, so that they can elevate those who are desirous of performing *hari-bhajana*. Thus He has established the *bhaktas*' excellence in this regard.

Bhagavān, the indwelling Supersoul, has governance over the living entities. He maintains control of only those living entities who, through their external senses, are reaping the fruits – their previously unseen destiny – of lifetimes of sinful and pious activities. In regard to His own devotees, however, Bhagavān's personal, direct grace is seen.

In this context, *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (18.62) states “*tat-prasādāt parām śāntim sthānam* – by the gracious blessing of that Supreme Controller (Īśvara), you will achieve ultimate peace and the eternal abode.” Herein, the word *prasāda* must certainly be understood as grace in the form of Him bestowing His personal mercy potency. This has been previously stated.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Someone may say that since the *bhaktas* are subordinate to the will of Bhagavān, how can their mercy awaken independently, without Bhagavān’s will or inspiration? Since inspiration from Bhagavān also underlies the *bhaktas’* mercy, that inspiration is to be considered the prime cause of good fortune, and it takes the form of the mercy of these great souls. How, then, is *bhakti’s* self-manifesting nature to be accepted?

In answer to this question, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains that due to Bhagavān’s quality of *bhakta-vaśyatā* (submission to His devotees), He has voluntarily placed the potency of mercy in the hearts of His *bhaktas*, such that the *bhaktas’* mercy does not have to wait for Bhagavān’s will or inspiration. The *bhaktas* can independently bestow mercy upon ordinary people. Bhagavān has, of His own accord, bestowed this kind of excellence upon His devotees.

Bhakti-sandarbha (*Anuccheda* 180) states, “The particular significance of *mahat-kṛpā* (the mercy of His devotees) is that if it were not independent, it would have been impossible for anyone in this world to have obtained the mercy of Bhagavān.

“Bhagavān is exclusively, and in the most complete way, condensed spiritual bliss (*ānanda*); He is impenetrable by corruption; and He is untouched by the material energy (*māyā*). Herein lies the distinction between Bhagavān and the living entities (*jīvas*).

“Just as there is no possibility of the slightest darkness remaining within the sun, which is the reservoir of profuse light, so it is absolutely impossible for unhappiness to touch Bhagavān, who is by nature absolutely blissful. Śruti also states, ‘*āditya-varṇam tamasaḥ parastāt* – like the supremely luminous sun, He is far above darkness.’ That is why Bhagavān cannot be touched by any of the unhappiness felt by the *jīvas*. Being the inherent form of *ānanda*, He remains continuously overwhelmed by *ānanda*. People in general, however, are touched by the misery of others, and mercy awakens within their hearts.

“Śrī Bhagavān is the condensed form of supreme bliss (*paramānanda*). Although all potency [to make the impossible possible, along with all other potencies] always resides within Him, still, it is not possible for Him to express compassion directly for the wayward *jīvas*. That is why the mercy bestowed autonomously by great souls is in fact the sole means to effect the deliverance of the abject and unhappy *jīvas*.

“Like Bhagavān, *sādhus* also wander in the realm of *ānanda*, which is made up of *śuddha-sattva* (pure existence), and therefore, they cannot be touched by any of the unhappiness of the material world, which innately consists of the modes of passion and ignorance. Still, as a man waking from sleep can remember the miseries he felt in his dreaming state, the *mahā-puruṣas* sometimes remember the miseries of this world. When their hearts are thus melted with compassion, they show mercy to the wayward souls. Because of this, Śrī Bhagavān, who is all-compassionate, places His own mercy in the heart of these great souls and keeps their mercy completely independent, so that the common people can become inclined to Him. Therefore, Bhagavān’s mercy is transmitted into the heart of the *jīvas* in the wake of *mahat-kṛpā* (the mercy of great souls), and not through His own personal will.”

Now, one may counter this notion by saying that *antaryāmī* Bhagavān, who governs from within as Supersoul, inspires the hearts of all living entities and grants the power of activity to their internal and external senses. In answer to this, Bhagavān Himself says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.61):

īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām / hṛd-deśe ’rjuna tiṣṭhati
bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni / yantrārūḍhāni māyayā

O Arjuna, the indwelling Supersoul is situated in the heart of all living beings. By His illusory potency, He causes them to wander in the cycle of birth and death, engaging them in various material activities, as if they are mounted on a machine.

So, does the all-powerful, autonomous Supreme Lord have any control over His devotees’ activities? In this regard, it is said that the internal and external senses of the devotees, which are a result of their previously unseen destiny, as well as the ability of those senses to receive Bhagavān’s mercy potency, are actually under Bhagavān’s control. In other words, it is Bhagavān’s own potency alone that duly governs the revelation of His mercy potency in the senses of the *bhaktas*. The devotees are not fully independent in this regard.

Still, it is seen that Bhagavān bestows His grace upon His own devotees. In essence, the wayward *jīvas* are subordinate to their accumulated *prārabdha-karma* (manifest result of previous material activities). In the form of the Supersoul, Bhagavān, by His external energy, inspires these *jīvas* from within and motivates, or empowers, their internal sense (the mind) and their external senses to undergo the results of their past deeds. Yet He does not control His *bhaktas*’ senses in the same way.

Although the *bhaktas* may consider their joys and sorrows to be arising from their previous *karma*, they are not in fact subordinate to their *prārabdha-karma*. Their joys, sorrows and all else are taking place by the will of Bhagavān in a way that is favourable to the nourishment of their *bhakti*. In regard to the manifestation of Bhagavān’s mercy potency in the *bhakta*’s senses, Bhagavān Himself is the sole regulator. The devotees, therefore, do not have any control in regard to the mercy Bhagavān bestows upon them. But, in the matter of distributing mercy to other *jīvas*, Bhagavān has personally made His own mercy potency flow through the *bhaktas*, thus granting them full freedom to do this work.

In the *Gītā* (18.62), Bhagavān personally says, “*tat-prasādāt parāṁ śāntim, sthānam prāpsyasi śāśvatam* – surrender completely to Him, that Supreme Controller. By His grace, you will attain transcendental peace and the supreme eternal abode.” Here the word *prasāda* should be understood as the favour of Bhagavān in the form of the bestowal of His mercy potency.

4b ~ Niṣkāma-karma and so forth are the gateway to bhakti

kiṁ ca “svecchāvatāra-caritaiḥ” iti “svecchā-mayasya” ity ādi pramāṇa-śatair avagatena svācchānyenāvatarato ’pi tasya bhū-bhāra-haraṇādeḥ sthūla-dṛṣṭyā hetutve iva niṣkāma-karmādeḥ kvāpi dvāratve ’pi na kṣatīḥ | kiṁ ca – “yan na yogena sāṅkhyena dāna-vrata-tapo ’dhvaraiḥ | vyākhyā-svādhyāya-sannyāsaiḥ prāpnuyād yatnavān api ||” ity ādinā dāna-vratādinām spaṣṭam eva hetutva-khaṇḍane ’pi – “dāna-vrata-tapo-homa-japa-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ | śreyobhir vividhaiś cānyaiḥ kṛṣṇe bhaktir hi sādhyate ||”

Bhāvānuvāda: Furthermore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and hundreds of other evidences have thoroughly established that Bhagavān descends to this world solely of His own accord: “*svecchāvatāra-caritaiḥ* – through the autocratic adventures of the manifestations of Godhead” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.8.57), and “*svecchā-mayasya* – You appear exclusively to satisfy the yearnings of Your pure devotees” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.2). Still, those with external vision maintain that removing the burden of the earth and the like are the cause of Bhagavān’s appearance. Similarly, in certain places in the scriptures, processes like *niṣkāma-karma* (selfless action offered to Bhagavān) and so forth have been described as the doorway to *bhakti*. There is no harm in this. [In other words, nothing incorrect has been stated.]

However, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.12.9) states: “One cannot obtain *bhakti* to Me even by making a great endeavour to practise mysticism (*yoga*), analyse the elements (*sāṅkhya*), acquire monistic knowledge (*jñāna*), give in charity (*dāna*), follow sacred vows (*vrata*), perform austerity (*tapasya*), engage in authorized rituals (*yajña*), deliberate upon scripture (*śāstra-vyākhyā*), study the Vedas (*svādhyāya*) and accept the renounced order of life (*sannyāsa*).”

Through such evidence as this, the notion that *bhakti* is acquired through charity, saintly vows and so forth has been clearly refuted. Yet *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47.24) states elsewhere, “The living entities in this world attain *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* through various auspicious acts, such as giving

in charity, making saintly vows, performing austerity, offering oblations, chanting *mantras* and studying the Vedas.” How then is it possible to reconcile these scriptural statements?

Piyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is harmonizing the statements of the scriptures that seem to contradict *bhakti*’s quality of being self-manifesting. In certain places in the scriptures, *niṣkāma-karma*, or dedicating the results of one’s actions to Śrī Bhagavān, has been called the gateway to *bhakti*. Through these statements, a doubt may arise in the heart of some that if dedicating the results of one’s actions to Bhagavān is the cause of *bhakti*, how can *bhakti*’s quality of being self-manifesting be substantiated? With an example, this subject is being deliberated upon with profound scriptural insight.

Through statements from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* such as “*svecchāvatāra-caritaiḥ*” (4.8.57) and “*svecchā-mayasya*” (10.14.2), it becomes clear that the Supreme Lord, who is independent of all rules, descends to this world of His own accord. Nevertheless, from an external perspective, the reasons for Bhagavān’s descent have been cited as removing the burden of the earth and so on.

If this is deliberated upon more carefully, something becomes obvious: Can He who effects the dissolution of countless millions of universes simply by His desire not vanquish a few demons and thereby remove the burden of the earth just by willing it?

That said, having descended upon the earth of His own accord, *līlā-maya* Bhagavān performs various pastimes, giving pleasure to His devotees. In the same manner, even if from an external perspective *niṣkāma-karma* and so on appear to be the gateway to *bhakti*, if we deliberate upon this more carefully, it is understood that there is no way to obtain *bhakti* other than by the mercy of the *bhaktas*. Therefore, although it has been pointed out that *niṣkāma-karma* and so on are mentioned as the gateway to *bhakti*, it does not mean that *bhakti*’s quality of being self-manifesting is diminished.

4c ~ Giving in charity, executing vows and so forth result in attaining bhakti in the mode of goodness

iti yad hetutvaṁ śrūyate tat khalu jñānāṅga-bhūtāyāḥ sāttvikyā eva bhakter na tu nirguṇāyāḥ premāṅga-bhūtāyāḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: In answer to this, it is said that where charity, vows and so on are described as the cause of attaining *bhakti*, it is to be understood that it refers only to *bhakti* in the mode of goodness, which arises as an attribute of *jñāna* (*jñānāṅga-bhūtā-sāttvikī-bhakti*). It does not refer to devotion beyond the material modes, which arises as an attribute of *prema* (*premāṅga-bhūtā-nirguṇā-bhakti*).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Again, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.12.9) states:

*yam na yogena sāṅkhyena / dāna-vrata-tapo 'dhvaraiḥ
vyākhyā-svādhyāya-sannyāsaiḥ / prāpnuyād yatnavān api*

Bhakti is not attained through even the greatest of efforts in mysticism (*yoga*), analysis of the elements (*sāṅkhya*), philosophical speculation (*jñāna*), charity (*dāna*), saintly vows (*vrata*), austerity (*tapasya*), authorized rituals (*yajña*), deliberation upon scripture (*śāstra-vyākhyā*), study of the Vedas (*svādhyāya*), acceptance of the renounced order of life (*sannyāsa*) and so on.

This verse clearly indicates that other than by receiving the mercy of great souls (*mahat-kṛpā*), such practices as mysticism and analysis of the elements cannot result in the awakening of *bhakti*.

While *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* so clearly refutes this, it also states (10.47.24):

*dāna-vrata-tapo-homa- / japa-svādhyāya-saṁyamaiḥ
śreyobhir-vividhaiś cānyaiḥ / kṛṣṇe bhaktir hi sādhyate*

Through charity, saintly vows, austerity, authorized rituals, chanting *mantras*, study of the Vedas, self-restraint and other activities performed to generate good fortune, *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* is achieved.

In this verse, charity, saintly vows and so on are listed as practices (*sādhana*) for attaining *bhakti*, but these activities have been mentioned in relation only to *bhakti* in the mode of goodness, which is an attribute of *jñāna* (*jñānāṅga-bhūtā-sāttvikī-bhakti*). They do not relate to transcendental *bhakti*, which is an attribute of *prema* (*premanāṅga-bhūtā-nirguṇā-bhakti*), or to eternally perfected transcendental devotion (*svarūpa-siddhā-bhakti*).

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, prior to describing the symptoms of transcendental devotion to His mother, Devahūti, Bhagavān Śrī Kapiladeva sets out the symptoms of *bhakti* in the mode of goodness (*sāttvikī-bhakti*), while also describing the symptoms of *bhakti* performed with material desires (*sakāma-bhakti*), or in other words, *bhakti* mixed with the modes of nature (*saguṇā-bhakti*):

*karma-nirhāram uddiśya / parasmin vā tad-arpaṇam
yajed yaṣṭavyam iti vā / pṛthag-bhāvaḥ sa sāttvikah*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.10)

Those in the mode of goodness (*sāttvika-bhaktas*) worship Me, the Supreme Lord, to dissipate their sins and to dedicate to Me the fruits of their pious action (*karma*). They do so with the intelligence that worshipping the Lord is their duty, and they are desirous of *mokṣa* [not *bhakti*].

Bhakti is the natural tendency (*vṛtti*) of Śrī Bhagavān’s internal potency (*svarūpa-śakti*). Actually, at no time is *bhakti* in the mode of goodness or in any of the modes of material nature. *Bhakti* is transcendental to the material modes (*nirguṇa*). But by willingly accepting subordination to *jñāna*, *bhakti* becomes a limb of *jñāna* (*jñānāṅga-bhūtā*) and grants liberation to the *jñānīs*. It is for this reason that *bhakti* has been called *sāttvikī-bhakti*.

Some people cultivate *jñāna* to obtain liberation (*mukti*), but *jñāna* is in no way competent to give liberation without the assistance of *bhakti*. For this reason, the *jñānīs*, in order to obtain liberation, perform *bhakti* to Bhagavān. The verse under consideration, which begins *dāna-vrata-tapo-homa*, mentions this *bhakti* in the mode of goodness, which is an attribute of *jñāna* (*jñānāṅga-bhūtā-sāttvikī-bhakti*), not *śuddha-bhakti*, which grants *prema*.

4d ~ Giving in charity, executing vows and so forth, for the sake of Bhagavān, results in attaining prema-bhakti

kecit tu dānam viṣṇu-vaiṣṇava-sampradānakam vratāny ekādaśy-ādīni tapas tat-prāpti-hetuko bhogādi-tyāga iti sādhana-bhakti-āṅgāny evāhuḥ | tat-sādhyatve bhakteḥ “bhaktiā sañjātayā bhaktiā” itivat nirhetukatvam eva siddham iti sarvaṁ samañjasam || 4 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Alternatively, some explain *dāna* to mean charity aimed at service to Śrī Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas, *vrata* to mean vows such as *Ekādaśī*, and *tapasya* to mean the renunciation of sense gratification with the intention of obtaining Bhagavān, and that they are described as limbs of *sādhana-bhakti*.

It has been explained that the goal of all these limbs of *bhakti* is *bhakti*: “*bhaktiā sañjātayā bhaktiā – prema-bhakti* is produced by *sādhana-bhakti*” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.3.31). This aphorism, which establishes the causeless nature of *bhakti*, perfectly reconciles all the statements of scripture.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Again, certain individuals have interpreted *dāna* (charity), *vrata* (vows), *tapasya* (austerities), *homa* (oblations of ghee into fire) and other components of this verse as limbs of *śuddha-bhakti*. In Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on this *Bhāgavatam* verse (10.47.24), he writes:

*tatra dānaṁ viṣṇu-vaiṣṇava-sampradānakam | vratam ekāśyādikam |
tapah kṛṣṇārtha-bhoga-tyāgādi | homo vaiṣṇavaḥ | japo viṣṇu-mantrāṇām |
svādhyāyo gopāla-tāpanyādi-pāṭhaḥ | śreyāṁsy api bhakty-aṅgāny api
jñeyāni | anyeṣāṁ dānādīnām bhakti-hetutvābhāvasya prak prati-
pāditatvāt |*

Here, *dāna* refers to giving charity to Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas for the purpose of serving them. *Vrata* refers to Vaiṣṇava vows like observing Ekādaśī. The meaning of *tapasya* is renunciation of enjoyment for the sake of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure. The word *homa* refers to Vaiṣṇava *homa*, or else offering the Lord’s food remnants and so on to the Vaiṣṇavas. *Japa* refers to the uttering of *viṣṇu-mantra*, *gāyatrī* and so on. *Svādhyāya* refers to the reading of Śruti, such as *Gopāla-tāpanī*. In this way, by the word *śreyah* (supreme welfare), the other aggregate limbs of *bhakti* should be understood. Charity and so on performed for any other purpose can never be the cause of *bhakti*. Certainly, this has already been fully established.

Thus, by conclusively establishing the transcendental nature of *bhakti*, there is a full and beautiful reconciliation.

Text 5

5a ~ In the absence of bhakti, practices like jñāna, karma and yoga are fruitless

“śreyah-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho” iti “ko vārtha āpto ’bhajatām svadharmataḥ” iti “puraiva bhūman bahavo ’pi yoginaḥ” ity ādibhyo jñāna-karmayogādīnām prati-sva-phala-siddhyai bhaktim avaśyam apekṣamāṇānām iva

Bhāvānuvāda: *“Śreyah-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho... – O Lord, devotional service to You is the main source of all kinds of auspiciousness. Those who give up this path just to cultivate jñāna will simply undergo hard work,*

suffer pain and experience difficulty, just as a person who beats empty husks is rewarded with hard work only, not rice” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.4); “*ko vārtha āpto ’bhajatām sva-dharmataḥ...* – even by fully engaging oneself in one’s prescribed occupational duties, if such engagement is devoid of *bhagavad-bhakti*, one does not gain anything” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.17); “*pureha bhūman bahavo ’pi yoginaḥ...* – O almighty Lord, in the past, many *yogīs* in this world, unable to attain You through the path of *yoga*, finally offered all their endeavours to You. As a result, they achieved *bhakti* characterized by hearing and chanting about You. They therefore came to understand You and attained the supreme destination in the form of *sāmīpya*, or being situated near You” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.5).

By scriptural statements such as these, it is evident that *bhakti* is surely relied upon to obtain the cherished fruits of *karma*, *yoga*, *jñāna* and so on.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, having established the self-manifesting nature of *bhakti*, now elucidates topics such as the dependence on *bhakti* of other practices like *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*. He also describes *bhakti*’s quality of independence and *bhakti* as the sole and essential life air of various other practices. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.4) states:

*śreyaḥ-sṛtiṁ bhaktim udasya te vibho
kliśyanti ye kevala-bodha-labdhave
teṣāṁ asau kleśala eva śiṣyate
nānyad yathā sthūla-tuṣāvaghātinām*

[Beholding Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s astonishing influence, Śrī Brahmā is uttering words of praise:] O Bhagavān, whosoever abandons *bhakti*, the sole means to obtain complete auspiciousness, just for the sake of obtaining exclusive *jñāna*, will simply undergo hard work, suffer pain and achieve difficulty, just as the only gain of a person who beats empty husks is hard work, not rice.

In Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary on verse 18.55 of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (beginning *bhaktiḥ mām abhijānāti*),

he has mentioned four kinds of practitioners who cultivate exclusive *jñāna*, or *brahma-jñāna*:

- (1) Those people who think that *jñāna* alone, devoid of *bhakti*, is competent to give *mukti* accept profuse tribulation in their practice of cultivating *jñāna*. In essence, what they attain is tribulation and tribulation alone. Such people are greatly condemned. The verse previously discussed (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.4) comments on these *jñānīs*.
- (2) Then there are those who practise *jñāna* that is mixed with *bhakti* (*bhakti-miśra-jñāna*) upon seeing the scriptural passage “*sarvāsām eva siddhīnām mūlaṁ tac-caraṇārcaṇam* – the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet is the root of the perfection of all kinds of *sādhana*.” After enormous tribulation, such persons reach the stage of absorption in abstract meditation, but because they consider Śrī Bhagavān’s divinely graceful form to be a temporary manifestation of *māyā*, they become offenders at His lotus feet. As a result, they become degraded and cheated out of obtaining *mukti*. Such people are condemnable among *jñānīs*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32) it has been said:

*ye ’nye ’ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho ’nāḍṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*

[In *Garbha-stotra* (prayers by the demigods to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the womb), the demigods headed by Brahmā are praising Śrī Kṛṣṇa as follows:] O lotus-eyed one, impure is the intelligence of those who, disregarding Your divinely graceful lotus feet, believe themselves to be liberated, for such persons have no *bhakti* to You. Although they ascend to a state of liberation in this life (*jīvan-mukta*) as a result of excruciatingly burdensome practices, they again fall down into disgracefulness.

- (3) And there are those among the guild of *jñānīs* who practise *jñāna* mixed with *bhakti* (*bhakti-miśra-jñāna*) and consider the form of Śrī Bhagavān to be comprised of eternality, cognizance and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*). They alone, upon dispelling worldly knowledge and nescience and gaining indirect knowledge related to the Absolute Reality, obtain the liberation of merging into the Lord's effulgence (*brahma-sāyujya*). Such people are somewhat laudable.
- (4) There is a fourth type of *jñānī*. This type of *jñānī* is supremely fortunate. While cultivating *jñāna*, personalities like Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī obtained, by the mercy of Bhagavān, the association of a *mahā-bhāgavata*. By the influence of the association of that *mahā-bhāgavata*, they were rescued from the inclination to achieve *mukti* and became blissfully immersed in tasting the sweetness of *bhakti-rasa*. Such *jñānīs* are exceedingly laudable.

Thus, it is most apparent that all *jñānī-sādhakas* depend immensely on *bhakti* in order to obtain perfection.

Now the *karmīs'* reliance on *bhakti* will be described:

*tyaktvā sva-dharmam caraṇāmbujam harer
bhajann apakvo 'tha patet tato yadi
yatra kva vābhadram abhūd amuṣya kim
ko vārtha āpto 'bhajatām sva-dharmataḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.5.17)

[Devarṣi Nārada is saying to a disheartened Śrī Vyāsadeva:] O Muni, how can any harm come to those who, giving up their prescribed and occasional duties in *varṇāśrama-dharma*, perform *bhajana* of Śrī Hari's divinely graceful lotus feet and then fall spiritually, before their *bhajana* has fully matured? There can never be inauspiciousness for them. But what is to be obtained by those who do not perform *bhajana*, or *bhakti*, to Bhagavān and who simply discharge their prescribed and occasional

duties in *varṇāśrama-dharma* (four social divisions and spiritual orders of life)? For them, there is no gain at all.

The purport is that if prior to obtaining Bhagavān, a [*bhakti*-] *sādhaka* passes away, becomes ill, or for any number of reasons happens to discontinue his *bhajana* or even go astray, there is no loss for him at all, nor does any misfortune befall him. On the other hand, for a person who neglects performing *bhakti* to Bhagavān and remains absorbed until the end of his life in the discharge of regular prescribed duties, as well as occasional duties such as the performance of charity, religious vows and austerity, there is nothing to be gained at all. After enjoying fleeting and precarious happiness on heavenly planets and the like, such a person again plummets into *samsāra*, the cycle of birth and death in the material world. Without *bhagavad-bhakti*, his vows, the discharging of his prescribed duties and so on, all go entirely in vain.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya-līlā* 22.26) affirms this:

*cāri varṇāśramā jadi kṛṣṇa nāhi bhaje
sva-karma korite se raurave paḍi' maje*

If those in the four social divisions and spiritual orders of life do not perform *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then even though they have faithfully carried out the prescribed duties of these divisions and orders, they fall into the hell known as Raurava.

Thus, *yoga*, *karma* and so on are not at all effective without *bhakti*. To indicate this, Lord Brahmā says:

*pureha bhūman bahavo 'pi yoginas
tvad-arpitēhā nija-karma-labdhayā
vibudhya bhaktyaiva kathopanītayā
prapedire 'ñjo 'cyuta te gatiṁ parām*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.5)

O infallible, infinite and limitless one! When, in previous times, many yogīs on this planet found themselves incapable of obtaining knowledge of You through *yoga*, they eventually fully offered the results of all their worldly and Vedic actions at Your divinely graceful lotus feet. By fully offering the results of their actions, as well as by the influence of *bhakti* born of listening with relish to descriptions of Your pastimes, they became aware of *ātma-tattva* (the truth of the soul) and Your *svarūpa-tattva* (the truth of Your intrinsic nature) and happily obtained the supreme destination – Your lotus feet.

5b ~ Bhakti is not dependent on any other process

bhakteḥ svīya-phala-prema-siddhyai svapne 'pi na tat-tat-sāpekṣatvaṁ, pratyuta “na jñānaṁ na ca vairāgyaṁ prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha” iti “dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān mām bhajet sa ca sattamaḥ” ity ādibhyas tasyāḥ sarvathānanyāpekṣitvaṁ kim vaktavyaṁ teṣāṁ eva jñāna-karma-yogādīnāṁ pratisv ekeṣu phaleṣv api kadācid ātmanā sādhyamāneṣu na tat-tad-gandhāpekṣatvaṁ api | yad uktam – “yat karmabhir yat tapasā jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat |” ity ādau “sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā |” iti |

Bhāvānuvāda: Not even in one’s wildest dreams does *bhakti* rely on *karma*, *yoga*, *jñāna* and so on to bestow her own fruit – namely, *prema*. But “*na jñānaṁ na ca vairāgyaṁ, prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha* – for a person endowed with *bhakti* to Me, the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation is not considered the means to achieve the highest perfection within this world” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.31).

Furthermore, Śrī Bhagavān says, “*dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān, mām bhajet sa ca sattamaḥ* – he who has abandoned all *dharma* (ordinary religious duties) and performs exclusive *bhajana* of Me is considered to be the best of all living entities” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.11.32). Statements such as this certainly establish *bhakti*’s non-dependence on anything in

every respect. Not only this, even when she grants the fruits of practising *jñāna*, *karma*, *yoga* and so on, she is not even faintly dependent on them to do so. In other words, she personally grants the fruits of such practices without their assistance. Evidence of this is found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.20.32–33):

yat karmabhir yat tapasā / jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat

sarvaṁ mad bhakti-yogena / mad bhakto labhate ’ñjasā

Whatever fruit is obtained through auspicious practices such as fruitive activities (*karma*), austerity (*tapasya*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*), My *bhaktas* easily achieve simply by performing *bhakti-yoga* to Me.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is saying that one cannot even dream that *bhakti* relies upon *jñāna*, *yoga*, *karma* and so on to bestow her own fruit of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, whereas the *karmīs*, *jñānīs* and *yogīs* fully rely on *bhakti* to attain the fruit of their practices. What to say of *bhakti* relying on anything else, by the mere touch of the above-mentioned *jñāna*, *karma* and so on, *bhakti*’s sanctity is tainted.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.31) states:

tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya / yogino vai mad-ātmanah

na jñānaṁ na ca vairāgyaṁ / prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha

[Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is saying to Uddhava:] For a devotee who is endowed with *bhakti* to Me and whose consciousness is situated in Me, the cultivation of *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and so on are generally not considered the means of attaining the highest auspiciousness within this world.

Bhakti is transcendental to material qualities and she is independent. She does not rely on anything, whereas *jñāna*, *vairāgya*, etc. rely on *bhakti*.

Without *bhakti*, they cannot bestow any fruit. Even though the devotee of Bhagavān does not desire them, they pursue a person with *bhakti*.

*jñāna-vairāgyādi—bhaktir kabhu nahe ‘aṅga’
ahiṃsa-yama-niyamādi bule kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅga*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.145)

Paths such as *jñāna* and *vairāgya* are never limbs of *bhakti*. Indeed, good qualities such as non-violence and control of the mind and senses automatically follow a *kṛṣṇa-bhakta*.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.7) states that Bhakti-devī alone rapidly awakens pure Vedic knowledge and *yukta-vairāgya* (renunciation in the spirit of devotion):

*vāsudeve bhagavati / bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ
janayaty āśu vairāgyaṁ / jñānaṁ ca yad-ahaitukam*

After hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, a faithful person automatically acquires *bhakti* endowed with knowledge and renunciation. By such *bhakti*, he realizes Bhagavān’s *svarūpa* in his heart, and he realizes his relationship with Bhagavān. Thus he obtains service to Him.

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says, “*jñāna-vairāgyārthaṁ pṛthak yatno bhaktair na kartavya iti bhāvaḥ* – devotees ought not to separately endeavour for *jñāna* and *vairāgya*.” The instruction is given to fully renounce *varṇāśrama* and so forth, and exclusively perform *bhagavad-bhajana*:

*ājñāyaivam guṇān doṣān / mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān / mām bhajet sa tu sattamaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.32)

O Uddhava, in the scriptures, I have given instruction on the *dharma* of mankind. Having considered the favourable and unfavourable aspects

of such duties, one who renounces the inclination to perform such ordinary religious duties and instead exclusively performs *bhajana* of Me is in fact the best among mankind.

Furthermore, in concluding the *Gītā*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya / mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo / mokṣayiṣyāmi mā sucaḥ*

Bhagavad-gītā (18.66)

O Arjuna, completely giving up all temporary duties like prescribed worldly duties and prescribed Vedic duties, you should take shelter solely of Me. Do not worry, I will liberate you from all sins that arise from your abandoning your prescribed religious duties.

In *Prīti-sandarbha*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes, “*bhakti tātparyāntama-sahamānā* | – *bhakti* cannot tolerate mixing with other practices like *jñāna* and *karma*.” In bestowing *prema*, which is the fruit of *bhakti*, the assistance of *karma*, *jñāna*, etc. is certainly not needed. Rather, the mere fragrance of *bhakti* – or a semblance of *bhakti* – easily grants the cherished results of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and so on. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava:

*yat karmabhir yat tapasā / jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmaṇa / śreyobhir itarair api*

*sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena / mad-bhakto labhate ’ñjasā
svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma / kathañcid yadi vāñchati*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.32–33)

Through *bhakti-yoga*, My *bhakta* effortlessly attains that which is to be gained by the practices of pious action (*karma*), austerity (*tapasya*), knowledge (*jñāna*), renunciation (*vairāgya*), mystic perfection (*yoga*), religious charity (*dāna-dharma*), pilgrimage to holy places (*tīrtha-yātrā*) or saintly vows (*vrata*). Although My *bhaktas* do not desire anything

apart from serving Me, still, under certain special circumstances, if they so desire, they can easily attain heaven, liberation or even My abode. On the other hand, *karma*, *tapasya*, *jñāna*, etc. are all fruitless without *bhakti*.

5c ~ The futility of any practice devoid of bhakti

tām vinā tu teṣām – “bhagavad-bhakti-hīnasya jātiḥ śāstram japas tapaḥ | aprānasyeva dehasya maṇḍanam loka-rañjanam ||” ity āder vaiphalyāyaiva syād iti | tasyāḥ parama-mahatyā adhīnatvaṁ teṣām samprāṇāyaivāstām |

Bhāvānuvāda: “For a person devoid of *bhakti*, his high birth, scriptural learning, the uttering of *mantras* and austerities are like decorations on a corpse; they are useless. Such external practices are performed only for the sake of delighting the minds of common people” (*Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* 3.11). In other words, although all these attributes are externally capable of attracting the attention of an ignorant person, they are actually incapable of granting any fruit. Therefore, to become fruitful, or full of life, they must accept subordination to supremely glorious *Bhakti-devī*. This means that without *bhakti*, a man’s birth in a high dynasty, scriptural knowledge, chanting of *mantras*, austerity and so forth are all fruitless. Just as the body is subordinate to the life airs (*prāṇa*), so *jñāna*, *japa*, *tapa*, *yoga*, etc. are subordinate to *bhakti*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (3.11) states:

*bhagavad-bhakti-hīnasya / jātiḥ śāstram japas tapaḥ
aprānasyeva dehasya / maṇḍanam loka-rañjanam*

For those devoid of *bhagavad-bhakti*, high birth in the *brāhmaṇa* class, erudition in Vedic and other scriptural texts, self-discipline and austerity are just like decorating a corpse with fine clothes and ornaments for the satisfaction of worldly people.

These scriptural statements convey the futility of practices that are devoid of *bhakti*. Whatever fruit is to be obtained through observance of these practices is obtained only by *bhakti*'s assistance. It is to be understood that the practices of *japa*, *tapasya* and so on are indeed subordinate to the incomparably greater *Bhakti-devī*, just as the body is subordinate to the life airs.

5d ~ In the performance of *bhakti*, considerations such as purity of time and place are not required

api tu karma-yogasya kāla-deśa-pātra-dravyānuṣṭhāna-śuddhy-ādy-apekṣā ca tat-tat-smṛti-prasiddhaiva | asyās tu na tathā – “na deśa-niyamas tatra na kāla-niyamas tathā | nocchiṣṭādau niṣedho ’sti harer nāmani lubdhakaḥ ||” ity ādeḥ | kim cāsyāḥ prasiddha-sāpekṣatvam api na | “sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā | bhṛgu-vara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma ||” ity ādeḥ | kim anyad vaktavyaṁ sva-śuddhi-paryantāpekṣāpi naivāsya dṛṣṭā “śuddham vāśuddha-varṇaṁ vyavahita-rahitaṁ tārayaty eva satyam” ity ādeḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: In performing *karma-yoga*, meaning the various ceremonial activities related to *karma-kāṇḍa* (Vedic fruitive acts aimed at one's own enjoyment), there are requirements regarding purity of time, place, recipient, ingredients, ceremonial formalities and so on. This is specifically seen in the *smṛti-sāstras* related to such activities. But there are no such regulations for *bhakti*: “O hunter, in carrying out *śrī harināma-kīrtana*, there is no consideration of place. Even if someone has food remaining in his mouth or is in an impure state, *nāma-kīrtana* is not prohibited” (*Viṣṇu-dharmottara*).

Furthermore, even reliance on what is normally a prerequisite, such as *śraddhā*, is unnecessary in *bhakti*: “O best of the *Bhṛgu* dynasty, if a person even once utters the name of *Kṛṣṇa* without offence – be it with faith or indifference – that chanting will deliver him from the bondage of material existence” (*Skanda Purāṇa*).

What more can I say? In the performance of *bhakti*, even one's personal purification is of no concern. In whatever manner the holy name is pronounced – clearly or unclearly – uttering it without interruption delivers a person.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Another consideration is that while such practices as *karma* and *jñāna* rely upon place, time, recipient, ingredients, ceremonial formalities, purity and other considerations, the practice of *bhakti* does not. Anybody, in whatever place they may be, at any time, and in any condition, can do *hari-bhajana*. This is well-established in *vaiṣṇava-smṛti*:

*na deśa-niyamas tasmin / na kāla-niyamas tathā
nocchiṣṭātau niṣedho 'sti / śrī-harer nāmni lubdhaka*

Viṣṇu-dharmottara,
quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (11.408)

O hunter, the indescribable greatness of *harināma* is such that its performance is not restricted by place or time. It can be chanted even when a person has food in his mouth and on his hands. In any condition, whether pure or contaminated, there is never any prohibition on the performance of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

Bhakti does not rely on anything to bestow her own complete perfection. For this reason, it has been said:

*sakṛd api pariḡitam śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛgu-vara nara-mātram tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma*

Skanda Purāṇa

O best of the Bhṛgus! Upon being uttered one time, whether with faith or impulsively, the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa delivers a man from all suffering.

The commentary on this verse quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* states:

*yathā kathañcit sakṛt tat kīrtanād apy ānuṣaṅgikatvena sarvasyāpi
mokṣo bhaved evety āha sakṛd apīti | parīty arddhe avyaktam
asampūrṇam uccāritam apīty arthaḥ |*

The purport is that the primary fruit of chanting the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Therefore, whoever performs *kīrtana* of His name one time – in any manner – most certainly obtains liberation (*mokṣa*), which is *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*'s inherent, concomitant fruit. It should be understood that the purport of the component *pari* in the word *parigītam* is that one obtains this result even upon indistinctly or incompletely uttering *nāma*.

5e ~ In karma-yoga, errors in the utterance of mantras give rise to immense obstacles

*karma-yogasya tathā-bhūtatve mahānartha-kāritvam eva | “mantra-hīnaḥ
svarato varṇato vā mitho prayukto na tam artham āha | yathendra-śatruḥ
svarato ’parādhāt sa vāg-vajro yajamānaṁ hinasti ||” ity ādeḥ |*

Bhāvānuvāda: By contrast, both injunctions and prohibitions are present in *karma-yoga*, as are stipulations regarding place and time. Transgressing these considerations generates severe *anarthas*. As stated in the scriptures, if during the performance of a *yajña* (oblations offered into fire) or other rituals a mistake is committed in articulating a particular *mantra*'s acute, grave or circumflex pitch accents, if any syllable is omitted or if the syllables are not arranged accurately, such incorrect utterance acts as a lightning bolt and utterly ruins the beneficiary of the *yajña*, just as Tvaṣṭā Rṣi's incorrect utterance of the syllables *indra-śatro* while trying to say, “May the enemies of Indra increase,” caused the opposite of the result desired.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: In the practice of *bhakti*, which is the supremely powerful function of Śrī Bhagavān’s *svarūpa-śakti*, there is no consideration of place, time or recipient, and there is no possibility that the practitioner of *bhakti* will ever meet with ruination, even if there are flaws in his *bhajana*. Such is not the case, however, in such practices as *karma* and *jñāna*. In the performance of *karma-yoga*, the injunctions and prohibitions regarding place, time or recipient are a consideration. If but a tinge of a flaw remains, it causes a great calamity for the executor of that practice, and sometimes even utter ruin will befall him. The activities of Tvaṣṭā Ṛṣi described in the Sixth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* serve as evidence of this.

Once, having observed Indra’s arrogance, Bṛhaspati, the *guru* of the demigods, hid for some days in order to teach Indra a lesson. The demoniac race, which is inimical to the demigods, received news that Bṛhaspati had become exceedingly displeased with Indra and had gone missing. With the help of their own *guru*, Śukrācārya, the demons attacked and effortlessly defeated the demigods, who had become feeble on account of being abandoned by Bṛhaspati, and they captured the kingdom of heaven.

At that time, the demigods took shelter of Brahmā, who advised them to appoint Tvaṣṭā Ṛṣi’s son Viśvarūpa, as their priest, which they did. Viśvarūpa presented the Nārāyaṇa-kavaca to Indra, and in this way the demigods headed by Indra defeated the demoniac race. Viśvarūpa, although the son of the devout sage Tvaṣṭā, was also related to the demons as their grandson (being the son of a demon’s daughter). That is why at the time of offering oblations, he covertly offered a portion of the sacrifice to the demons.

At one point, Indra noticed this, and in his wrath, he killed Viśvarūpa. Knowing this, Tvaṣṭā Ṛṣi set out to perform a sacrifice to bring about the demise of Indra. Uttering the *mantra* “*indra-śatro vivardhasva* – enemies of Indra, may you increase!” he proceeded to offer oblations into the sacrificial fire.

There are three kinds of pitch accents: *udātta* – “raised” (acute accent, high pitch); *anudātta* – “not raised” (grave accent, low pitch); and *svarita* – “sounded” (circumflex, high-falling pitch). When articulating the words *indra-*

śatro vivardhasva, if the word *indra* is *anudātta* and its articulation abrupt, and if the word *śatru* is *udātta*, meaning its articulation is prolonged, then the child produced from the effect of uttering the *mantra* in this manner will kill Indra. By the will of destiny, however, Tvaṣṭā Ṛṣi's articulation of the word *indra* was *udātta* (high and prolonged) and his articulation of the word “*śatru*” was *anudātta* (low and abrupt). Consequently, the meaning of the *mantra* was reversed: “May an offspring be obtained who will be killed by Indra.” Thus, Vṛtrāsura was born from that sacrifice, and Indra eventually killed him.

Upon there being the most minimal shortcoming – the slightest mistake in articulation – Tvaṣṭā Ṛṣi's sacrifice produced the result he least desired, not the result he cherished. And so it was that the exact opposite came to pass, for Indra vanquished Vṛtrāsura.

However, this is not so on the path of *bhakti*:

mūrkho vadati viṣṇāya / dhīro vadati viṣṇave
ubhayos tu samam puṇyam / bhāva-grāhī janārdanaḥ

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 11.108)

One who is inept [in Sanskrit grammar] intones *viṣṇāya namaḥ* when offering obeisance to Lord Viṣṇu, whereas one who is learned intones *viṣṇave namaḥ*. But both achieve equal piety by their offering of obeisance, because the Supreme Lord, Śrī Janārdana, only accepts a person's inner mood.

A father is very pleased to hear the broken language of his infant child. In fact, hearing the child's chatter gives the father even more delight than hearing the sophisticated language of his elder son. Similarly, in *bhakti*, even if a devotee's articulation of hymns and prayers in praise of Bhagavān lack clarity, Bhāva-grāhī Janārdana, He who accepts only loving sentiments, understands the internal feelings of the devotee and is delighted.

Such is not the case, however, with sacrifices (*yajñas*) composed entirely of fruitive acts. By the slightest imperfection in Tvaṣṭā Ṛṣi's articulation,

the result was reversed. Thus, *bhakti-yoga* has a speciality that makes it vastly different from *karma-yoga*, for the activities of *karma-yoga*, such as the ceremonial offering of oblations into the sacrificial fire, as well as the sacrifices themselves, are dependent on faultless and pure performance.

5f ~ Jñāna-yoga is subservient to karma & the slightest deviation is condemned

evam jñānasyāntaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhy-adhīnatvaṃ prasiddham eva | niṣphala-karma-yogenāntaḥ-karaṇasya śuddhau niṣpādītāyām eva tatra tasya praveśāt karmādhīnatvaṃ ca | tad-adhikṛtasya daivād durācāratva-lave 'pi "sa vai vāntāśy apatrapaḥ" iti nindā | kamsa-hiraṇya-kaśipu-rāvaṇādīnām tat-tat-prakarāṇa-drṣṭyā jñānābhyāsavatām api na tattvena vyapadeśa-lavo 'pi |

Bhāvānuvāda: Similarly, it is well known that one who takes shelter of *jñāna-yoga* is dependent on purity of mind. Without purity of mind, *jñāna-yoga* will bear no fruit. Only upon the mind being purified through *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* (pious action devoid of fruitive desire) does one become eligible to enter the path of *jñāna-yoga*. Therefore, it is seen that *jñāna-yoga* is dependent on *karma*. Furthermore, it is also seen that *śāstra* repeatedly condemns as a shameless vomit-eater any practitioner of *jñāna-yoga* who by chance misbehaves even slightly. *Śāstra* states, “*sa vai vāntāśy apatrapaḥ...* – if a person renounces the *sannyāsa-āśrama*, which is the perfection of *tri-varga* (religion, economic development and sense gratification), and again enters household life, he is called a *vāntāśī*, a shameless person who eats his own vomit” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.36). It is seen in relevant scriptural contexts that, although Kamsa, Hiranyakaśipu, Rāvaṇa and the like were engaged in the cultivation of *jñāna*, they are widely criticized, because they did not possess even a trace of true *jñāna*. *Sādhus* do not sanction even the slightest misconduct in the practitioners of *jñāna*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: *Jñāna-yoga*, also, is essentially dependent on purity of mind. Such is the assertion of the revealed scriptures. The practice of *jñāna* will not be successful as long as the mind remains impure. Hence, the eligibility for initiation into *jñāna-yoga* arises only when one achieves purity of mind through *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* (selflessly performing pious action). In this way, *jñāna-yoga* is dependent on *karma*, also. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.19), Śrī Kṛṣṇa says:

tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ / kāryaṁ karma samācara
asakto hy ācāraṁ karma / param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ

O Arjuna, without attachment – that is, being devoid of the craving to gain the fruits of action – always perform your prescribed duties. By performing those duties in a detached manner, the consciousness becomes pure. Only when the consciousness is pure will one become eligible to cultivate *jñāna*. Thereafter, one attains salvation (*mukti*).

The purport is that as soon as there is the slightest imperfection or corruption in the *sādhakas'* execution of *karma*, *jñāna* and so on, their lives, both in this world and the next, are ruined to such an extent that those *sādhakas* become utterly vanquished. However, on the path of *bhakti*, as soon as *parā-bhakti* (transcendental devotion) enters the heart – which may happen even while faults like lust, anger and depravity remain present there – any faults are dispelled by the mercy of *bhakti*. Nonetheless, *sādhakas* should always make an active effort to abstain from bad behaviour. It is completely inappropriate to engage in immoral acts while performing *bhakti*. By doing so, Bhakti-devī conceals herself.

This implies that criticism of the *sādhaka-bhaktas* is not found [in *śāstra*] even if poor behaviour surfaces in their present life due to misdeeds committed in former lives, or even if traits arise that are governed by impressions from former lives. This is because Bhakti-devī manifests in the heart of non-duplicious practitioners of *bhakti* and instantly purifies

their mind and consciousness. On the other hand, saintly persons do not approve of the slightest kind of ill behaviour in the practitioners of *jñāna*. For instance, although Kāṁsa, Hiranyakaśipu, Rāvaṇa and the like were in fact greatly knowledgeable, because of their depravity, they are denounced everywhere. They are referred to as demons.

5g ~ The eradication of lust, the disease of the heart, through bhakti

bhaktē tu “vikrīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhiḥ” ity ādau – “bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam | hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ ||” ity atra “ktvā” pratyayena hṛd-rogavaty evādhikāriṇi paramāyā api tasyāḥ prathamam eva praveśas tatas tayaiva parama-svatantrayā kāmādīnām apagamaś ca |

Bhāvānuvāda: It is apparent that a person has admission to the path of *bhakti* even when faults like lust remain. We learn from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.39), “*vikrīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhiḥ...* – a person who, with full faith, hears about and narrates the all-pervading Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental pastimes, such as His *rāsa-līlā* with the damsels of Vraja, quickly gains transcendental devotion (*parā-bhakti*) to Him. And concurrently, being sober, or in other words, being in control of his senses, that person is very soon able to alleviate himself of lust, the disease of the heart.”

In this *śloka*, the use of the suffix *ktvā* refers to the word *pratilabhya*, which means “after attaining *bhakti*”. [In Sanskrit grammar,] this is a non-terminating verb. The purport is that even while the disease of the heart, meaning lust and the like, still remains, one is eligible to hear and chant about pastimes of *rāsa*. The point being that after such hearing and reciting, *parā-bhakti* appears in the heart, and then, by the influence of that supremely independent *bhakti*, the diseases of the heart, headed by lust, are indeed dispelled.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: On account of the emergence of faults headed by lust, the practitioner of *karma*, *yoga* or *jñāna*, as well as a person who is eligible to practise them, is criticized in every way and meets with complete ruination. On the path of *bhakti*, however, there is no possibility of this. Rather, a person is eligible for *bhakti* even while faults like lust remain in him. As he begins to perform the limbs of devotion, the supremely independent Bhakti-devī manifests in his heart, and all his faults are soon vanquished.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is herein propounding the above-mentioned principle with evidence from pre-eminent scriptures. In the awakening of *bhakti*, the primary stage is *śraddhā*, and after that, *rati* (the sprout of *prema*). By listening to narrations of the pastimes of Bhagavān from the mouths of enlightened personalities, either *śraddhā* or *rati* arises [depending on the previous *saṁskāras* of the listener]. The essence of all Bhagavān’s *rasa*-laden pastimes is *rāsa-līlā*. After narrating that incomparably sacred pastime, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī revealed the fruit of hearing and describing it:

*vikrīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito ’nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hr̥d-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.33.39)

A sober person who, with full faith, continuously hears or describes Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental *rāsa-līlā* with the damsels of Vraja will first attain transcendental devotion to the lotus feet of Bhagavān. Thereafter, he will quickly conquer his senses and become forever free from the disease of the heart – worldly lust.

As already mentioned, the intended meaning of this verse is that by incessantly and faithfully hearing and reciting Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa-līlā* with the

vraja-gopīs, one obtains *parā-bhakti*, whereby the diseases of the heart, headed by lust, will disappear quite rapidly. In this verse, the terminating verb in the phrase “*kāmaṁ hṛd-rogam āsv apahinoti* – lust, the disease of the heart, is totally given up, quite rapidly” is used after the non-terminating verb within the phrase “*bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya* – gaining *parā-bhakti* for Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa”. By this, the following point is understood: *Parā-bhakti*, or *bhakti* characterized by *prema*, is obtained even while lust remains. Thereafter, by the influence of that *parā-bhakti*, which is supremely independent and extremely powerful, the disease of the heart, meaning lust, or material desires, is destroyed.

In his *Laghu Vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī* commentary on this *Bhāgavatam* verse (10.33.39), Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written, “*atra tu hṛd-rogāpahānāt pūrvam eva parama-bhakti-prāptiḥ, tasmāt parama-balavad evedam sādhanam iti bhāvaḥ* – it is a universal principle that first the disease of the heart, or the impetus to engage in sense-gratification, is destroyed through *sādhana*, and then the desired object (*sādhya-vastu*) is obtained.” But it is stated above that *parā-bhakti* is obtained even while the disease of the heart, lust, remains. It has thereby been pointed out that hearing and reciting *rāsa-līlā* with deep faith is the incomparably powerful *sādhana* for obtaining *parā-bhakti*. Here, *parā-bhakti* is to be understood as none other than *gopī-prema*, the topmost expression of *prema*.

5h ~ Śāstra does not criticize even a depraved person in his performance of bhakti

teṣāṁ kadācit sattve ’pi “api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām” iti “bādhyamāno ’pi mad-bhakta” ity ādibhyaś ca tad-vatām na kvāpi śāstreṣu nindā-leśo ’pi |

Bhāvānuvāda: Furthermore, although lust and so forth sometimes persist even while one performs *sādhana-bhajana*, still “*api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām...* – a person may be extremely depraved, but if he performs *bhajana*

of Me exclusively, he is certainly a *sādhu*” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.30). Also, “*bādhyamāno ’pi mad-bhaktaḥ...* – even if My *bhakta*, due to uncontrolled senses, is attracted to sense objects, because of the predominance of *bhakti*, he is never overwhelmed by those objects” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.18). According to these and other evidential statements of scripture, even when *bhaktas* remain in a state of depravity, not even a slight trace of criticism of them is found anywhere.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Not to speak of the disease of the heart continuing, meaning that lust is still present there, one never even hears criticism [in *śāstra*] of an extremely degraded individual who is on the path of *bhakti* and performing one-pointed *bhajana*. Not even criticism of his *bhajana* is heard. This is clearly evident in the statements of *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30):

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

Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “O Arjuna, whoever performs *bhajana* of Me with one-pointed consciousness, even if he is extremely ill-behaved, should be considered a *sādhu* (saint), since his endeavour with perseverance and care is highly saintly. That person who does not worship any demigod or goddess but only worships Me; who does not perform *jñāna*, *karma*, *yoga*, etc., but only performs *bhakti* to Me; and who does not aspire for anything apart from My satisfaction, should, in fact, be acknowledged as a *sādhu*, or *bhakta*, even if he is affected by degraded behaviour in the form of violence, adultery, theft and so forth. This is My command. As such, although it is absolutely impossible for such wayward behaviour to remain in a person who is resolutely engaged in one-pointed *bhajana* of Me, if it does happen to be observed in him at some point, still he must be acknowledged as a *sādhu*.”

The essence of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary on this *Bhagavad-gītā* verse is that Bhagavān’s attachment to the devotees is totally natural. Consequently, even if a devotee is ill-behaved,

his *bhakti* will never be destroyed, and Bhagavān in time will elevate him to an exalted position. It is solely with the aim of clearly expressing this point that this verse has descended to this world.

That person who does not worship other gods, who does not accept the shelter of practices like *karma* and *jñāna* – but only accepts the shelter of *bhakti* – and who has no longing in his heart besides Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s happiness, is an *ananya-bhakta*. As such, even if impressions due to wicked deeds – violence, adultery, theft and so forth – committed in his previous births persist in the *bhakta*, he is to be understood as saintly. The component *mantavyaḥ* (“must be considered”) in this verse is the edict – that is, the edict of Bhagavān. Not honouring it will prove detrimental. Moreover, not honouring this edict will mean transgressing the words emanating from Bhagavān’s divine lotus mouth. Hence, in regard to such ill-behaved individuals, there exists not the slightest bit of room for suspicion regarding their standing as *sādhu*.

At this point some persons may conjecture, “Is it not that someone is a *sādhu* to the degree he does exclusive *bhajana* of Bhagavān, and to the degree he acts wickedly, he is not a *sādhu*?” In answer to this, it is said *sādhur eva*. That is, by virtue of the word *eva* (“certainly”), he is never to be conceived of as unsaintly, to any degree at all. In fact, he is to be accepted as a *sādhu* entirely. Moreover, there is another reason why Bhagavān is advocating that he be honoured as a *sādhu*: “His intelligence is thoroughly fixed in *bhakti* to Me.” In other words, the merit of such a person’s resolve is that even if he has to go to hell for his unrelenting sins, he will not give up one-pointed *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* at any cost.

In essence, although this verse from *Bhagavad-gītā* describes the magnificence of *ananya-bhakti* (one-pointed devotion), it is not giving a licence for misbehaviour. In truth, it is never possible for the hearts of the *bhaktas* to be inclined toward bad behaviour for long. That is why the word *api* (“even”) has been used at the beginning of this *Gītā* verse. Even if, by chance, such depravity occurs within the conduct of a *sādhaka* who remains under the control of any bad impressions, due to either the activities of his

previous births or heinous association, then the supremely independent and very powerful Bhakti-devī removes those ill thoughts from his heart quite swiftly. By the fire of repentance, the heart of that *sādhaka* rapidly becomes pure. That is why in the subsequent verse of the *Gītā*, Śrī Bhagavān has said:

*kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā / śaśvac chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi / na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*

Bhagavad-gītā (9.31)

Arjuna, such a person fixed in *bhajana* of Me swiftly becomes virtuous. He obtains perpetual serenity and never meets with ruination. For this very reason, you can say with solemn assurance that My *bhaktas* are never ruined.

That person who does not deliberate on these statements of *Gītā* or understand their underlying meaning or purport, and who, considering this verse a licence, knowingly engages in corrupt acts while doing *bhajana*, feeling no remorse, has not a fraction of saintliness in him. Furthermore, by habitually committing sinful acts on the strength of the holy name, he commits terrible offences. This is to be understood as fact. Only when *śrī nāma* becomes pleased by his unending performance of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, along with his forsaking ill-behaviour and the like, can his incessant repenting and his experience of intense misery again qualify him as saintly. There is no other way. This point should also be understood in this light.

On the path of *jñāna*, a *jñānī* is criticized as long as the slightest depravity remains in him, and for that, he is not recognized as a *jñānī*, as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.18.40) states:

*yas tv asaṁyata-śaḍ-vargaḥ / pracaṇḍendriya-sārathiḥ
jñāna-vairāgya-rahitas / tri-daṇḍam upajīvati*

A renunciant who has taken refuge in the path of *jñāna*, but whose mind and senses remain uncontrolled, is devoid of knowledge and

renunciation and is impelled by his charioteer-like intelligence. He makes a show of bearing a *daṇḍa*, solely for the purpose of maintaining his livelihood.

On the other hand, a person's standing as a *bhakta* is not forbidden and criticism of him is not found, even if he is badly behaved. The author substantiates this with the following verse:

*bādhyamāno 'pi mad-bhakto / viṣayair ajitendriyaḥ
prāyaḥ pragalbhayā bhaktyā / viṣayair nābhibhūyate*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.18)

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:] O Uddhava, by the influence of powerful *bhakti* to Me, even My *bhaktas* who are not completely competent in subduing their senses are not overwhelmed by sense objects.

5i ~ Ajāmila is accepted as a bhakta even though he chanted a mere semblance of the holy name

ajāmilasya bhaktatvaṁ viṣṇu-dūtair nirūpitam | 'saṅketa-bhagavan-nāma putra-snehānuṣaṅgajam' ity ādi-dṛṣṭyā tad-ābhāsavatām apy ajāmilādīnām bhaktatvaṁ sarvaiḥ saṅgītam eva |

Bhāvānuvāda: The messengers of Viṣṇu (the Viṣṇudūtas) are fully versed in *tattva*. In comparison with the Yamadutas, they do not err in ascertaining what is real and unreal. Therefore, what they determine is the truth. They thus established Ajāmila's standing as a *bhakta*: "Although he remained a man of depraved character, out of fondness for his son, he uttered the name 'Nārāyaṇa', albeit in reference to his own son." Thus, such utterances, although a mere semblance (*ābhāsa*) of Bhagavān's name, reveal the glorious position of Ajāmila and others like him as *bhaktas* and as those who are to be extolled by all.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Even when a mere semblance of *bhakti* exists in an extremely fallen individual (*durācārī*), his standing as a devotee is not impeded, not to speak of one who is practising *bhakti* with serious intensity. An example of this is Ajāmila, whose standing as a devotee was confirmed by the Viṣṇudūtas, even though he was dissolute. Being overcome by affection for his son, Ajāmila uttered Bhagavān’s name in reference to his son, since his son’s name was Nārāyaṇa. Ajāmila was a depraved individual, but his standing as a *bhakta*, merely by his uttering a semblance of Bhagavān’s name, is celebrated through this evidence from the revealed scriptures.

5j ~ Paths such as karma-yoga are dependent on bhakti

*tad evaṁ karma-yogādīnām antaḥkaraṇa-śuddhi-dravya-deśa-śuddhy-ādayaḥ
sādhakās tad-vaiguṇyādayo bādhakā bhaktis tu prāṇa-dāyiny eveti | sarvathā
pāratantryam eva teṣām | na hi svatantrāḥ kenāpi sādhyante bādhyante veti |*

Bhāvānuvāda: It is accepted, therefore, that in regard to *karma*, *yoga* and other paths, the mental purity of the practitioner and the purity of the ingredients, place and so forth are vital to the success of the practice, and any fault, wantonness, etc. in these factors hinders that success. And even if perfectly performed, these disciplines can never bestow any fruit without *bhakti*, for *bhakti* alone breathes life into them. Therefore, it can be perceived in every way that disciplines like *karma*, *yoga* and *jñāna* depend on *bhakti*. There are factors that make these processes successful, and there are factors that hinder them. These processes are not in themselves independent.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In this manner, the *siddhānta* is firmly established that some factors render practices such as *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* effective, and some factors render them defective. Purity of consciousness (*citta*) and so forth make them effective, and the distortion brought about by desire for enjoyment and the like makes them defective. That practice (*sādhana*) in

which effective and defective factors govern its success can never be referred to as dependent on itself only.

On the other hand, the practice of *bhakti*, which is autonomous and very powerful, does not require purity of consciousness and so forth. This is because hearing and chanting can go on even when the heart remains impure. Even when lust and so forth remain, the practice of *bhakti* is not impeded, since alongside the presence of lust, the activities of *bhajana*, such as hearing and chanting, are performed. Therefore, the *sādhana* of *bhakti* is supremely autonomous. There is not even the slightest doubt about this. That which is supremely autonomous is neither made effective nor defective by anything, at any time.

5k ~ The superiority of *bhakti* over *mokṣa*

kim ca jñānaika-sādhana-mātratvaṃ bhakter ity ajñair evocyate yato jñāna-sādhyān mokṣād api tasyāḥ paramotkarṣa evālocyate | “muktim dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogam” iti | “muktānām api siddhānām nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ | sudurlabho prasāntātmā koṭiṣv api mahāmune ||” ity ādibhyah |

Bhāvānuvāda: Only an ignorant person claims that *jñāna* activates *bhakti*. *Śāstra* indeed determines the supreme eminence of *bhakti*, even over *mokṣa*, which is the ultimate goal of *jñāna*.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.6.18) states, “Śrī Hari may give *salokya-mukti* and so forth to those who perform *bhajana* of Him, but He does not easily bestow *prema-bhakti-yoga*.” Moreover, it has been said, “O great sage, even among hundreds of millions of perfected and liberated personalities, it is extremely rare to find even one *bhakta* who is dedicated to serving Śrī Nārāyaṇa, his mind thus totally serene” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.14.5).

In *śāstra*, one encounters numerous statements like these, which conclusively establish *bhakti*'s supremacy over *jñāna* or *bhakti*'s absolute supremacy over *mukti*, the ultimate fruit of *jñāna*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Previously, the pre-eminent author, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, has explained that the practices of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and so on have the nature of being dependent on something else – since certain elements render them effective and certain elements render them defective – but that the practice of *bhakti* is supremely independent (*svatantra*) due to the absence of anything that can render it effective or defective.

Ignorant persons, unable to understand the actual imports of *śāstra*, say that *jñāna* activates *bhakti*. Refuting the philosophical conclusions of such ignorant persons, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is establishing the absolute supremacy of *bhakti* with evidence from scripture.

Some people say that *jñāna* activates *bhakti*. In their opinion, the inclination for *bhakti* is actually impossible without knowledge of the soul (*ātma-tattva*), knowledge of the Absolute Truth (*para-tattva*) and so on. They explain this by saying that while secondary *sādhana*s are certainly never required in the practice of *bhakti*, there is no way to activate *bhakti* other than by developing *jñāna*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, considering such people uninformed, is refuting their ideas and demonstrating the independence of *bhakti*.

An extensive analysis of *jñāna* is now presented. By the word *jñāna*, three branches of knowledge are understood: (a) *tat-padārtha-jñāna*, meaning knowledge of the Absolute Truth (Parabrahma, or *bhagavat-tattva*), (b) *tvaṁ-padārtha-jñāna*, meaning knowledge of the intrinsic, spiritual form (*svarūpa*) of the living entity and (c) *sambandha-jñāna*, meaning knowledge of the relationship between the Absolute Truth and the living entity.

- (a) Tat-padārtha-jñāna – knowledge of the intrinsic form of the Absolute Truth Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the object of worship

Tat-padārtha-jñāna is the transcendental knowledge that Parabrahma Śrī Kṛṣṇa possesses a beautiful form and that He is composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss (*sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*). It refers to knowledge of His quality of being Svayam Bhagavān or Parabrahma, even while acting like a human,

and of His quality of being the embodiment of the totality of all *rasa*. It refers to knowledge of His unlimited beauty, of His unlimited *mādhurya*, of His unlimited form, qualities and pastimes, and of His unlimited kindness. It refers to knowledge of all His other qualities, like His affection for His devotees. It also refers to knowledge of His holy abode, associates, internal potency (*svarūpa-śakti*) and external potency (*māyā-śakti*).

(b) *Tvaṁ-padārtha-jñāna* – knowledge of the *jīva*

Tvaṁ-padārtha-jñāna refers to knowledge of the *jīva*'s qualities of being a particle of consciousness, of emanating from the *taṭastha-śakti* (the Lord's marginal potency), of being the Lord's separated expansion (*vibhinnamśa*), of being the eternal servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, of having a minute degree of independence, and so on.

(c) *Sambandha-jñāna* – knowledge of the relationship between
Bhagavān and the living entity

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the very form of the Absolute Truth, is the Lord, and the living entity is His eternal servant. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is infinite, and the *jīva* is infinitesimal. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the controller of *māyā*, and the living entity is controlled by *māyā*. Forgetfulness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet is the sole cause of the living entity's entanglement in *māyā* and his unending misery, whereas *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the sole means of his becoming liberated from *māyā* and obtaining supreme bliss. Knowledge of all this is referred to as knowledge of the relationship between the Supreme Lord and the living entity, or *sambandha-jñāna*.

Some people speak about knowledge of the oneness of Absolute Reality and the living entity (*brahma-jīva-aikya-jñāna*). They do not accept the existence of Parabrahma's potency (*śakti*) or the existence of His personal aspect: His beautiful form and varied qualities. According to their conception, Absolute Reality is without qualities and without form; there is no distinction between the living entity and *brahma*; and *brahma-sāyujya-mukti*

(merging in *brahma*) is the living entity’s ultimate goal. These people are offenders to Bhagavān, because they think that the insignificant living entities are the Absolute Truth and that Parabrahma Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rāma and so on, who have transcendental qualities, are but peculiarities of the illusory energy. Knowledge about the oneness of the Absolute Reality and the living entity is averse to *bhakti*, and is therefore to be abandoned entirely.

The association of devotees (*sat-saṅga*) is one of the primary limbs of *bhakti-sādhana*. By the mercy of a supremely independent *mahāpuruṣa*, the above-mentioned three kinds of *jñāna* independently blossom in the heart of the *bhakti-sādhaka*. This is because the *sādhaka* has associated with a *mahāpuruṣa* and has heard the *bhagavat-kathā* that flows ceaselessly from his mouth. If it were possible to be inclined toward the activities of *bhakti*, such as *sat-saṅga* and *bhajana-kriyā*, by separately obtaining that *jñāna*, then it could be said that *jñāna* activates *bhakti*. Occasionally, such *jñāna* is somewhat helpful upon one’s entering the path of *bhakti*, but it cannot be called the activator of *bhakti*, since it is not a limb of *bhakti* or *bhajana*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes:

jñāna-vairāgyayor bhakti- / praveśāyopayogitā
īṣat prathamam eveti / nāṅgatvam ucitam tayoh

yad ubhe citta-kāṭhinya- / hetū prāyaḥ satām mate
sukumāra-svabhāveyam / bhaktis tad-dhetur īritā

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.248–249)

In other words, when knowledge (*jñāna*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*) are not inharmonious with the path of *bhakti*, or when they are in fact favourable to *bhakti*, their usefulness for starting one on the path of *bhakti* is accepted. But after a person has set off on the path of *bhakti*, *jñāna* and *vairāgya* are no longer necessary; hence they are never limbs of *bhakti*. According to the conception of *mahāpuruṣas*, after one enters the domain of *bhakti*, the continued practice of *jñāna* and *vairāgya* hardens the heart.

Therefore, it is solely *bhakti*, which is so tender, that is the cause of entering the domain of *bhakti*, or crossing the threshold to *bhakti*. That is why it has been said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.14.3):

*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*

[Śrī Brahmā is eulogizing Śrī Kṛṣṇa:] O unconquerable one, in this universe there are those who do not make even a slight separate endeavour to obtain knowledge of Your nature and form, Your majesty and Your greatness. They maintain their existence by staying near Your *bhaktas* and hearing and serving with their body, mind and words the narrations of Your names, forms, qualities and pastimes, which automatically flow from Your *bhaktas'* lips. Although You are ordinarily unconquerable, meaning no one in the three worlds can defeat You, You are conquered by such individuals.

Therefore, it is only the uninformed who say that *jñāna* activates *bhakti*. Knowers of the Truth do not make this claim, because countless scriptures establish *bhakti's* supreme excellence over even *mukti*, the ultimate goal of *jñāna*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is giving an example of this from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.6.18):

*rājan patir gurur alaṁ bhavatām yadūnām
daivam priyaḥ kula-patiḥ kva ca kiṅkaro vaḥ
astv evam aṅga bhagavān bhajatām mukundo
muktim dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogam*

O Parīkṣit, Bhagavān Mukunda Himself was the master, the *guru*, the worshipful deity, the best friend and the family head of the Pāṇḍava and Yadu dynasties. Sometimes, He would even act as their obedient servant and become their messenger. The most beneficent Bhagavān may easily

give *mukti* to those dedicated to attaining His favour, but He rarely gives *prema-bhakti*.

In essence, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on this verse that Mahārāja Parīkṣit felt deep sorrow at the time of hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, because he knew that no *avatāra* of Bhagavān had ever appeared in his Puru dynasty. Understanding this, the all-knowing Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, in order to demonstrate the superiority of *bhakti* over *mukti*, caused this verse to descend. In this way, he dispelled Parīkṣit Mahārāja’s sorrow and brought him joy. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s intention was to assert that the family in which *bhakti* [that is, the *bhakta*] descends is superior to the family in which Bhagavān descends. The family in which *bhakti* descends is more praiseworthy, because Bhagavān is conquered through *bhakti* alone.

It is true that no incarnation of Bhagavān had ever descended in the Puru dynasty, but a *bhakta* certainly had.

Śrī Bhagavān is the maintainer of the Pāṇḍu dynasty in the same way that He is the maintainer of the Yadu dynasty. He is also their instructor, their object of worship, their best friend and their leader. He went as far as to act as their messenger, thus becoming their servant. It is never seen that a process other than *bhakti* can control Bhagavān like this. Such *bhakti* is extremely rare. Bhagavān may well grant liberation (*mukti*) to those who worship Him, which is why one of His names is Mukunda, but He rarely gives *prema-bhakti*.

In the verse under discussion, it is not the case that the word *karhicit* (“at any time”) implies that Śrī Bhagavān never gives *prema-bhakti*. He does not give it as long as the intense hankering to obtain *prema-bhakti* does not awaken within the heart. In other words, it is all very well that a devotee may be doing *bhajana*, but if any ambitions apart from serving Kṛṣṇa remain in his heart – even as a scent – Bhagavān does not bestow *prema* upon him. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has therefore written in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi-līlā 8.18):

*kṛṣṇa jadi chuṭe bhakte bhukti mukti diyā
kabhu bhakti nā dena rākhena lukāiyā*

As long as the hankering for enjoyment and liberation remain in the heart of the *bhaktas* engaging in *bhajana*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not give them *prema-bhakti*. Rather, He conceals it from them.

When a child falls ill, an affectionate mother keeps *rasagullās*, sweet-
rice and so on hidden from him. She gives him those things when he is
healthy, otherwise not. In the same way, Bhagavān keeps *bhakti* hidden from
unfit *bhaktas*. It is not normally the case that Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not want to give
prema-bhakti to His own devotees. This is seen elsewhere in Śrī *Caitanya-
caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 22.37), also:

*anya-kāmī jadi kare kṛṣṇera bhajana
nā māgileha kṛṣṇa tāre dena sva-caraṇa*

If those who long for something other than *bhakti* perform *bhajana* of
Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa grants them service to His divinely graceful feet, even
without their asking for it.

Some people think that if Śrī Kṛṣṇa can satisfy a devotee simply by giving
him sense enjoyment (*bhukti*) or liberation (*mukti*), He would never grant
him *prema-bhakti*, since He becomes controlled by *prema-bhakti*. According
to their idea, subservience to the devotees is troublesome for Him. In truth,
however, *prema-bhakti* is the function of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *hlādinī-śakti* (pleasure
potency). Therefore, He derives far more bliss from *prema-bhakti* than from
His own intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*). Since His submission to the *bhakta* is
His supreme happiness, He always hankers for it. It is not possible that
this quality of submission brings Him pain or that He rejects it. This is the
definite conclusion of the *bhakti-śāstras*.

Since *bhakti* is so superior to *mukti*, which is the ultimate goal of *jñāna*,
how can *jñāna* be the activator of *bhakti*?

Having refuted the conception that *jñāna* activates *bhakti* and having established the superiority of *bhakti* over *mukti*, the ultimate goal of *jñāna*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is now establishing the vast superiority of the devotee of Bhagavān over the liberated personality (the *mukta-puruṣa*).

King Parīkṣit said to Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī:

*muktānām api siddhānām / nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabha praśāntātmā / koṭiṣv api mahā-muneḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.14.5)

O greatest of sages, among the billions upon billions of those who are emancipated even in this life (*jīvan-mukta*) and who have nearly attained the liberation of merging into the *brahma* effulgence (*brahma-sāyujya-mukti*), only one performs worship of Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa. Such a person, whose mind is totally serene and who takes refuge solely in Nārāyaṇa, is extremely rare. There may be a few such persons.

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written:

*muktānām prakṛta-śarīra-sthatve `pi tad-abhimāna-sūnyānām |
siddhānām prāpta-sālokyādīnām ca koṭiṣv api madhye nārāyaṇa-
sevā-mātrākāṅkṣī sudurlabhaḥ | praśāntātmā sarvopadrava-rahitaḥ ||*

The purport is that a person who is free from identification with the mortal body in which he resides should be understood as liberated, a *jīvan-mukta-puruṣa*. But to achieve *brahma-sāyujya-mukti*, even a *jīvan-mukta-puruṣa* must wait until the fruits of his actions (*prārabdha*) are destroyed.

By *brahma-jñāna* alone, the fruits of a *jñānī*'s actions cannot be destroyed. The reason for this is as follows: *Brahma-jñāna* is attained by the wisdom to discern spirit from non-spirit. By the fruit of this wisdom, his heart becomes pure and he obtains knowledge of the undifferentiated spirit (*abheda-brahma*), whereby the *jīva* has a conception of oneness with *brahma* (Absolute Spirit).

Although some knowledge of the Absolute Reality's special quality does dwell in this undifferentiated *brahma-jñāna*, it does not lead to any activity in the form of worship or service. Hence, no potency of the Supreme Lord manifests in the *sādhaka's* body by which the *sādhaka's* unsurmountable *prārabdha* can be destroyed.

Therefore, even upon acquiring *brahma-jñāna* – meaning, even after an enormous portion of the *sādhaka's* unlimited mass of accumulated seeds of sin (*bīja*), the tendency to sin (*kūṭa*) and so forth, have been destroyed – the *sādhaka* must still wait for the *prārabdha* that resulted in his present body to be destroyed before he attains *sāyujya-mukti*. Such *sādhakas* are referred to as *jīvan-mukta* (liberated in this life). Even while their mortal body persists, such *mukta-puruṣas* retain no identification with their body.

The word *siddhānām* should be understood to mean “those who have nearly attained liberation”. A devotee of Nārāyaṇa – that is, a devotee who is free from any ambition apart from the desire to serve Śrī Nārāyaṇa – is rarer than billions upon billions of such liberated personalities (*jīvan-muktas*) and perfected personalities (*siddha-puruṣas*). This is because the mind of such a *bhakta* is serene, or free from all forms of disturbance.

Here, one may ask the following question: What disturbance can possibly remain for a perfected personality, or one who is liberated in this life? Scripture states that upon offending the inconceivably powerful lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, even such individuals will again become enraptured by worldliness (*samsāra*).

*jīvan-muktā api punar- / bandhanam yānti karmabhiḥ
yady acintya-mahāśaktau / bhagavaty-aparādhinaḥ*

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's *Laghu-toṣaṇī* commentary
on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.2.32)

Even if a person is liberated in this life, he again becomes bound to worldliness, being addicted to material desires because of offences to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Therefore, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has instructed Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

*kṛṣṇa-bhakta—niṣkāma, ataeva ‘sānta’
bhukti-mukti-siddhi-kāmī—sakali ‘aśānta’*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 19.149)

Since a devotee of Kṛṣṇa is free from all [material] desires, he is peaceful. Those who desire material enjoyment, liberation from worldliness and mystic perfections are restless.

Devotees of Bhagavān are therefore far superior to those who have perfected *jñāna*. Even one who delights in the featureless aspect of the Absolute gives up the path of *jñāna* and begins to perform *hari-bhajana* upon attaining the slightest taste for *bhakti*.

*brahmānanda haite pūrṇānanda līlā-rasa
brahma-jñānī ākarṣiyā kare ātma-vaśa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 17.137)

The *rasa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, which is replete with transcendental happiness, allures the *jñānī* absorbed in realization of *brahma* and completely conquers him.

For those who have not tasted an iota of *bhakti*, the bliss of the featureless aspect of the Absolute (*brahmānanda*) appears to be great happiness. But in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated:

*ātmārāmās ca munayo / nirgranthā apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukīm bhaktim / ittham-bhūta-guṇo hariḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.7.10)

Even *munis* who were deeply absorbed in contemplating *brahma* and immersed in the delight of realizing *brahma*, although already liberated from anger and false ego, performed causeless devotional service to

Bhagavān. This is because Bhagavān's qualities are so full of *mādhurya* (an indescribable charm) that they attract everyone to Him.

In *Lalita-mādhava-nāṭaka* (5.2), it has also been written:

*rddhā-siddhi-vraja-vijayitā satya-dhamara-samādhir
brahmānando gurur api camatkārayaty eva tāvat
yāvat premnā madhu-ripu-vaśīkāra-siddhauṣadhīnām
gandho 'py antaḥkaraṇa-saraṇī-pāthatām na prayāti*

Inherently, *prema* is the perfect elixir to bring Śrī Kṛṣṇa under one's control. As such, as long as there is no trace of *prema* within the core of the heart, flourishing material mystic perfections (*siddhis*), beginning with the ability to become smaller than an atom (*aṇimā*), seem most exalted, and *samādhi* (trance) – the fruit of practising *dharma*s beginning with truthfulness – as well as the great happiness of realizing *brahma*, can produce astonishment within one's heart.

It has therefore been established conclusively that the excellence of the *bhaktas* is millions upon millions of times greater than that of liberated personalities (*mukta-puruṣas*). In His teachings to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu presented a gradation of excellence:

*ei-mata brahmāṇḍa bhari' ananta jīva-gaṇa
caurāśī-lakṣa yonīte karaye bhramaṇa

tāre madhye 'sthāvara', 'jaṅgama'—dui bheda
jaṅgame tiryak-jala-sthalacara-vibheda

tāra madhye manuṣya-jāti ati alpatara
tāra madhye mleccha, pulinda, bauddha, śabara

veda-niṣṭha-madhye ardheka veda 'mukhe' māne
veda-niṣiddha pāpa kare, dharma nāhi gaṇe*

*dharmācāri-madhye bahuta 'karma-niṣṭha'
koṭi-karma-niṣṭha-madhye eka 'jñānī' śreṣṭha*

*koṭi-jñānī-madhye haya eka-jana 'mukta'
koṭi-mukta-madhye 'durlabha' eka kṛṣṇa-bhakta*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 19.138, 144–148)

This universe is teeming with countless billions of living entities, which are of two kinds: those that cannot move about (*sthāvara*), such as trees, and those that can move about (*jaṅgama*), such as humans, birds and animals. Among the 8.4 million species of living entities, which include aquatic life, beasts and so on, there are very few kinds of human beings. And even among humankind, there are races and groups like *mlecchas* (uncivilized persons), *pulindas* (primitive clans), Buddhists, and *śabaras* (mountain tribesmen) who do not abide by the Vedas. Among the remaining members of humankind who do acknowledge the Vedas, half pay lip service to them but fail to carry out the injunctions of the Vedas in regard to *dharma* (religion), *karma* (prescribed occupational duties) and so on. Rather, they engage in sinful acts opposed to the Vedas. Among the remaining people who do undertake the practice of *veda-dharma*, most are intent on performing *karma* (fruitive acts), such as *yajñas*. Among tens of millions of such humans who are devoted to *karma*, there is hardly one *jñānī*. And again, among tens of millions of *jñānīs*, it is a rare person indeed who reaches the stage of perfection and becomes free of bodily identification and so on. Among tens of millions of such liberated persons, one rare individual will happen to be a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

Among billions of *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*, one will be a true *kṛṣṇa-bhakta*, whose heart is completely tranquil. In other words, having given up all other desires, such a devotee wants nothing apart from Śrī Kṛṣṇa and service to Him. He alone is known as totally serene, being fully dedicated to serving Kṛṣṇa.

Those who hanker for material enjoyment (*bhukti*) or liberation (*mukti*) cannot be considered totally serene. They remain restless, since one who covets *bhukti* or *mukti* can never be peaceful. Those who hanker for *aṇimā* (becoming smaller than an atom) and other mystic perfections desire self-satisfaction, as well as fame and worship. Without doubt, they always remain dissatisfied. Aspirants for *mukti* are also, in truth, restless. Desiring opulence befitting the transcendental abode, *jīvas* who obtain *sālokya-mukti*, *sārṣṭi-mukti*, *sārūpya-mukti* or *sāmīpya-mukti*, certainly remain restless. And those who desire *sāyujya-mukti*, wherein their own existence is not retained, are also regarded as unfulfilled, because, while they do not long for personal happiness, they surely long for the cessation of their misery. Being troubled by the anguish of material existence, they engage themselves in *sādhana* leading to *sāyujya-mukti*, in order to become free of that misery. The sole root of the striving for *sāyujya-mukti* is the desire to suspend one's own suffering. How can a person be said to be at peace when he longs for the suspension of his unhappiness?

Someone may say that the intent to obtain oneness with *brahma* is in fact a longing for *mukti*, not a longing for the suspension of unhappiness. In this case, also, it must be accepted that a person's motive for performing *sādhana* is a longing for the glory of attaining *brahma*. This longing for exaltation also makes the mind restless. The longing to suspend unhappiness, or the longing for the glory of attaining identification with *brahma*, persists until the last stage of *sādhana*. This is because one who covets *sāyujya-mukti* cannot have any goal besides this. Therefore, an aspirant for *mukti*, also, is not at peace.

Furthermore, as long as the living entity has not attained an eternal, continuous and infinitely varied bliss, and as long as his consciousness has not become thoroughly absorbed in that bliss, his restlessness of mind will not vanish. It is not possible. The living entity can find this bliss only while exclusively relishing the *rasa* of Bhagavān's pastimes, through *bhakti*. The minds of those who have relished such *bhakti-rasa* (the mellows of devotion), or *līlā-rasa* (the mellows of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's sweet pastimes), cannot be agitated even by the bliss of identifying with *brahma* (*brahmānanda*). On the other

hand, by relishing *bhakti*, which is full of *līlā-rasa*, the *jñānīs* absorbed in *brahmānanda* become restless and a craving arises in them to relish *bhakti-rasa*, to which they are then drawn:

brahmānanda haite pūrṇānanda līlā-rasa

brahma-jñānī ākarṣiyā kare ātma-vaśa

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 17.137)

This, also, confirms that the mind of the *brahma-jñānī* can remain steady in *brahmānanda* only as long as the topics consisting of the *mādhurya* of the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the inexhaustible ocean of *bhakti-rasa*, do not enter his ears. Śrīla Śukadeva Muni and the four Kumāras headed by Sanaka are evidence of this point. From the time of their birth, they were totally absorbed in *brahma* realization, but drawn by the qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they became engaged in *bhajana*.

Thus, the possibility remains that even the mind of a *brahma-jñānī* can be restless. It is for this reason that they too have been described as not peaceful. By contrast, the devotee who tastes *bhakti-rasa* has truly forgotten his own self. This is because he eternally serves Śrī Kṛṣṇa and thus relishes the *rasa* of His pastimes. Consequently, he is not just truly at peace (*śānta*), but totally serene (*praśānta*). In other words, he is peaceful to the superlative degree.

5l ~ Jñāna is nourished by the mercy of bhakti

*indram eva pradhānīkṛtya svayaṁ guṇībhavatopendreṇa taṁ sarvathā puṣṇatā
sva-kṛpālutvam eva yathābhijñā-janeṣu pratyāyate na tu svāpakarṣas tathāiva
jñānam puṣṇantyās tat-tat-prakarāṇa-vākyeṣu tasyā bhakter anugraha eva
sudhībhir anugamyata iti || 5 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: [In the above text, *bhakti*'s supreme excellence has been declared. Why, then, do we see that in certain parts of *śāstra*, *jñāna* is described as primary? This is now being answered with the following analogy.]

Although Śrī Bhagavān is *sarva-śaktimān*, the omnipotent and collective reservoir of all transcendental qualities, He made Indra His elder. Accepting subservience to him, Bhagavān came in the form of Upendra (Vāmana), the younger brother of Indra, and maintained Indra, king of the demigods, in every way. Wise persons understand this as Bhagavān’s quality of mercy; it is not at all indicative of His inferiority. Similarly, we should understand from scriptural statements that establish *jñāna* as prominent and *bhakti* as being merely a supportive limb of *jñāna*, that it is solely to nourish *jñāna* that the supremely independent and transcendental Bhakti-devī, by accepting the mode of goodness, has mercifully become a limb of *jñāna*. Wise and learned persons have ascertained this to be the grace of *bhakti*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: It is with highly nuanced deliberation that Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura presents this analysis, in which he firmly establishes the independent nature of Bhakti-devī. A question may arise in regard to those who perform the practice of *jñāna* mixed with *bhakti*. We find scriptural statements such as “*kṛṣṇa-bhakti binā tāhā dite nāre phala* – without the help of *bhakti*, no practice can bestow its fruit” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya-līlā* 22.18). Accordingly, to attain liberation, which is the fruit of *jñāna*, practitioners of *jñāna* practise *bhakti* also. In such practice, *bhakti* is present as a limb of *jñāna*. *Jñāna* is predominant and Bhakti-devī is in a secondary position. How, then, will the independent nature of *bhakti* be established? Furthermore, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *bhakti* of such a *jñānī* is called *sāttvikī-bhakti*, or devotion in the mode of goodness. In this case, how will the transcendental (*nirguṇa*) aspect of *bhakti* also be proved? The revered author has beautifully reconciled this with an analogy.

In the Eighth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the pastimes of Śrī Vāmanadeva have been described. Despite Śrī Vāmanadeva’s supreme independence, unlimited potencies, and embodying all transcendental qualities, by His own free will, He appeared in the form of Śrī Upendra, the younger brother of Indra, king of the demigods. Only for Indra’s benefit did

Vāmanadeva accept subordination to him. On the pretext of begging three steps of land from Mahārāja Bali, Vāmanadeva, with His first two steps, took possession of the earth and the heavenly planets. And with His third step, He sent Bali Mahārāja to the lower planetary system of Pātālaloka. He then gave the kingdom of heaven to Indra and thus maintained him. Śrī Vāmanadeva accepted the name Upendra⁷. By his own free will, He became Indra’s younger brother and always offered him the respect due an elder brother. Would learned persons, upon seeing Bhagavān Upendra maintaining and supporting Indra in this way, actually consider Him inferior to Indra? Rather, they understand that the respect Bhagavān Upendra (Vāmana) gave to Indra, as well as Upendra’s efforts to maintain him, to be His mercy upon Indra. In this way, His supreme excellence is established, not His inferiority.

To the extent the *jīva* manifests his full potential by performing *sādhana*, his quality of being a *jīva* – that is, his true consciousness – manifests. In a similar manner, to the extent that the compassion of Śrī Bhagavān descends to the lowly and degraded, Bhagavān’s quality of being Bhagavān (His *bhagavattā*) also manifests.

In essence, the omnipotent and all-capable Bhagavān protected Indra and maintained him by becoming his younger brother. If we closely examine this pastime, we see that Bhagavān Upendra was simply being compassionate to Indra. Despite being supremely independent, omniscient and all-capable, Śrī Bhagavān, by His own independent desire, became the younger brother of Indra and even took on the name Upendra. In this way, He established Indra’s pre-eminence. By His doing so, Śrī Bhagavān is not diminished in any way. Rather, it reveals His *bhakta-vātsalyatā*, or quality of being affectionate to His devotee. Similarly, *bhakti* nourishes *jñāna*, because without taking shelter of *bhakti*, *jñāna* cannot grant any result.

Like Śrī Bhagavān Himself, His *svarūpa-śakti* – *bhakti* – is also supremely compassionate. The one and only cause of attaining either the aspect of the Absolute Truth that is devoid of qualities (*nirviśeṣa*) or the aspect that is

7 *Upa-indra* – literally, “the smaller Indra”, meaning Indra’s younger brother. –Ed.

replete with all qualities (*saviśeṣa*) is *bhakti*. Śrī Bhagavān states, “*Bhaktiyā mām abhijānāti* – I am understood only by *bhakti*” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.55) and “*bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ* – I am achieved only by *bhakti*” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21). These and other verses in Śrī Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam support this.

In this way, by performing the *sādhana* of *jñāna* but not the *sādhana* of *bhakti*, one will only achieve tribulation. For this reason, intelligent *jñāna-sādhakas* perform the *sādhana* of *bhakti*, along with their worship of *nirviśeṣa-brahma*. In such *jñāna-sādhana*, the practice of *bhakti* is accomplished in an auxiliary manner; however, it is solely by the influence of such *bhakti* that *jñāna-sādhana* achieves perfection. It is for this reason that in *jñāna-sādhana*, where the worshipper is seen as being non-different from the object of worship, *bhakti* does not appear in her primary form. Rather, she appears in a secondary form as a limb of *jñāna*. By not manifesting His power of independence, Upendra gave prominence to Indra, and by His own desire He became secondary. This indicates that Upendra bestowed mercy upon Indra. Likewise, *Bhakti-devī*, by mercifully not manifesting her potency of independence and by her own desire, remains in a subordinate position as a limb of *jñāna*, and thus nourishes the practice of *jñāna*. As a result of the *jñānī*'s practice, *bhakti* bestows upon him knowledge promoting the oneness of the individual soul and *brahma* (*brahma-aikya-jñāna*) and liberation.

Just as Upendra cheated Bali Mahārāja and bequeathed the heavenly planets to Indra, similarly, the most compassionate *Bhakti-devī*, despite being the function of Bhagavān's *svarūpa-śakti* and despite being *nirguṇa*, or beyond all material qualities, mercifully and by her own independent desire, adopts the mode of goodness (*sattva-guṇa*) in order to make the *jñānī*'s practice of *jñāna* complete. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* this type of *bhakti* has been called *sāttvikī-bhakti*.

Again, one may ask, “This Absolute Truth has two manifestations, or aspects. One is *saviśeṣa*, the personal aspect (or Bhagavān Himself), and the other is *nirviśeṣa*, the impersonal aspect, devoid of any variety (*brahma*).

The *nirviśeṣa-svarūpa* of the Supreme Absolute Truth is also transcendental (beyond the modes of nature). Why, then, would *bhakti* have to adopt the material quality of goodness in order to grant someone realization of this impersonal aspect, which is itself devoid of material qualities? Can *bhakti*, who is free from material qualities, not give realization of *nirviśeṣa-brahma* while remaining in her own *svarūpa*?”

In answer, it is said that *bhakti* is the name of one of Bhagavān’s *śaktis*. The term *śakti* indicates the capacity to act, or accomplish. The *śakti* that manifests the Supreme Absolute Truth (*parā-tattva*) is called *bhakti*. Bhakti-devī, who is beyond all material qualities, reveals the *svarūpa* of Bhagavān to the practitioners of *bhakti* who are free from any material desires and beyond the modes of material nature. However, the desire for liberation remains in the heart of *jñānī-sādhakas*. Unless one’s heart is devoid of any material desire, Bhakti-devī, in her transcendental *svarūpa*, cannot awaken there. Because of the thorn-like desire for liberation in the heart of the *jñānīs*, that is, because their heart is full of material desires and affected by the modes of material nature, Bhakti-devī adopts the mode of goodness and appears in their hearts to fulfil their desires. There is no other way for them to attain perfection in their respective practices.

The mode of goodness illuminates, the mode of passion exhilarates, and the mode of ignorance covers. Although the mode of goodness does not reveal the transcendental Supreme Absolute Reality, it certainly gives a conception of the Supreme Absolute Reality. In regard to *bhakti* in the mode of goodness, Bhagavān Kapiladeva says in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.10):

*karma-nirhāram uddiśya / parasmin vā tad-arpaṇam
yajed yaṣṭavyam iti vā / pṛthag-bhāvaḥ sa sāttvikah*

When a person offers the results of his action to Bhagavān, with the purpose of freeing himself from the effect of fruitive action and thus attaining liberation, or when he performs devotion to Bhagavān with desires other than to satisfy Him, simply out of a sense of duty to Him, his devotion is in the mode of goodness, *sāttvikī-bhakti*.

In order to please Bhagavān, many offer Him the fruit of their pious action (*karma*), desiring to become free from the results of *karma* or achieve liberation, since without pleasing Bhagavān, one does not accomplish either. *Bhakti* indeed bestows the fruit of *karma*, *yoga* and *jñāna*. Without the mercy of Bhagavān or *bhakti*, *karma*, *yoga* and *jñāna* are unable to bestow their fruits.

When *bhakti* is performed with an interest other than pleasing Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is not *śuddha-bhakti*. *Śāstra* instructs us to worship Bhagavān; therefore, so many perform *bhajana* solely out of a sense of duty, not in full knowledge of *bhakti-tattva*. Their *bhajana* is not aimed at attaining *bhakti*, nor is it for the pleasure of Bhagavān. For this reason, their *bhakti* is not *nirguṇa*, or beyond the modes of material nature. It is known as *sāttvikī-bhakti*, devotion in the mode of goodness.

This above-mentioned *Bhāgavatam* verse states that *bhakti* grants liberation. Therefore, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpada has said, “*kaivalya kāmā sāttvikī* – the desire to become one with *brahma* is of the nature of goodness.” Thus, it is apparent that the *sādhana* to achieve liberation is devotion in the mode of goodness, since *jñāna* on its own is unable to grant liberation.

Text 6

6a ~ Bhakti arises from bhakti

“*bhaktiyā sañjātayā bhaktyā*” iti bhakteḥ phalaṁ prema-rūpā saiveti svayam puruṣārtha-mauli-rūpatvaṁ tasyāḥ | tad evaṁ bhagavata iva svarūpa-bhūtāyā mahā-śakteḥ sarva-vyāpakatvaṁ sarva-vaśīkāritvaṁ sarva-sañjīvatvaṁ sarvotkarṣa-parama-svātantryaṁ sva-prakāśatvaṁ ca kiñcid uṭṭāṅkitam

Bhāvānuvāda: “*Bhaktiyā sañjātayā bhaktyā* – *bhakti* arises from *bhakti*.” According to these words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.31), the fruit of [*sādhana*-] *bhakti* is *prema-bhakti*. *Prema* is the crest jewel of all spiritual

attainments. Thus, like Bhagavān, His splendid internal potency Bhakti-devī is omnipresent, all-controlling, all-nourishing, all-attractive, supremely independent and self-manifesting. These qualities have been briefly noted here.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, citing evidence from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and other scriptures, has firmly established the self-manifesting, independent nature of *bhakti*, along with her other characteristics, and is thus concluding the First Shower.

It has been stated previously that it is by the mercy of any supremely independent, great saintly personality (*mahāpuruṣa*) that one attains *bhakti*. Bhakti-devī, who is situated in the heart of the *mahāpuruṣa*, is the sole cause of that mercy, for without *bhakti*, mercy cannot arise. Consequently, *bhakti* is the cause of *bhakti*. By determining this, the independent and self-manifesting nature of *bhakti* has been proven. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.31) directly establishes how *bhakti* is the sole cause of *bhakti*:

smarantaḥ smārayantaś ca / mitho 'ghauḡha-haram harim
bhakyā sañjātayā bhakyā / bibhraty utpulaḡāṁ tanum

[Śrī Prabuddha, the best of the nine *yogendras*, said to Nimi Mahārāja:]
O King, in this way, it is by *prema-bhakti*, which has appeared from *sādhana-bhakti*, that the *premi-bhakta*, his body shivering in ecstasy and his hair standing on end, remembers Śrī Hari and makes others, also, remember Him.

In the practice of *karma*, *yoga*, *jñāna* and so forth, the means (*sādhana*) differs from the goal (*sādhya*). The *sādhana* of the fruitive workers (*karmīs*) is to offer oblations (*yāga*), perform sacrifice (*yajña*) and so on, and their goal is the attainment of the heavenly planets. The *sādhana* of the *jñānīs* includes withdrawal of the mind from sense pleasures (*śama*), restraint of the senses (*dama*), and profound and repeated meditation (*nididhyāsana*),

and their goal is to merge into the impersonal aspect of the Supreme Lord (*brahma-sāyujya*). The *sādhana* of the *yogīs* is restraint (*yama*), observing prohibitions (*niyama*), discipline of the body (*āsana*), breathing exercises (*prāṇāyāma*) and so forth, and their goal is to merge with Paramātmā (*paramātmā-sāyujya*). To the degree that these various practitioners approach perfection, their practice reduces. Finally, they rid themselves of their burdensome practice altogether and become absorbed in its perfection. Thus their practice (*sādhana*) and their perfection (*sādhya*) are entirely distinct from each other. This can be easily understood.

By contrast, *sādhana-bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti* are the comparative and superlative stages of the same practice. The previous stage of *bhakti* becomes the cause of the next stage of *bhakti*. Therefore, as the practitioner of *bhakti* progresses toward *prema-bhakti*, his practice augments. It does not end. This is because in the stage of *sādhana-bhakti*, his taste for devotion has not yet solidified. At the stage of *bhāva* and *prema*, however, that taste becomes extremely condensed. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has said:

*pākile se prema-bhakti, apakve sādhana-rīti,
bhakti lakṣaṇa tattva-sāra*

Prema-bhakti-candrikā (5.8)

Prema-bhakti is when love for Kṛṣṇa is fully mature, or ripe, and *sādhana-bhakti* is the same devotion that has not yet ripened. This is the essence of the characteristics of *bhakti-tattva*.

Just as mango is sour when unripe and extremely relishable when ripe, *prema* matures sequentially through many stages known as *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga* and *anurāga* and finally *mahābhāva*. These are the various stages of the development, or transformations, of *prema*. *Prema* itself, without abandoning the sweet qualities of the previous stages, becomes condensed, or more relishable, as it attains the higher states of *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya* and so on. The highest stage of *prema* is called *mahābhāva*, and this is present

only within the *vraja-gopīs*. That *bhakti* in which there is no other desire than to give happiness to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called *uttama-bhakti*.

Uttama-bhakti is of three types: *sādhana-bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti*. Here, there is another matter worth considering. According to the philosophy of *sāṅkhya*, during an activity, the ingredient cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*) abandons its previous condition and transforms into its effect. By way of analogy, when milk [the ingredient cause] transforms into yoghurt, it abandons its previous state. One can no longer find milk in that yoghurt. The following question may then be raised: By use of the word “transformation” here, are we to consider that this phenomenon occurs in *bhakti*, also? In other words, when *bhāva-bhakti* (*rati*) transforms into *prema-bhakti*, does *bhāva-bhakti* cease to exist? When *prema-bhakti* transforms into *sneha*, does the stage or the characteristic of *prema-bhakti* disappear? When *sneha* transforms into *praṇaya*, do the previous qualities of *sneha* cease to exist?

In response to this doubt, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states that this principle does not hold true for *bhakti*. *Rati* is the special function of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *hlādinī-śakti*. By the power of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s inconceivable potency (*acintya-śakti*), *rati* progresses to its higher stages without abandoning its previous stage. Just as *sādhana-bhakti* is comprised of *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and other limbs of devotion, so those same limbs exist in *bhāva-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti* as well. Similarly, *bhāva-bhakti* transforms into *prema-bhakti* without abandoning its previous stage.

This *prema-bhakti* is the crest jewel of all spiritual attainments (*puruṣārtha*). That which is valuable, or desirable (*artha*) for the soul (*puruṣa*), is called *puruṣārtha*. In this world, although the *jīvas* have different objects of desire, for everyone, the common root is the desire for happiness, or bliss. *Bhakti*, the special function of Śrī Bhagavān’s *hlādinī-śakti*, drowns the *jīvas* in an ocean of nectarous bliss. In contrast with *bhakti*, even the happiness of merging with *brahma* (*brahmānanda*) is considered exceedingly insignificant, not to speak of material happiness and comforts or the happiness of the heavenly planets.

Like Bhagavān, His great potency Bhakti-devī, who originates from His *svarūpa*, is all-pervading. Anyone can perform *hari-bhajana* anywhere, at any time and in any condition. Therefore, that Bhakti-devī also pervades unlimited universes, the spiritual Vaikuṅṭha planets, Goloka and other *dhāmas*. Like Śrī Bhagavān, *bhakti* has the quality of being able to control everyone. Not to speak of others, even liberated souls are attracted by her quality of extraordinary affection and begin to perform *hari-bhajana*.

muktā api līlayā vīgrahaṁ kṛtvā bhagavantaṁ bhajate

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary
on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

Even a liberated soul is attracted to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Attaining a spiritual form, he enters the pastimes of Bhagavān, to render service to Him.

Previously, it has been said that without the help of Bhakti-devī, *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, *tapasya* and so forth cannot bestow the fruits of their practice. Therefore, by comparing *bhakti* with all other practices (*sādhana*) and their respective goals (*sādhya*), *bhakti*'s supreme excellence, independence, self-manifesting nature, and so on have been established. Now Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is stating that *bhakti* is an ocean of all good qualities, and he has described some of the glories of the intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) of *bhakti*. At the beginning of His instructions to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu says:

pārāpāra-śūnya gabhīr bhakti-rasa-sindhu
tomāya cākhāite tāra kahi eka 'bindu'

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 19.137)

The ocean of *bhakti-rasa* is without shore and extremely deep. To give you a taste of one drop from that ocean, I am describing some of it.

6b ~ One with mature intelligence is inclined toward bhakti

*tad api tām vinā anyatra pravṛttau prekṣāvattvasyābhāva iti kim vaktavyam |
naratvasyāpi “ko vai na seveta vinā naretaram” ity ādibhir avagamo dṛṣṭaḥ || 6 ||*

iti mādhyaya-kādambinyām bhakteḥ sarvotkarṣa-nāmā prathamāmṛta-vṛṣṭiḥ || 1 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: That said, if we see that a person retains any inclination toward processes other than *bhakti*, then we should understand that his intelligence has not fully matured. *Śāstra* states, “Except for a non-human or a foolish animal, there is no one who does not perform loving devotional service to Śrī Bhagavān.” These and various other scriptural statements evidence a living entity’s degradation even after attaining a human birth.

**Thus ends the Bhāvānuvāda
of the First Shower of Nectar, named
Bhakteḥ sarvotkarṣa
(“Pre-eminence of Bhakti”).**

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: If the glories of *bhakti* are extremely astonishing and matchless, then it is indeed appropriate for all the *jīvas* to make attaining *bhakti* the sole purpose of their life. Therefore, if attaining *bhakti* is not a *jīva*’s goal, it is certain that he has not carefully pondered any bona fide scripture. His intelligence has not matured and his capacity to deliberate has not developed. For this reason, it is said that such *jīvas* lack the power of discrimination. It should be understood that they are not yet on the human platform. In other words, despite possessing a human-like form, they actually have the nature of animals. This is not simply the author’s personal opinion. He is establishing this statement on the basis of scriptural evidence: ... *pumān virajyeta vinā paśughnāt* – except for those who possess animalistic

propensities, who will not perform *bhajana* of Śrī Bhagavān, who is endowed with unlimited transcendental qualities? (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.1.4)

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.3.18–19) describes those who are averse to *hari-bhajana* as dull or animalistic:

*taravaḥ kiṃ na jīvanti / bhastrāḥ kiṃ na śvasanty uta
na khādanti na mehanti / kiṃ grāme paśavo 'pare*

*śva-vid-varāhoṣṭra-kharaiḥ / samstutaḥ puruṣaḥ paśuḥ
na yat-karṇa-pathopeto / jātu nāma gadāgrajaḥ*

The purport of these verses is that those who have obtained a human form in this world and who do not perform *hari-bhajana* have simply wasted their life. If one claims that a long life is the measure of a successful life, then one may ask, does not a tree live long? A tree lives for many scores of years. But if longevity is the mark of a successful life, then trees are significantly superior to humans. To this, some may argue that although a tree lives long, it cannot breathe like a human. In answer, it may be said that if inhaling and exhaling is the measure of a successful life, then the bellows of a blacksmith are superior to a human, as they can breathe in and out more than humans do. If one then contends that bellows cannot compare to a human's eating or mating, then in response it may be asked, "Do village animals, like cows, buffalos, goats, dogs, pigs, donkeys and camels, not eat and mate?" It can thus be concluded that the success of human life lies only in performing *hari-bhajana*, which is not possible for those in other species of life.

In his commentary, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, while explaining the *paśavo 'pare* portion of the above verse, has written, "*tamapi narākāraṃ paśuṃ matvāha apara iti* – it is to be understood that humans averse to *hari-bhajana* are actually human-like animals. This is indicated by use of the word *apare*."

Some may say that in this world, there are those who are averse to *hari-bhajana* but who are nonetheless scholars or heads of nations and praised widely. Can we not regard at least such individuals as humans? In answer to

this, it is said that those who are averse to *hari-bhajana* and whose ears have never heard the name of Bhagavān are like dogs that bark uselessly, camels that eat thorns, hogs that devour stool, or donkeys that bear a heavy load while being kicked by a she-donkey. Such persons, despite being glorified by others who are also averse to *hari-bhajana*, should be understood to be like animals.

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has said, “*śvādityulais tat-parikakaraiḥ samyak stuto ’py asau puruṣaḥ paśus teṣām eva madhye śreṣṭhaś cet tarhi mahāpaśur evety arthaḥ.*” The purport is that a person who is averse to *hari-bhajana*, who is densely absorbed in sense gratification, who abandons the nectar of *hari-kathā*, who, like a dog, pursues useless material enjoyment, and who leaves aside the nectar of Śrī Hari’s name, is accustomed, like a pig, to eat the stool of sense objects. This is just like a camel who abandons soft mango leaves, which are likened to *bhakti*, and happily chews the thorns of material sense enjoyment, or like a donkey who happily carries the heavy burden of material existence while being kicked by the hind legs of a she-ass. Such persons, who are glorified by others like them, are fit to be called topmost among animals, because they are the elite among the brutes. Therefore, for those persons in whom human qualities have begun to blossom, taking shelter of *hari-bhajana*, or the path of *bhakti*, is imperative. This specifically is what is being established here.

**Thus ends the Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti
of the First Shower of Nectar, named
Bhakteḥ sarvotkarṣa
 (“Pre-eminence of Bhakti”).**

Second Shower of Nectar

Delineation of the
First Three Stages of Bhakti



Sādhana-bhakti
Śraddhā, Sādhu-saṅga & Bhajana-kriyā

Text 1

Dualism and monism are not discussed herein

*athātra mādḥurya-kādambinyām dvaitādvaita-vāda-vivādayor nāvakaṣo labhata
iti kaiścīd apekṣaṇīyaś ced aiśvarya-kādambinyām dr̥ṣyatām nāma || 1 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: In this *Mādḥurya-kādambinī*, there is no scope for analysis of and debate on the philosophical positions of dualism (*dvaita*) and monism (*advaita*). One who wishes to become knowledgeable on these topics can refer to the book entitled *Aiśvarya-kādambinī*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In the First Shower of *Mādḥurya-kādambinī*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura established the supreme excellence of *bhakti*, and in this Second Shower, he delineates the many different limbs of *bhakti*. There is no scope in this book for argument about monistic and dualistic philosophies or for a deliberation upon them, for this book is called *Mādḥurya-kādambinī*, a cloud bank that showers sweet nectar related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and devotion to Him. In the practice of *bhakti*, although one is required to understand the principle of dualism (*dvaita*) and monism (*advaita*) – in other words, the simultaneous oneness and difference of the living entities and of this material world with the Absolute Truth – the author considers it inappropriate to discuss that *siddhānta* herein, for his purpose is to deliberate upon the varieties of *bhakti-sādhana*. For this reason, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura suggests that one who wishes to learn about these other matters may read another work by him, entitled *Aiśvarya-kādambinī*.

Although this establishes that Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura authored a work titled *Aiśvarya-kādambinī*, in which he discusses monistic and dualistic philosophies, that work cannot be located. His disciple Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu also composed a work with the title *Aiśvarya-kādambinī*, but nowhere in that work is there a discussion of monism versus dualism. It is certain, therefore, that the *Aiśvarya-kādambinī* written by

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and the *Aiśvarya-kādambinī* written by Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa Prabhu are distinct works. Of this there is no doubt.

Text 2

2a ~ The intrinsic nature of sādhana-bhakti & uttama-bhakti

idānīm karaṇa-kedārikāsu prādurbhavantyās tāsya eva bhakter jñāna-kamādy-amiśritatvena śuddhāyāḥ kalpa-vallyā api nirastāny aḥalābhisandhitayaiva dhṛta-vratair madhu-vratair iva bhavya-janair āśriamāṇāyāḥ sva-viṣayaikānukūlyamūla-prāṇāyāḥ

Bhāvānuvāda: *Bhakti* [as *sādhana-bhakti*] appears in the field of the senses [that is, the body, mind and words] of the *sādhaka-jīva*. Such *bhakti*, due to being untainted by *karma*, *jñāna* and so forth, is pure. Moreover, the intrinsic nature of such *bhakti*, like that of a wish-fulfilling vine (*kalpa-latā*), is to bestow all kinds of results. Despite this, the only person who takes shelter of this wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti* is that greatly fortunate bee-like person whose sole vow is to exclusively drink the nectar of *bhakti-rasa* and who abandons the hankering for all other kinds of rewards except service to Bhagavān. Such a fortunate soul is likened to a bumble bee, because he vows to maintain his life by drinking honey from this vine and from nowhere else.

The fundamental life-force of this vine of *bhakti* is the continual rendering of service to one's worshipful Lord, Śrī Bhagavān, in a manner that is favourable for His well-being and full of affection for Him.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In this sacred book's First Shower of Nectar, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura established, through various types of unassailable logic, argument and scriptural evidence, the independent and

self-manifesting nature of *bhakti*. Now, in this Second Shower of Nectar, he is discussing the sequential development of *sādhana-bhakti*. First, he describes the appearance of the devotional creeper (*bhakti-latā*) in the heart of the practitioner of *bhakti*, as well as its qualities and nature.

Devotion that is completely devoid of any desire and hankering other than to serve Kṛṣṇa and that is untainted by any type of fruitive activity (*karma*) or monistic knowledge (*jñāna*) is called *śuddha-bhakti* (pure devotion). The nature of *śuddha-bhakti* has been compared to a wish-fulfilling vine, so that it can more easily be understood. Just as a vine only grows in fertile soil, the wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti* appears only in a fertile heart, or in the heart of a devotee who is devoid of selfish desire (*niṣkāma*). One may well ask, “Since a vine can grow only from a seed, what is the seed of the vine of devotion?” In His teachings to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

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

mālī haiyā kare sei bīja āropana
śravaṇa-kīrtana-jale karaye secana

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 19.151–152)

A *jīva* who is averse to Kṛṣṇa roams throughout the universe in various species of life, due to the results of his own activities. But when good fortune generated by the causeless mercy of exalted personalities arises for him, then, by the mercy of *śrī guru* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he obtains the seed of the creeper of devotion. The devotee thereafter becomes like a gardener and waters that seed with hearing (*śravaṇa*) and chanting (*kīrtana*).

Śrīman Mahāprabhu has mentioned this seed of the vine of devotion, but what exactly is it? He has not described it explicitly. It is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.51.53):

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

O Acyuta, the *jīva* has been wandering in the cycle of birth and death since time immemorial. When the moment for his release from this cycle approaches, he obtains the association of saintly persons. From then onward, he fixes his intelligence on Your lotus feet with great determination and becomes firmly attached to You, understanding You to be the only shelter, the supreme goal for saintly persons, and the origin of all creation, both material and spiritual.

At the end of his *Laghu-toṣaṇī* commentary on the above-mentioned verse, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written, “*sat-saṅgamaena raty-aṅkura-rūpaiva matir jāyata iti* – in saintly company, an intellect awakens that is likened to the sprout of *rati*.” By the causeless mercy of exalted devotees, an intelligence is awakened in the heart of the *sādhaka* that gives rise to *kṛṣṇa-sevā-vāsanā*, the desire to perform *bhagavad-bhajana*, service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This desire is called the seed of the wish-fulfilling vine of devotion. In other words, the inclination to serve Śrī Bhagavān is the seed of this vine.

When this seed has been watered in the field of the *sādhaka*’s senses through the process of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, the devotional creeper sprouts.

The favourable execution of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the root of this wish-fulfilling creeper of *bhakti*. In other words, the very life of *bhakti* is to give happiness and satisfaction to Śrī Kṛṣṇa by rendering affectionate service to Him in a way that is favourable for His well-being.

In the *Prīti-sandarbha*, while describing the symptoms of loving devotion to Bhagavān, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī states, “*tathā viṣayānukūlyātmakas-tad-ānukūlyānūgat tat-sprhā tad-anubhava hetūkollāsa-maya jñāna-viśeṣaḥ priyatā* – to render service to the *viṣaya* (object of love), Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in a manner favourable for His well-being and from which He derives happiness,

is the life and soul of loving devotion, or *bhakti*. This *bhakti* issues forth moods that awaken a desire to attain Him. That desire in turn leads to realization of Him, the *viṣaya*. An extraordinary understanding of Him thus arises, which is characterized by inconceivable joy.”

The purport is that *śuddha-bhakti*, which gives rise to *prema*, possesses three features:

(1) That which brings Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the object of *bhakti*, satisfaction or pleasure is the life and soul of *bhakti*. In the heart of the devotee, there are no desires other than the desire to serve, or provide happiness to, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Here, a question may arise as to why a devotee has a desire to attain Bhagavān. For the response to this, we proceed to the second feature.

(2) The desire that manifests within a devotee to attain Kṛṣṇa is due only to his wish to give happiness to Kṛṣṇa by serving Him. A devotee never cherishes the desire to attain Kṛṣṇa to experience his personal happiness.

However, suppose a practitioner were completely devoid of personal desire. He would therefore be incapable of striving for his own happiness. In that case, the inherent purpose and value of *bhakti* to bestow the ultimate goal of life [blissful service] would cease to interest him, since pure joy [derived from loving devotional service] is regarded as the supreme attainment. We thus proceed to the third feature.

(3) Although a devotee never possesses the slightest desire for his own happiness, he definitely receives unparalleled joy from serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is ecstasy personified, and from experiencing His sweetness. That is called love for Bhagavān, or *bhakti*.

A bumblebee wishing to taste only a flower’s sweet honey takes shelter of a vine. Similarly, the bumble-bee-like devotee, being devoid of all desires other than to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, forever takes shelter of the wish-fulfilling creeper of devotion, in order to taste the honey-like nectar of *prema*.

2b ~ The first two leaves of the vine of bhakti: kleśa-ghnī & śubha-dā

sva-sparśena sparśa-manir iva karaṇa-vṛttir api prakṛtatva-lohatām śanaiaś tyājayitvā cin-mayatva-śuddha-jāmbunadatām prāpayantyāḥ kandalībhāvānte samudgacchantyāḥ sādhanābhikhye dve patrike vivriyete | tayoh prathamā kleśa-ghnī dvitīya śubha-deti |

Bhāvānuvāda: By its touch, this *bhakti-latā*, like a touchstone, gradually dispels the iron-like quality of the senses' material tendencies and transforms the senses into a state of transcendence, comparable with the most purified gold.

Meanwhile, fresh sprouts appear. When fully manifest, these sprouts are known as the two leaves of *sādhana-bhakti*. One leaf is *kleśa-ghnī* – that which destroys all misery. The other is *śubha-dā* – that which bestows auspiciousness.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Here, yet another question may arise. *Bhakti* is a special function of Bhagavān's internal potency, the *svarūpa-śakti*, and is endowed with the symptoms of a supra-material, self-manifesting entity. How can she manifest in the material senses of the *sādhaka*? In answer to this, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says that in the same way that contact with a touchstone transforms even rusty iron into gold, *bhakti*, by her transcendental touch, gradually transmutes the material senses of the *sādhaka* into extremely pure, or transcendental, gold-like senses.

After taking shelter at the lotus feet of a spiritual master (*guru-pādāśraya*), that is, after receiving initiation and instructions from him, the *sādhaka* engages in the practices of devotion (*bhajana-kriyā*) and gradually, the supra-mundane, extraordinary activity of *bhakti* begins to appear in his material senses. As the *sādhaka* engages in the limbs of *bhakti* like *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, *bhakti* – which, like Śrī Bhagavān Himself, is transcendental,

being composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*) and which is a self-manifesting reality – permeates his material senses.

As a blazing fire heats pieces of iron, *bhakti* gradually renders the senses of the *sādhaka* transcendental. For a *sādhaka* who has attained the stage of *rati*, or *bhāva*, his internal senses, or the mind and intelligence, become completely spiritualized. And, upon reaching the stage of *prema*, his present physical body, which is composed of five material elements, disappears and his spiritual body manifests. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has also written:

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-sudhā pānād / deha-daihika-vismṛteḥ
teṣāṃ bhautika dehe 'pi / sac-cid-ānanda rūpatā*

Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta (1.3.61)

For those who have forgotten their body and things related to it, drinking the nectar of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* causes their physical form, which is composed of the five material elements, to gradually disappear and their form composed of eternality, knowledge and bliss to manifest.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

*prabhu kahe—“vaiṣṇava-deha 'prākṛt' kabhu naya
'aprākṛta' deha bhakter 'cid-ānanda-maya'*

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

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

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Antya-līlā* 4.191–193)

The body of a Vaiṣṇava is not material, but rather, it is transcendental (*aprākṛta*) and full of transcendental bliss (*cid-ānanda-maya*). When the *bhakta* fully surrenders himself at the time of receiving *dīkṣā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa

accepts him as His own and makes him qualitatively one with Him, permeating the *bhakta*'s body with transcendence and bliss. The *bhakta* then worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet with his spiritual body.

In his *Anubhāṣya* (commentary) on these verses from Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda writes, "At the time of initiation, the devotee, having relinquished his material misconceptions and experiences, becomes equipped with transcendental knowledge of his relationship with Bhagavān. Upon obtaining this divine knowledge, he gains the qualification to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa with his transcendental body. Once the devotee is released from the shelter of Bhagavān's material energy (*māyā*) and the misconception that he and that energy are separate from Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes him His own. The devotee then abandons his false conception of being the enjoyer in the realm of mundane sense gratification, and with the senses of his soul, he gains realization of his eternal position as a servant of Kṛṣṇa. In his spiritual body of eternality, cognizance and bliss, the devotee has realization of the eternal object of service, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, and attains the qualification to engage in service to Him with his spiritual body. But even while the devotee internally renders transcendental service in his transcendental body, fruitive workers (*karmīs*), due to their faulty, mundane intelligence, presume the devotee's activities to be much like their own attempt to attain material enjoyment. As a result of such an offence, they are deprived of the mercy of a transcendental spiritual master. In this regard, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's commentaries on verses 1.3.35 and 2.3.45 of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* offer helpful insight."

Meanwhile, the first two leaves on the creeper of devotion emerge. The seed of the wish-fulfilling vine of devotion, which is the desire aroused by the mercy of exalted devotees to perform *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is planted in the field of the *sādhaka*'s heart by the grace of *śrī guru* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That seed, when watered by the process of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, quickly sprouts. Thereafter, the first two leaves appear. These two leaves are called *kleśa-*

ghnī (that which destroys all misery) and *śubha-dā* (that which bestows all auspiciousness).

2c ~ Rāga-bhakti & vaidhī-bhakti

dvayor api tayor antas tu lobha-pravartakatva-lakṣaṇa-caikvaṇyena “yeṣāṃ ahaṃ priya ātmā sutaś ca” ity ādi śuddha-sambandha-snigdhatayā ca prāptotkarṣe deśe rāga-nāmno rājña evādhikārah | bahis tu “tasmād bhārata sarvātmā” ity ādi śāstra-pravartakatva-lakṣaṇa-pāruṣyābhāsenā priyādi-śuddha-sambandhābhāvāt svata evāti-snigdhatānodayena pūrvataḥ kiñcid apakṛṣṭe deśe vaidha-nāmno ’parasya rājñah | kleśa-ghnatva-śubhadatvābhyān tu prāyas tayor na ko ’pi viśeṣaḥ || 2 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: The upper side of these two unfurling leaves of *sādhana-bhakti* is characterized by the gleaming softness of devotion impelled by greed (*lobha*). Śrī Bhagavān has said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.38), “*yeṣāṃ ahaṃ priya ātmā sutaś ca...* – For My devotees, I am their beloved and their very soul, and like a son, I am the object of their affection. I am their friend, divine master, well-wisher, benefactor and worshipful Lord.” According to this and similar statements from scripture, when the realm of devotion is softened by the purity of one’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa, it attains an excellence that brings it under the jurisdiction of a king named Rāga, or ardent attachment, whose excellent realm is represented by the leaves’ smooth upper surface.

The underside of the two leaves is referred to in statements such as “*tasmād bhārata sarvātmā...* – therefore, O Parīkṣit, those who wish to be fearless forever should perform worship of Śrī Hari, the Lord of all entities” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.5). This verse suggests that because such *bhakti* is characterized as being impelled by the demand and dictate of the scriptures, it is somewhat rough. And because such *bhakti* lacks a pure relationship with the Lord, like that of a beloved, a son and so forth, it is somewhat dull, or inferior. For this reason, the realm of devotion

represented by this underside of the leaf is under the jurisdiction of a different king named Vaidha, or regulation.

In terms of the capacity to dispel suffering (*kleśa-ghnatva*) and grant auspiciousness (*śubha-datva*), however, there is almost no difference between *rāga-bhakti* and *vaidhī-bhakti*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: The upper sides of these two leaves of *sādhana-bhakti* are extremely soft, smooth and beautiful, and the undersides are rough. Similarly, there are two types of *sādhana-bhakti*. One is *rāga-bhakti*, which is rooted in a specific type of greed and is very soft and beautiful, and the other is *vaidhī-bhakti*, which is rooted in the disciplinary injunctions of the scriptures, and is somewhat rough.

The purport is that *sādhana-bhakti* has two qualities: *kleśa-ghnī* (it dispels all misery) and *śubha-dā* (it bestows all auspiciousness). Here, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, with the intention of rendering this subject very simple and readily understandable, has presented an example. Since it is an established fact that a quality (*guṇa*) and the possessor of that quality (*guṇī*) are not separate from one another, we are to understand that here, the author delineates *sādhana-bhakti* by describing its two aspects of *rāga-bhakti* and *vaidhī-bhakti*, as well as their shared qualities of *kleśa-ghnī* and *śubha-dā*.

The import is that two moods govern *sādhana-bhakti*. The first is greed. Seeing the qualities of *bhakti* – her softness and charm, her tenderness, her self-manifesting nature, etc. – awakens in the heart of the *sādhaka* a spontaneous greed for *bhakti* and a desire to attain her. *Sādhana-bhakti* impelled by such natural greed is called *rāgānuga-bhakti*. That is why it states here that a king named Rāga has jurisdiction over that soft aspect of *bhakti*. In other words, *rāga*, or *prema*, governs *rāgānuga-bhakti* at every stage. Because of this *prema*, *sādhakas* establish their different relationships with Śrī Bhagavān. They accept Śrī Bhagavān as their dearly beloved, their life and soul, their son, their friend, their spiritual master, their confidante or their worshipful presiding deity.

Bhagavān Kapiladeva spoke the following to His mother, Devahūti:

*na karhicin mat-parāḥ śānta-rūpe
nañkṣyanti no me ’nimiṣo ledhi hetih
yeṣām ahaṁ priya ātmā sutaś ca
sakhā guruḥ suhr̥do daivam iṣṭam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.38)

O Mother, for devotees who are granted such spiritual fortune, there is no question of their losing that fortune, nor can the vigilant movements of the cycle of time destroy it. This is because I am as dear to such devotees as their very own self, as an object of affection like a son, as an object of trust like a friend, as a preceptor, as a benefactor, and as their worshipable Lord.

Thus, in the practice of *rāgānuga-bhakti*, a softness exists due to the presence of a pure relationship, and like the soft upper section of the leaves, it shines resplendently in a superior position. In other words, *rāgānuga-bhakti* always remains in a position of excellence.

The other impetus for a *sādhaka* to engage in *sādhana-bhakti* is fear born of the regulations of the scriptures. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* declares that without rendering loving devotion to Bhagavān (*bhagavad-bhakti*), the living entity can never cross the vast ocean of repeated birth and death, because the root cause of this material existence, which is comprised of birth and death, is the bondage of illusion (*māyā*), and *bhagavad-bhakti* is the only means to break it:

*tasmād bhārata sarvātmā / bhagavān īśvaro hariḥ
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca / smartavyaś cecchatābhayam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.1.5)

O descendant of King Bharata, one who desires to be free from all miseries must hear about, glorify and also remember the Personality of Godhead, who is the Supersoul, the controller and the savior from all miseries.*

The type of *sādhana-bhakti* practised as a result of hearing such scriptural statements is called *vaidhī-bhakti*. Practitioners of *vaidhī-bhakti* engage in the various limbs of *bhakti*, not out of affection for Bhagavān but in an attempt to end their suffering. For this reason, *vaidhī-bhakti* is said to be rough and coarse, not rooted in an intimate, pure relationship of attachment to the Lord. It is likened to the rough underside of a leaf. This indicates that compared with *rāgānuga-bhakti*, *vaidhī-bhakti* is inferior. In the practice of *vaidhī-bhakti*, the rules and regulations of scripture are predominant. This type of *sādhana-bhakti* is therefore described as being under the jurisdiction of a king named Vaidha, or regulation.

Both sides (upper and lower) of the leaves on a vine have similar properties. It is not that the leaf's soft upper surface has certain properties and that of the lower rougher surface has others. Similarly, the nature of *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti* and the nature of *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti* is almost the same. Both are equally effective in removing sorrows and granting auspiciousness.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

yatra rāgānavāptatvāt / pravṛttir upajāyate
śāsanenaiva śāstrasya / sā vaidhī-bhaktir ucyate

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.6)

Bhakti is sometimes inspired by greed and sometimes impelled by the dictates of the scriptures. Devotion that is not incited by greed but by the mandate of scripture is called *vaidhī-bhakti*.

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written “*rāgo 'trānūrāgāḥ tad rūciś ca* – here, the word *rāga* refers to *bhajana* endowed with deep attachment, or *ruci* (taste).” *Bhajana* not impelled by such *rāga* is called *vaidhī-bhakti*.

Also, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has written, “*rāgo 'tra śrī mūrter darśanād daśama-skandhīya tal līlā-kathā śravaṇāccha bhajana lobhaḥ* –

greed that arises in the performance of *bhajana* upon beholding the deity of Bhagavān or hearing the sweet narrations of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes as related in the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is called *rāga*.”

Bhakti not instigated by such greed, but rather, impelled by the injunctions of scripture, is called *vaidhī-bhakti*. Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī said to Parīkṣit Mahārāja [as quoted previously from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.5], “*tasmād bhārata sarvātmā, bhagavān īśvaro hariḥ / śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca, smartavyaś cecchatābhayam*.” In other words, in order to become liberated from the clutches of fearsome death and the extremely terrifying hellish punishment brought on by excessive attachment to the body, to things related to the body, and to worldly relationships, and in order to attain supreme happiness, it is imperative for the *jīva* to utter the holy names of Śrī Hari, hear discussions about His pastimes and engage in one-pointed remembrance of Him. The practice of those who perform *bhakti* after hearing this is called *vaidhī-bhakti*.

The inner surface of both leaves on the vine of devotion (*bhakti-latā*) is soft, shiny and beautiful. This inner side has thus been compared to *rāga-bhakti* (devotion with ardent attachment). One should understand *rāga-bhakti* to mean *rāgānuga-bhakti*. The devotion of the associates of Vraja is called *rāgātmikā-bhakti*. Devotion performed under the guidance of these eternally perfected associates is called *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

*iṣṭe svārasikī rāgaḥ / paramāviṣṭatā bhavet
tanmayī yā bhaved bhaktiḥ / sātra rāgātmikoditā*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.272)

A deep, spontaneous obsession, or an unrelenting yearning, for one’s chosen worshipful deity is called *rāga*. And devotion imbued with this loving mood is called *rāgātmikā-bhakti*.

*virājantīm abhivyaktām / vraja-vāsi-janādiṣu
rāgātmikām anusṛtā / yā sā rāgānugocyate*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.270)

This *rāgātmikā-bhakti* is found in its fully manifest form in the Vrajavāsīs, or the eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Devotion performed in the wake of, or guided by, *rāgātmikā-bhakti* is called *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

rāgātmikā-bhakti—‘*mukhyā*’ *vraja-vāsi-jane*
tāra anugata bhaktir ‘rāgānugā’-nāme

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.149)

That devotion, the very essence of which is constituted of eternal ardent attachment (*rāga*) within the self, is known as *rāgātmikā-bhakti*. It is pre-eminently and splendidly manifest in the residents of Vraja. Devotion that follows this *rāgātmikā-bhakti* is known as *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Just as the eyes and other senses are naturally drawn to beauty and other sense objects, without the need for any separate inducement, so the devotees of Bhagavān have a natural, profound and unquenchable love for Him. This is called *rāga*. There are varieties of *rāga*, such as *sānta* (neutrality), *dāsyā* (servitude), *sakhya* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental affection) and *madhura* (amorous love). In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.38), Bhagavān Kapiladeva said to His mother, Devahūti:

yeṣāṃ ahaṃ priya ātmā sutaś ca
sakhā guruḥ suhrdo daivam iṣṭam

For My devotees, I am their beloved, their very own self, their son, friend, spiritual master, well-wisher and worshipful Lord.

The word *priya* in this verse refers to Śrī Rādhā and the *gopīs*, who lovingly serve in *madhura-bhāva*. *Suta* (meaning “son”) refers to Śrī Nanda and Śrī Yaśodā, who serve in a mood of parental affection. *Sakhā* refers to Śrīdhāma and others, who serve in friendship, and also to Raktaka, Patrakā and others who are in the mood of a servant, all of whom are bound to Kṛṣṇa in a loving relationship. By hearing about the charming, loving moods

of these *rāgātmikā* associates of Kṛṣṇa, a longing, or greed, to achieve the same loving mood and service to Him awakens in the heart of the *sādhaka*. Such greed is the principal impetus in *rāga-bhajana*. In this special Kali-yuga, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the *ācāryas* sheltered at His lotus feet accept that to attain service in *mañjarī-bhāva*, the *sādhana* performed under the guidance of the eternally perfected maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, like Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī and Śrī Rati Mañjarī, is the topmost of all spiritual practices.

Another point to deliberate upon is that although there are vast differences between the relish of devotion rooted in greed (*rāga-bhakti*) and that of devotion rooted in scriptural dictates (*vaidhī-bhakti*), there is little difference in how their qualities of destroying suffering and granting auspiciousness awaken.

Text 3

3a ~ Five types of kleśa (misery)

“*tatrāvidyāsmītā-rāga-dveṣābhīniveśāḥ pañca kleśāḥ*” |

Bhāvānuvāda: *Kleśa* (misery) is of five types: ignorance (*avidyā*), false ego (*asmitā*), passion for, or attachment to, material things (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*) and absorption in worldly objects (*abhīniveśa*).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is discussing the two qualities of *sādhana-bhakti*: *kleśa-ghnī* and *śubha-dā*. It has already been explained that both qualities are present in *rāga-bhakti* and *vaidhī-bhakti*. But in that context, what is the meaning of *kleśa* (misery)? And what is *śubha* (auspiciousness)? In this text the author expounds upon these points.

Maharṣi Patañjali has written in the third aphorism of the *sādhana-pāda* of his book *Yoga-darśana*, “*avidyā-’smitā-rāga-dveṣābhīniveśāḥ pañca-kleśāḥ* –

ignorance (*avidyā*), false ego (*asmitā*), attachment to material enjoyment (*rāga*), aversion to suffering (*dveṣa*) and material absorption (*abhiniveśa*) are five different types of *kleśa*, or misery.” Being situated in the heart, they cause one to engage in either action (*karma*) or inaction (*akarma*). As a result, one attains one’s destiny, the fruits of piety or impiety, which are happiness or distress, respectively. These five types of misery (*kleśa*) are briefly described below.

- (1) *Avidyā* – A state of consciousness in which one mistakes temporary objects as eternal, mistakes that which is impure as pure, mistakes unhappiness as happiness, and identifies the self with matter, is called *avidyā*, or ignorance. *Avidyā* is at work when one considers impermanent things such as one’s body, property and possessions, spouse, children, pleasures and wealth as permanent; when one considers the impure physical body, comprised of blood, flesh, fat, bones, stool and urine, to be pure or enjoyable; and when one thinks that trivial mundane pleasures constitute happiness, when in fact their result is the fearsome cycle of birth and death, including punishment in hell and other such miseries. In other words, it is *avidyā* to think that pleasure derived from mundane sense objects, which is uninterrupted suffering, is actual happiness, and to identify the physical body, its relations and inanimate possessions as one’s self.
- (2) *Asmitā* – To wrongly assume that the cognitive power of visual perception (*darśana-śakti*) is completely identical with the inherent power to see (*dr̥k-śakti*) is an example of *asmitā*. In other words, *asmitā* is the egotism or delusion of thinking in terms of “I” and “mine”.
- (3) *Rāga* – Desire, or attachment to the means by which one procures pleasure or removes distress, is called *rāga*. In other words, the yearning for more, even after obtaining one’s desired object, is called *rāga*.

- (4) *Dveṣa* – Aversion to or hatred for the cause of distress is called *dveṣa*.
- (5) *Abhiniveśa* – To be strongly attached to one’s body due its being the basis for attaining worldly pleasures and to be terrified of death is called *abhiniveśa*.

3b ~ Four stages of sin (pāpa)

prārabdhāprārabdha-rūḍha-bīja-pāpādayas tan-mayā eva |

Bhāvānuvāda: Next, there are four stages of sin that are also integral to *kleśa*: *prārabdha-pāpa* [sins in the fructifying stage, meaning that the result of past sins has begun to manifest in the living entity’s present body and is being endured by him], *aprārabdha-pāpa* [sins that will take time to fructify], *rūḍha*, or *kūṭa* [sins that are about to become seeds, having remained in the subtle body of the *jīva* in the form of the impressions of past actions] and *bīja* [seeds of sinful desires that will eventually lead to the fructifying stage].

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Furthermore, there are four types of sin (*pāpa*), which are also considered sources of misery (*kleśa*). They are *prārabdha*, *aprārabdha*, *rūḍha* (*kūṭa*) and *bīja*, and are briefly described as follows:

- (1) *Prārabdha-pāpa* – Of the accumulated sinful acts committed in previous births, *prārabdha-pāpa* is the portion for which one has begun to suffer in this birth.
- (2) *Aprārabdha-pāpa* – This refers to the unfructified accumulation of sins committed over the course of many lifetimes. One has not yet begun to suffer retribution for these misdeeds. In other words, the sinful reaction that currently lies dormant but is in store for us is called *aprārabdha-pāpa*.

- (3) *Rūḍha-pāpa* – This is also referred to as *kūṭa*, or sin in its subtle form [that is, it exists in the heart as the impressions of past actions]. *Rūḍha-pāpa* refers to those wrongdoings that eventually become seeds (*bija*), and in time sprout and yield their own fruits. It is the totality of the fruits of *aprārabdha-pāpa*.
- (4) *Bija-pāpa* – This refers to sin that consists of desire and is thus the underlying cause of *prārabdha*. These seeds of desire remain concealed in the heart. In due course, by the will of Bhagavān, they manifest as *prārabdha*, forcing one to undergo their due results.

Careful thought is called for in this regard. The ignorance (*avidyā*) that exists within those *jīvas* who are averse to the Absolute Truth produces these desires. To satisfy these desires, they have to take the body of a human, demigod, animal and so forth. This has been reoccurring since the beginning of time. Of these species, only the human form of life gives the *jīva* the facility to engage in fruitive activity (*karma*) [and incur karmic reactions]. Other forms of life, such as demigods and animals, are meant for experiencing the fruit of previous activities. There is much enjoyment in these various species, and therefore, whatever desires arise in such life forms are conducive to that particular type of enjoyment. Thus, along with the manifestation of their *prārabdha-karma*, their desires are fulfilled. Even though desires arise in their heart, they do not accumulate to become seeds of further enjoyment. Only desires aroused in the human form of life are capable of retaining *karma-bija*, or seeds that will result in new action.

Considering this, we can infer that human beings are more proficient at desiring than enjoying.

In essence, by *sādhana-bhakti* – either *rāga-bhakti* or *vaidhī-bhakti* – these five types of *kleśa* (misery) – *avidyā*, *asmitā*, etc. – are fully destroyed, as is the *kleśa* arising from the four types of sin (*pāpa*), such as *prārabdha*. Therefore, *sādhana-bhakti* is called *kleśa-ghnī*, that which destroys all miseries.

Also, the *Padma Purāṇa* states:

*aprārabdha-phalam pāpam / kūṭam bījam phalonmukham
krameṇaiva praliyeta / viṣṇu-bhakti-ratātmanām*

For those who with their life and soul have undeviating and exclusive attachment to devotion to Lord Viṣṇu, the four types of sins are completely destroyed in the following sequence: (1) *aprārabdha* [the accumulated stock of sins that are lying in a dormant condition], (2) *kūṭa* [sins that are about to produce seeds, which means they are beginning to take shape as sinful desires], (3) *bīja* [seeds that are already established as sinful desires] and (4) *prārabdha* [fructified sins].

*yat-pāda-paṅkaja-palāśa-vilāsa-bhaktyā
karmāśayam grathitam udgrathayanti santah
tadvan na rikta-matayo yatayo 'pi ruddha-
srotogaṇās tam araṇam bhaja vāsudevam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.22.39)

[Śrī Sanat-kumāra said to Mahārāja Pṛthu:] O King, the devotees of Bhagavān, simply by lovingly meditating on the effulgence shining forth from the petal-like toenails of His worshipful lotus feet, tear asunder the hard knot in the heart, which is formed by fruitive activity. The *yogīs* seeking impersonal liberation, however, cannot break that knot, even though they control their senses. Therefore, O King, giving up the separate endeavour to control the senses, one should perform *bhajana* of Bhagavān Vāsudeva, He who is the shelter of all beings.

In other words, false ego (*asmitā*) and so forth are the tendencies of ignorance (*avidyā*). Therefore, as ignorance is destroyed in the course of performing *sādhana-bhakti*, the effects of ignorance are also easily and

automatically destroyed. *Sādhana-bhakti* also vanquishes all one's *prārabdha-karma*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.33.6) states:

yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukīrtanād
yat-prahvaṇād yat-smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt

[Śrī Devahūti said to Bhagavān Kapiladeva:] O Bhagavān, if even an untouchable who partakes of dog flesh hears or chants Your holy names, or if he once in a while offers obeisance to You or remembers You, even if carelessly, he is elevated to the worshipful status of a *brāhmaṇa* priest qualified to conduct *soma-yajñas* (fire sacrifices intended to invoke the nectar of the moon that is drunk only by demigods). What, then, is to be said of someone who has direct audience of You? For such a person, the human life is a complete success.

Here it is stated that by uttering the names of Bhagavān, hearing narrations of His pastimes, remembering Him, and so forth, even a dog-eating *cāṇḍāla* becomes qualified to conduct such exalted Vedic fire sacrifices as the *soma-yajña*. From this it is understood that *sādhana-bhakti* destroys even a person's fructified sin (*prārabdha-pāpa*), as it is fructified sin that determines one's birth in a low, ill-fortuned caste such as that of a *cāṇḍāla*. Fructified sin is not destroyed even by knowledge of the impersonal *brahma* (*brahma-jñāna*). Even at the stage of *jīvan-mukta* (emancipation in this life from false bodily identification), the *jñānīs* achieve actual liberation (*mukti*) only when the results of their past actions cease. However, the destruction of fructified sin (*prārabdha-pāpa*), which is not possible even by knowledge of *brahma*, is achieved easily by *sādhana-bhakti*. The other types of sin – *aprārabdha*, *kūṭa* and *bīja* – will therefore also surely be destroyed. What doubt can there be about this?

3c ~ The auspicious qualities bestowed by bhakti

śubhāni durviṣaya-vaitṛṣṇya-bhagavad-viṣaya-satṛṣṇy-ānukūlya-kṛpā-kṣamā-satyā-sārālya-sāmya-dhairya-gāmbhīrya-mānada tvāmānitva-sarva-subhagatvādayo gūṇāś ca “sarvair gūṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ” ity ādi drṣṭyā jñeyāḥ || 3 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Here, use of the word *śubha* (auspiciousness) implies a distaste for objects that cause misery and a thirst for that which is related to Bhagavān. It also implies kindness (*ānukūlya*), mercy (*kṛpā*), forgiveness (*kṣamā*), truthfulness (*satya*), simplicity (*sārālya*), equality (*sāmya*), patience (*dhairya*), gravity (*gāmbhīrya*), the qualities to honouring others (*mānadatva*) and not expecting respect (*amānitva*), all good fortune (*sarva-saubhāgya*) and other virtues.

This is also understood from scriptural evidence such as “*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā, sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ* – the demigods with all their virtues fully reside in that person who has selfless devotion to Bhagavān” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.18.12). Therefore, all these qualities reside in the devotees.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The result of performing *sādhana-bhakti* is that *avidyā* and other types of misery (*kleśa*), as well as the different types of sin such as *prārabdha*, are completely destroyed, and all types of good qualities manifest in the body of the devotee. Therefore, *bhakti* is said to be *śubha-dā*, as she bestows all auspiciousness.

*sarva mahā-guṇa-gaṇa vaiṣṇava-śarīre
kṛṣṇa-bhakte kṛṣṇer guṇa sakali sañcāre*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.75)

A multitude of exalted virtues reside in the body of a Vaiṣṇava. All the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa are transmitted to His *bhakta*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is mentioning a few of the auspicious qualities of those devotees in the stage of *sādhana*. Primarily, they have a distaste for anything that ultimately proves to be a cause of sorrow, and they have a thirst for that which is related to Bhagavān. *Bhakti-sādhakas* who, by engaging their senses in Kṛṣṇa’s service, have obtained even an infinitesimal relish for the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, will naturally be disinterested in mundane forms, tastes and so forth, which are causes of great suffering. To say nothing of insignificant, mundane sense objects, even the happiness of impersonal liberation becomes insignificant for *bhakti-sādhakas*:

*kṛṣṇa-pāda-padma-gandha jei jana pāya
brahma-loka-ādi-sukha tāre nāhi bhāya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 6.136)

For one who chances upon the fragrance of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet, the bliss available on such planets as Brahmaloaka cannot satisfy him.

Gradually, all the devotee’s yearnings become centred on the worshipful lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. “How can I serve and please my worshipful deity?” This single thought arrests the *sādhaka*’s whole heart. When, by the mercy of Śrī Bhakti-devī, the *sādhaka*’s heart becomes filled with moods that are entirely beneficial for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇānukūlya*), an unprecedented beauty is fashioned in the temple of his heart. At that time, mercy, forgiveness, truthfulness, simplicity, equanimity, patience, gravity, respect, modesty, all-blessedness and other auspicious qualities arise in the *sādhaka*’s heart with exceptional clarity and shower their soothing rains of nectar upon it. At that time, a truly unprecedented calm prevails in the heart of the devotee. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (5.18.12) states:

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhāgavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
mano-rathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

In the heart of *bhakti-sādhakas* who possess selfless devotion (*niṣkāma-bhakti*) for the lotus feet of Bhagavān, all the demigods along with all virtuous qualities, such as adherence to religious principles, knowledge, and so forth, dwell perpetually. But in the case of those who are not devotees of Bhagavān, from where will the many qualities found in exalted personalities come? With a variety of material aspirations, they endlessly chase the petty attainments of the external world.

Therefore, it is the Vaiṣṇavas alone whose hearts are overflowing storehouses of all transcendental qualities. Śrīman Mahāprabhu said to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī:

*sei saba guṇa haya vaiṣṇava-lakṣaṇa
saba kahā nā jāya, kori dig-daraśana*

*kṛpālu, akṛta-droha, satya-sāra sama
nirdoṣa, vadānya, mṛdu, śuci, akiñcana*

*sarvopakāraka, śānta, kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa
akāma, nirīha, sthira, vijita-śaḍ-guṇa*

*mita-bhuk, apramatta, mānada, amānī
gambhīra, karuṇa, maitra, kavi, dakṣa, maunī*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.77–80)

All these qualities are symptoms of a Vaiṣṇava. There are too many to name, so I will give you but a glimpse. Kṛṣṇa’s devotees are (1) merciful, (2) harmless, (3) the very essence of truth, (4) equal to all, (5) faultless, (6) magnanimous, (7) mild, (8) clean, (9) without worldly possessions and (10) they engage in the welfare of all. They are (11) peaceful, (12) exclusively surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, (13) selfless, (14) indifferent to material acquisitions, (15) fixed in devotional service and (16) free from the influence of the six flaws of lust, anger, greed, envy, pride

and delusion. They (17) eat only as much as required and (18) are not intoxicated by anything. They are (19) respectful, (20) do not expect any respect for themselves and are (21) grave and (22) compassionate. They are (23) friendly, (24) poetic, (25) expert and (26) silent.

Text 4

The removal of inauspiciousness & the attainment of auspiciousness

“*bhatkiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir anyatra caiṣa trika ekakālah*” | ity ukta-
prakāreṇa yugapad api pravṛttayor api tayoh patrikayor udgama-tāratamyenaiva
tat-tad-aśubha-nivṛtti-śubha-pravṛttitāratamyād asty eva kramah | sa cātisūkṣmo
durlakṣyo `pi tat-tat-kārya-darśana-liṅgena sudhībhir avasīyate || 4 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.42) states, “As a surrendered person engages in *bhajana*, three effects manifest simultaneously in his heart: (1) *bhakti* characterized by *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, (2) direct experience of the Supreme Lord (Parameśvara) and (3) detachment from that which is separate from Bhagavān.” By this statement of scripture, one can understand that the previously described two leaves named *kleśa-ghnī* and *śubha-dā*, which appear on the vine of devotion, sprout simultaneously. However, the removal of inauspiciousness and the attainment of auspiciousness occur in accordance with the degree to which the leaves manifest, either slightly or substantially. At the same time, there are exceedingly subtle, and thus not easily discernible, signs of development. Intelligent persons can detect these symptoms and thus ascertain a person’s progress.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Previously, it was stated that *sādhana-bhakti*, whether *vaidhī* or *rāgānuga*, is capable of destroying all varieties of inauspiciousness, or misery, and awakening all auspicious qualities. Here, however, a doubt may

arise as to how *sādhana-bhakti* can simultaneously accomplish both. In answer to this, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura provides this verse as evidence:

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
 anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
 prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
 tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo ’nu-ghāsam
 Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.42)*

While eating, a person simultaneously experiences three sensations with each and every morsel of food. He experiences satisfaction (that is, gratification or pleasure), he receives nourishment (by consuming substances that sustain the force of life within him), and he gains relief from hunger. In the same way, a person who takes shelter of Bhagavān and engages in devotional service to Him will, in his performance of *bhajana*, experience three things simultaneously at every moment: pure love (*prema*) for Bhagavān; realization of the identity (*svarūpa*) of his beloved Lord; and detachment from anything other than his Lord.

Thus, despite the fact that both leaves on the creeper of devotion (*kleśa-ghnī* and *śubha-dā*) sprout simultaneously, miseries such as *avidyā* are removed and virtues manifest in proportion to the degree to which those leaves grow. Therefore, although this progression is certainly well-defined, it is so subtle and difficult to perceive that it is not easily understood. The example is given of a person eating. With every morsel he takes, he simultaneously experiences satisfaction, nourishment and satiation of hunger. However, we must understand that these three effects take place not only with each and every mouthful, but with each and every grain or particle of food. This is extremely difficult to observe, just as it is difficult to perceive progress in *bhakti*, or *bhajana*.

Therefore, although progress is very subtle and thus extremely difficult for the layperson to discern, devotees with knowledge can, by observing a *sādhaka*'s activities and the symptoms he exhibits, discern the degree to which he has achieved the destruction of misery and attained auspicious qualities.

Text 5

5a ~ The awakening of śraddhā (faith)

*tatra bhakty-adhikāriṇaḥ prathamam śraddhā | sā ca tat-tac-chāstrārthe dr̥ḍha-
pratyaya-mayī | prakramyamāṇa-yatnaika-nidāna-rūpa-tad-viṣayakatvaika-
nivārha-rūpa-sādara-spr̥hā ca | sā ca sā ca svābhāviki kenāpi balād utpādītā ca |*

Bhāvānuvāda: An awakening of *śraddhā* (transcendental faith) is the first symptom that appears in those eligible to attain *bhakti*. *Śraddhā* is unyielding faith in the statements of the devotional scriptures. A desire to perform the practices prescribed in those scriptures with special effort, respect and care is also referred to as *śraddhā*. Moreover, these two types of *śraddhā* fall into two separate categories: (1) naturally awakened and (2) forcibly induced by someone else.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, having succinctly described the *svarūpa* (intrinsic nature) of *bhakti*, her self-manifesting nature and her functions, now begins to delineate the main topic of this work: the various stages of the practice of devotion (*bhakti-sādhana*). *Śraddhā* is certainly the first stage of *bhakti-sādhana*, the first stepping-stone toward the temple of *bhakti*. *Bhakti*, or *hari-bhajana*, is the practice (*sādhana*) for all people in all lands to attain the ultimate goal. Any person in any nation or condition of life can engage in *hari-bhajana*.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-bhajane haya sabe adhikārī
kibā vipra kibā śudra ki puruṣa nārī*

Everyone, whether a priest or a labourer, a man or a woman, is qualified to engage in *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore, time, place, circumstance, caste or family status are not of any consequence in the practice of *bhakti*, as *bhakti* depends only upon one's

faith. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.64) states, “*śraddhāvān jana haya bhakti-adhikārī* – one who has faith is an eligible candidate for *bhakti*.” Faith is necessary, not only in the practice of *bhakti* but in the practices of *karma* (fruitive activity), *jñāna* (monistic knowledge) and *yoga*, also. Without faith, one cannot achieve perfection in any pursuit or practice. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (17.28), Śrī Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna:

*aśraddhayā hetuṁ dattaṁ / tapas taptam kṛtam ca yat
asad ity ucyate pārtha / na ca tat pretya no iha*

O son of Pṛthā, sacrifice, austerity, charity or any other act performed without faith is referred to as *asad*, unreal. Such activities give no transcendental result, either in this world or the next.

According to this statement of the *Gītā*, all practices devoid of *śraddhā* are unproductive. Mahārṣi Patañjali writes: “*śraddhā cetasaḥ samprasādaḥ sā hi jananīva kalyāṇī yoginaṁ pāti*.” This means that absolute happiness of heart is said to be *śraddhā*. “Absolute happiness of heart” indicates the primary seedling-like stage of being favourably disposed to a particular subject matter. It takes place when the filth of doubt is dispelled from the heart. This is called *śraddhā*. Therefore, we see that in regard to any subject, the dispelling of doubt and the establishing of faith is called *śraddhā*. Like a mother, *śraddhā*, the embodiment of auspiciousness, always protects the *yogī*. In any given pursuit, only a person with faith is capable of achieving perfection. As his faith in whatever he is pursuing strengthens, his heart becomes favourably inclined toward it, and he is ushered toward success.

It is true that in any practice, whether *jñāna*, *karma* or *yoga*, faith is essential, but in regard to *bhakti-sādhana*, faith is extraordinarily essential. Faith is the very first, crucial stage in the practice of *bhakti*, which is beyond the modes of material nature and is composed of transcendence. *Prema* is certainly the ultimate step in the practice of *bhakti*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu- / saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt / tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ*

*athāsaktis tato bhāvas / tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premnaḥ / prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.15–16)

This means that first, faith (*śraddhā*) develops in the heart of the *sādhaka*. After that comes association with saints (*sādhu-saṅga*), devotional practice (*bhajana-kriyā*) and the clearing of unwanted habits (*anārtha-nivṛtti*). Next, the *sādhaka* develops resolute faith (*niṣṭhā*) in *bhajana*, followed by a strong taste (*ruci*) for it. He then develops intense attachment (*āsakti*) to *bhajana* and to the object of *bhajana*, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. After this, *śuddha-sattva* (unalloyed transcendental existence) descends to the heart of the *sādhaka* in the form of spiritual emotions (*bhāva*), and finally pure love for Kṛṣṇa (*prema*) arises. This is the gradual development of *prema*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has described the two characteristics of *śraddhā*, the first step in the practice of *bhakti*. The first symptom of *śraddhā* is unflinching faith in the statements of devotional scriptures. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes:

*'śraddhā'-śabde viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.62)

Śraddhā is the firm conviction that by rendering transcendental loving service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, all one's obligations are automatically accomplished.

In other words, *śraddhā* means to have genuine faith in devotional literature, to understand the purports of scripture with steadfast intelligence, to wholeheartedly endeavour to gain realization of such matters, and to logically reconcile any apparent quandaries. Once one develops unflinching

faith in these philosophical conclusions, one will realize that without *bhagavad-bhajana*, life is absolutely useless. Concurrently, by hearing about Śrī Hari's compassion and other qualities, as well as His pastime of delivering the fallen souls, the heart floods with hope and blossoms. A revulsion, or distaste, for fleeting pleasures then arises naturally. Therefore, for one who possesses such *śraddhā*, maintaining a worthless life without *bhajana* becomes exceedingly insufferable, and surrender to the lotus feet of Śrī Hari becomes natural.

In the following purport, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī describes *śraddhā* and *śaraṇāgati* as identical with each other:

*śraddhā-śaraṇāpattyor aikārthyam labhyate | tac ca yuktam | śraddhā
hi śāstrārtha-viśvāsaḥ | śāstram ca tad-aśaraṇasya bhayam tac-
charaṇasyāsabhayaṁ vadati | tato jātāyāḥ śraddhāyās tac-charaṇāpattir
eva liṅgam iti ||*

Bhakti-sandarbhā (Anuccheda 176)

One should understand that the meaning of *śraddhā* (faith) and *śaraṇāgati* (surrender) is the same. Unflinching faith in the purports of scripture is called *śraddhā*. Scripture instructs devotees who are surrendered to Bhagavān's worshipful feet to be fearless. Those who are not surrendered are fearful. Therefore, when such unflinching faith in the purports of scripture awakens, its symptom is surrender. In other words, only by surrender is the presence of faith identified.

If such surrender is not rooted in the heart of the *sādhaka*, it is not possible to perform actual *bhajana* of Śrī Bhagavān's lotus feet. The *sādhaka* advances in *bhajana* to the degree that he has surrendered. What more can be said? Indeed, surrender is the life-force of the practice of *bhakti*. Only the surrendered devotee achieves supreme peace and devotional ecstasy, as well as Śrī Bhagavān's supreme abode.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna:

*tam eva śaraṇam gaccha / sarva-bhāvena bhārata
tat-prasādāt parām śāntim / sthānam prāpsyasi śāśvatam*

Bhagavad-gītā (18.62)

O descendant of Bharata, surrender completely to Him, that Supreme Controller. By His grace, you will attain transcendental peace and the supreme eternal abode.

Next, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura describes the second symptom of *śraddhā*. When a person becomes particularly diligent in executing the devotional practices delineated in scripture and exhibits a reverent desire to execute those practices, that too is called *śraddhā*. Once the first symptom of *śraddhā* – unflinching faith in the imports of the scriptures – is awakened, then the second symptom – the effect of such faith – is bound to manifest. There is no doubt about this. At that time, the *sādhaka* becomes particularly attentive in executing the practices described in scripture and exhibits a reverent wish to perform such activities.

In this matter, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī writes in *Bhakti-sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 173):

*kim ca jātāyām śraddhāyām siddhāv asiddhau ca svarṇa-siddhi-
lipsor iva sadā tad-anuvṛtti-ceṣṭaiva syāt | siddhīś cātrāntaḥkaraṇa-
kāmadī-doṣa-kṣaya-kāri-paramānanda-parama-kāṣṭhāgāmi-śrī-
hari sphuraṇa-rūpaiva jñeyā | tasyām svārtha-sāadhanānupravṛttau
ca dambha-pratiṣṭhā-lipsādi-maya-ceṣṭā-leśo 'pi na bhavati, na
sutarām jñāna-purvakaṁ mahād-avajñādayo 'parādhās cāpatanti,
virodhād eva | ... yadi vā śraddhāvato 'pi prārabdhādi-vaśena viṣaya-
sambandhābhyāso bhavati, tathāpi tad-bādhayā viṣaya-sambandha-
samaye 'pi dainyātmikā bhaktir evocchalitā syāt; ... śāstrīya-
śraddhāyān tu jātāyām sudurācāratvā yogaḥ syāt, “para patnī para
dravya” ity ādi viṣṇu-toṣaṇa-śāstra virodhāt |*

When people believe in the value of gold, they are seen to toil endlessly with great effort to attain it, whether they manage to obtain it or not. Similarly, upon the awakening of *śraddhā*, a *sādhaka* is seen to continually endeavour to perform *bhajana* under the guidance of exalted personalities, whether he attains perfection or not. One should understand that here, the word “perfection” means that internally one receives a glimpse of Śrī Hari, an experience affording the pinnacle of supreme ecstasy. Such a glimpse thoroughly destroys internal faults, like lust, in the heart of the *sādhaka*. A faithful person who has achieved perfection strives for excellence in that perfection, and a faithful person who has not achieved perfection strives to attain it. Not even the slightest trace of conceit or desire for fame remains in the heart of such faithful devotees. The faithful soul never consciously disobeys or offends pure devotees, for such an act is completely at odds with his attempts to achieve perfection in *bhajana*. If due to the result of previous impressions (*saṃskāras*) a faithful person sees that he still has attachment to material sense objects, he understands such attachment to be a hindrance to his *bhajana*, and devotion imbued with humility manifests within him. A faithful person never exhibits poor character. *Śāstra* states:

*para patnī para dravya / para himsāsu yo matim
na karoti pumān bhūpa / tuṣyate tena keśavaḥ*

Viṣṇu Purāna

Śrī Keśava is pleased, O King, by one whose mind does not dwell upon another man’s wife or wealth, or upon committing violence to others.

From such evidence, it is understood that when the *sādhaka*’s faith in scripture is awakened, he abandons anything that creates a formidable obstacle to *bhajana*, such as offences to exalted devotees, striving for mundane profit and adoration, and hankering for name and fame. Easily ascending the successive higher steps of *bhakti*, he is able to enter the palace of *prema*.

Therefore, the *sādhaka* should thoroughly understand the stage of *śraddhā*. For example, before a spectacular residential skyscraper is erected, a strong, secure foundation must be laid. If the foundation is not secure, the skyscraper will soon topple. Similarly, in order to erect the exquisite palace of devotion for the pleasure of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one must consolidate one’s foundation – *śraddhā* – because one’s *śraddhā* determines one’s eligibility for *bhakti*.

śraddhāvān jana haya bhakti-adhikārī
‘uttama’, ‘madhyama’, ‘kaniṣṭha’—śraddhā-anusārī

śāstra-yuktye sunipuṇa, dṛḍha-śraddhā jāra
‘uttama-adhikārī’ sei tāraya saṁsāra

śāstra-yukti nāhi jāne dṛḍha, śraddhāvān
‘madhyama-adhikārī’ sei mahā-bhāgyavān

jāhāra komala śraddhā, se ‘kaniṣṭha’ jana
krame krame tēho bhakta hoibe ‘uttama’

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.64, 65, 67, 69)

Only faithful persons are eligible candidates for *bhakti*. According to the measure of their faith, devotees are graded as *uttama-adhikārī* (exalted), *madhyama-adhikārī* (intermediate) and *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* (neophyte). One who is exceptionally conversant in scriptural topics and endowed with unflinching faith is an *uttama-adhikārī*. Such a person can deliver souls engrossed in worldly life. One who is not expert in scriptural subjects but is wholly faithful is a *madhyama-adhikārī* and most fortunate. And one whose faith is pliable is a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*. Gradually, by association with exalted devotees, the latter two also become *uttama*, or first-class, devotees.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has further divided the two aforementioned types of *śraddhā* into two. The first is known as *svābhāvikī*, or “occurring naturally”, and the second is *bala-pūrvaka-utpādita*, or “forcibly

awakened”. Furthermore, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has delineated two types of faith: faith in the injunctions of the Vedic scriptures (*śāstrīya-śraddhā*) and ordinary, temporal materialistic faith (*laukika-śraddhā*). The first arises upon receiving the association and mercy of exalted devotees. Scripture states, “*sat-saṅgāj jāyate-śraddhā* – association with saintly persons produces faith.” In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.25), Bhagavān Kāpiladeva addresses His mother, Devahūti, thus:

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

In the association of exalted devotees, one gains the opportunity to hear of My chivalrous pastimes, which deliver knowledge of My prowess and which are pleasing to the ear and heart. By hearing these pastimes, the path to abolishing ignorance promptly manifests, first as *śraddhā*, then *rati*, and finally *prema-bhakti* to Me.

From this verse it is understood that *śraddhā* is obtained by receiving the association of *mahāpuruṣas*, exalted personalities. The type of faith generated by their association or mercy is *svābhāviki*, natural. It is also called *śāstrīya-śraddhā*. This type of faith is advantageous in the performance of pure *bhajana* to attain love for Kṛṣṇa. Faith that is awakened by force, or ordinary, temporal materialistic faith (*laukika-śraddhā*), is faith that has not arisen from the association or mercy of exalted devotees. Rather, it has been adopted artificially by imitating others. This type of *śraddhā* has no particular use in the execution of pure *bhajana*. Upon attaining the association of exalted devotees, however, a person with such *laukika-śraddhā* can make his life successful by achieving *svābhāviki-śraddhā*, or *śāstrīya-śraddhā*.

Furthermore, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī outlines the sequence in which faith is attained by those in whom *ruci* (taste) is prominent and by those in whom

reasoning (*vicāra*) is prominent. In this context, this sequence is worth contemplating. For persons in whom reasoning is predominant, the process of attaining faith in *bhakti* is as follows:

tatra prathamam tāvat tat-tat-saṅgāj jātena tat-tac-chraddhā-tat-tat-parasparā-kathā-rucy-ādinā jāta-bhagavat-sāmmukhyasya tat-tad-anuṣāṅgenaiva tat-tad-bhajanīye bhagavad-āvirbhāva-viśeṣe tad-bhajana-mārga-viśeṣe ca rucir jāyate | tataś ca viśeṣa-bubhutsāyām satyām teṣv ekato 'nekato vā śrī-gurutvenāśrītāt śravaṇam kriyate | tac copakramopa-saṁhārādibhir arthāvadhāraṇam | punaś cāsambhāvanā-viparīta-bhāvanā-viśeṣavatā svayam tad-vicāra-rūpaṁ mananam api kriyate | tato bhagavataḥ sarvasminn evāvirbhāve tathāvidho 'sau sadā sarvatra virājata ity evaṁ rūpā śraddhā jāyate | ... ity evaṁ vicāra-pradhānānām mārgo darśitaḥ |

Bhakti-sandarbhā (Anuccheda 202)

First, as a result of associating with devotees, faith arises in the Supreme Truth and in saintly personalities. Once a person develops a taste to hear the *hari-kathā* narrated by these saintly personalities, an inclination toward Bhagavān is awakened within him. By the power of associating with saintly personalities, a taste awakens that causes the appearance of Bhagavān – the devotee’s cherished object of worship (*bhajanīya*) – in a particular form in his heart. Also, a specific taste is awakened to perform *bhajana* of Him. Thereafter, a specific desire arises within him to learn of confidential matters regarding his cherished Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and he takes shelter of one or many exalted personalities as *śravaṇa-gurus*, from whom he hears about Him. Here, the word *śravaṇa*, or “hearing”, means to thoroughly comprehend the purports of scripture by way of comprehending the introductory import of a text (*upakrama*), comprehending the conclusion (*upasamhāra*), repetition of the subject matter (*abhyāsa*), reaping the fruit of comprehending exceptional aspects of the subject matter (*apūrvatā-phala*), elucidating on the imports of

scriptural statements (*artha-vāda*) and ascertaining the conclusive understanding (*upapatti*).

Thereafter, the devotee realizes that Bhagavān exists in all His manifestations with His omniscience, omnipotence and supreme compassion. His belief that the performance of *bhagavad-bhajana* is his ultimate duty becomes firmly fixed. This is real faith evoked by the dictates of scripture, and for those who are by nature predominantly inclined toward reasoning (*vicāra*), this is the path leading to faith.

However, it is stated, “*ruci-pradhānān tu na tādr̥g vicārāpekṣā jāyate, kintu sādhu-saṅga-līlā-kathā-śravaṇa-ruci-śraddhā śravaṇādy-āvṛtti rūpaivāsau mār̥gaḥ – sādhakas* predominantly motivated by *ruci* do not depend on that kind of reasoning and deliberation. First, they hear narrations of Bhagavān’s pastimes in the association of devotees, then they acquire taste for such narrations, and as a result they develop *śraddhā*.” It is hereby indicated that it is with such faith that *sādhakas* driven by *ruci* engage repeatedly in *śravaṇa* and so forth.

5b ~ Sādhu-saṅga – association with saintly personalities

tataś cāśrita-guru-caraṇasya tasya jijñāsyamāna-sadācārasya tac-chikṣayaiva sajjātīyāśaya-saṅgā-bhakti-abhijñā-sādhu-saṅga-bhāgyodayaḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: Upon the awakening of faith, one attains *sādhu-saṅga*, the association of saintly persons. As a result, one accepts shelter at the worshipful feet of *śrī guru*, the most beloved devotee of Bhagavān. From him, one receives spiritual instruction (*śikṣā*), initiation into *kṛṣṇa-mantra* (*dīkṣā*) and instructions concerning the practice of loving devotional service (*bhajana-śikṣā*). Along with that, one inquires from *śrī guru* about the etiquette and proper conduct (*sadācāra*) to be adopted in following the process of *bhakti*. Practising in this way awakens the good fortune to be able to associate with devotees who have similar spiritual aspirations

(*sajātīya-āsaya*), who are affectionately disposed toward oneself (*snigdha*) and who are expert in the realm of *bhajana*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Having previously described the stages of *śraddhā*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is now describing the stage of *sādhu-saṅga*, or association with saintly personalities. Upon the awakening of faith, one is to accept the shelter of the lotus feet of *śrī guru* by receiving initiation (*dīkṣā*) from him, as well as instruction (*śikṣā*) on the process of *bhajana* and on proper conduct (*vaiṣṇava-sadācāra*). Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written in his commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15), “*ādau prathame sādhu-saṅga-sāstra-śravaṇa-dvārā śraddhā tad artha-viśvāsaḥ | tataḥ prathamānantaraḥ dvitīyaḥ sādhu-saṅgo bhajana-rīti-śikṣā-nibandhanaḥ* – At first, by hearing devotional texts in the association of saintly personalities, *śraddhā*, or an unflinching faith in the words of the scriptures and saintly persons, awakens. Thereafter, when a person realizes that engaging exclusively in *bhajana* is his duty, he further associates with saintly personalities. In other words, the next step is to accept the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master and receive instructions on the process of *bhajana* from him.”

The purport is that saints and scriptures declare that taking shelter of the lotus feet of *śrī guru* is the doorway to the temple of devotion. Śrīla Locana dāsa Ṭhākura has written in one of his *kīrtanas*, “*hari-nāmer naukā khāni, śrī-guru kaṇḍārī* – the Lord’s holy names are the boat, and *śrī guru* is the captain.” *Śrī gurudeva* is the captain, and he will take us across the ocean of material existence. Without the shelter of his lotus feet, no other process enables us to cross this ocean or attain *bhakti*. It is for this reason that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.21) states:

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

Therefore, a person who wishes to know his absolute welfare must accept the shelter of a *guru*. That *guru* must be well-versed in revealed scriptures

(*śruti-śāstras*) which describe *śabda-brahma* (the Absolute Truth), he must be an enlightened seer and he must be knowledgeable, able to impart to his disciples a comprehension of the complete purports of scripture. He must also be realized in conclusive spiritual truths (*tattva*) regarding the Supreme Lord (Parabrahma) and be fixed in service to Him. In this way, he can reveal to sincere aspirants confidential matters gleaned from his own realization of service to the Supreme Lord. He must possess a peaceful mind and not be excessively engaged in material affairs.

In essence, for one who has developed faith by the mercy of great saintly personalities and thus wishes to take shelter at the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*, it is imperative for him to accept shelter at the feet of a *guru* who exhibits the following symptoms:

- (1) He is well-versed in the Vedas and in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the essential expression of the Vedic purports, as well as in other such devotional scriptures. By citing the evidence and reasoning given in scripture, he can dispel the doubts in his disciples' hearts.
- (2) He has realization of Bhagavān, having performed *bhajana* of Bhagavān with unflinching faith and determination.
- (3) Having received the *kṛpā-śakti* (mercy potency) of Bhagavān, he has attained realization of that which is beyond the range of the mundane senses, and he is capable of infusing his disciples with that potency.
- (4) He is not oppressed by lust, greed, anger or other such lowly impulses.

One who possesses these four symptoms is known to be suitable for the position of a bona fide spiritual master (a *sad-guru*). On the other hand, if a person who introduces himself as a *guru* does not possess the above four qualities, he cannot be accepted as *guru*, even if he has taken birth in a noble family and possesses many virtues. It is stated:

*kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
jei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei ‘guru’ haya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 8.128)

Whether a *brāhmaṇa*, *sannyāsī* or *śūdra*, a person who knows the conclusive truth regarding Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-tattva*) is fit to be a spiritual master.

From these words spoken by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, it is understood that a *guru* must certainly know *kṛṣṇa-tattva*. When the living entity receives *dīkṣā-mantras* from such an exalted personality, it marks the first sprouting of the seed that will award him life’s ultimate achievement, service to Bhagavān. One day, this *dīkṣā* will bestow upon the *sādhaka* the fruit of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, thus making his life blessed. This is the purpose of *dīkṣā*.

On the subject of *dīkṣā*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes: “*guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi śikṣānam, viṣrambheṇa guroḥ sevā.*” In other words, three limbs complete the process of *guru-pādāśraya*, or accepting shelter at the lotus feet of *śrī guru*: (1) surrendering to a spiritual master, followed by (2) receiving initiation into the *kṛṣṇa-mantra* (*dīkṣā*) and receiving instruction (*śikṣā*) on the process of eternal service to Kṛṣṇa (*bhāgavata-dharma*) and (3) serving the spiritual master with full faith and intimacy.

Additionally, Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes:

*guru-pādāśraya, dīkṣā, gurura sevana
sad-dharma-śikṣā, pṛcchā, sādhu-mārgānugamana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.115)

The purport is that before a person accepts *dīkṣā-mantras*, it is imperative that he reside close to the spiritual master, pleasing the spiritual master’s heart by sincerely serving him with his body, mind and words. This is called *guru-pasatti*. By this process, the prospective *guru* and disciple are able to examine each other’s nature and qualities.

Moreover, this process produces a particularly valuable result: When *śrī gurupāda-padma*, whose heart has melted due to his supreme compassion, is satisfied by a person’s unpretentious service, that person receives genuine initiation (*dīkṣā*). For a disciple, this is the ultimate achievement of life. If this process is not honoured, obstacles are destined to enter the path of *bhajana* for both the spiritual master and the disciple. If the spiritual master does not have the disposition of a Vaiṣṇava, the disciple cannot attain perfection in *bhajana*, and if the disciple does not properly follow, he unavoidably becomes an obstacle in the *bhajana* of his *guru*.

Scripture states:

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

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (2.3.4)

and *Bhakti-sandarbhā* (*Anucceda* 283)

Dīkṣā is the process by which one awakens one’s transcendental knowledge (*sambandha-jñāna*) and destroys sin (*pāpa* – sin, *bīja* – the seed of sin, and *avidyā* – ignorance) at the root. A learned person who understands *bhagavat-tattva* calls this process *dīkṣā*.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu has also said:

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

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

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

When the devotee fully surrenders [to his *guru*] at the time of receiving *dīkṣā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes him as spiritual as Himself, thus permeating the devotee’s body with transcendence and bliss. With his spiritual body, the devotee then worships Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet.

After accepting *dīkṣā*, one must reside near one's *guru* to receive instructions on the techniques of *bhajana* from him, as well as on the matters of *bhāgavata-dharma* (the nature of the soul, which is to serve Bhagavān) and *vaiṣṇava-sadācāra* (the rules of proper conduct for a devotee). One must also serve the spiritual master with faith. Prior to initiation, the prime fruit of serving *guru* is the good fortune of achieving his grace in the form of initiation, or *mantra-dīkṣā*. After initiation, the fruit of serving *guru* is to become free from obstacles on the path of *bhajana*, thereby quickly attaining *prema-bhakti* and making one's life successful.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said, “*viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā* – service rendered to *guru* in a mood of intimacy.” What is this intimacy, or trust? Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.28.34):

*sutān hitveti pati-vratā patyur iva guroḥ sevāyām pravṛttāḥ śiṣyaḥ
śravaṇa-kīrtanādīny api bhogān tad-utthāna-premānandān api grhan
tad-ucita-vivikta-sthalaṁ api naivāpekṣeta | śrī-guru-sevayaiva
sukhena sarva-sādhyasiddhārtham ity upadeśo vyañjitaḥ | ... guru-
sevāyā eva vedena sarvādhikyasyoktatvāt |*

Just as a virtuous and devoted wife may sometimes not give attention to her children to accommodate her husband, the disciple dedicated to rendering one-pointed service to his *guru* easily achieves all types of perfection in his devotional practice simply by *guru-sevā*, sometimes even neglecting his performance of hearing and chanting. And just as a virtuous and devoted wife does not rely upon personal pleasures or a home to perform her service, the disciple engaged in service to *guru* denies himself the ecstasy derived from hearing and chanting in a solitary place suitable for the performance of *bhajana*. The Vedic literatures have glorified service to the spiritual master more than anything.

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura writes, “*śrī guru-carāṇe rati, sei se uttamā-gati, je-prasāde pūre sarva āśā* – deep attachment to the lotus feet of the spiritual master is the ultimate perfection, and by his grace, all one’s desires are fulfilled.”

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes in *Bhakti-sandarbha*:

tatra yadyapi śaraṇāpattyaiḥ sarvaṁ siddhyati ... tathāpi vaiśiṣṭya-lipsuḥ śaktaś cet tataḥ bhagavac-chāstropadeṣṭṛṇām bhagavat-mantrapadeṣṭṛṇām vā śrī-guru-carāṇānām nityam eva viśeṣataḥ sevām kuryāt | tat prasādo hi sva-sva-nānā-pratīkāra-dustyajyānartha-hānau parama-bhagavat-prasāda-siddhau ca mūlam |

Although one achieves all perfection solely by complete surrender (*śaraṇāgati*), if a devotee particularly desires to drink the *rasa* of *bhagavad-bhajana*, then as his ability permits, he will engage with special dedication in ceaseless service to his *śikṣā-guru*, who instructs him on devotional scriptures, or to his *dīkṣā-guru*, who awards him the *bhagavad-mantra* and instructs him on it. This is because *anarthas* (unwanted desires) are not removed even with great endeavour. Certainly, the way to destroy such *anarthas* at the root and also bring immense joy to the Lord is to perform pleasing service to the spiritual master.

Thus stated, the principal cause and component of success in the practice of *bhagavad-bhakti*, as well as its fruit – the attainment of love for Śrī Bhagavān and service to Him, having eliminated all vices – is to please *śrī guru*. With complete faith in these statements, one should serve the spiritual master with unflinching determination.

In this way, after accepting shelter at the worshipful feet of a bona fide spiritual master, a person receives instructions from him on proper Vaiṣṇava conduct. His good fortune then arises in the form of association with exalted personalities who are affectionate to him, whose spiritual disposition is similar to his own, and who are adept in *bhakti*. After a practitioner of *bhakti*

has accepted shelter at the feet of *śrī guru*, it is completely essential to attain the association of *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas as well.¹ By observing their ideal example, one can create a life dedicated to devotion. It is by associating with and serving these exalted *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas that the *sādhaka*'s attachment to *bhajana* acquires an intensity.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes, “*sajātīyāsāye snigdhe sādhaus saṅgaḥ svato vare* – one should associate with those pure devotees who are affectionately disposed to oneself, who are more advanced than oneself, and who possess a similar mood of love for Bhagavān” (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.90).

In the practice of *bhakti*, there may be an inclination toward Bhagavān's aspects of sweet intimacy (*mādhurya*) or divine majesty (*aiśvarya*), as well as toward the various moods of loving service, such as servitude (*dāsya*) and fraternity (*sakhya*). Therefore, a *sādhaka* will advance in his practice only if he associates with a saintly personality who possesses a devotional aspiration and mood that resembles his own. Even then, he should associate with saintly personalities who are devotionally superior to him, who are expert in *bhajana*, who are supremely compassionate and kind to him, whose disposition is gentle, and who are always affectionate to him. To perform *bhajana* in the association of such *sādhus* indicates supreme good fortune. By beholding, touching, conversing and associating with such exalted saints while engaging in activities related to Bhagavān and discussing topics about Him, *sādhana-bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti* and *bhakti-rasa* can be quickly and successively infused within the heart of a *sādhaka* and fulfil the purpose of his life. Therefore, even *śrī gurudeva* will repeatedly instruct his disciple to obtain such association and thereby make his life a success.²

1 Such association may come from one's *dīkṣā-guru* or from a *śikṣā-guru*. –Ed.

2 Refer to *Jaiva-dharma*, Chapter 26, in which Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra were ordered by their *guru*, Bābājī Mahārāja, to take instruction from Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī. –Ed.

5c ~ Bhajana-kriyā – performing the practices of devotion

tato bhajana-kriyā | sā ca dvi-vidhā aniṣṭhitā niṣṭhitā ca | tatra prathamam aniṣṭhitā kramenotsāha-mayī ghana-taralā vyūḍha-vikalpā viṣaya-saṅgarā niyamākṣamā taraṅga-raṅgiṇī śaḍ-vidhā bhavantīti svādhāraṁ vilakṣayati || 5 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Now *bhajana-kriyā* (devotional activities) will be described. *Bhajana-kriyā*, also, is of two types: *aniṣṭhitā*, or unsteady, and *niṣṭhitā*, or steady. First, *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā* is being described. It is of six types, in the following sequence:

- (1) *Utsāha-mayī* [filled with an enthusiasm based on over-confidence, which is thus feeble and short-lived]
- (2) *Ghana-taralā* [“thick and thin” or irresolute, sporadic, endeavours in devotion]
- (3) *Vyūḍha-vikalpā* [indecisiveness resulting from contemplating a diversity of alternatives, doubts constantly assailing one’s resolve]
- (4) *Viṣaya-saṅgarā* [battle with desire for worldly sense objects and temptations]
- (5) *Niyamākṣamā* [the inability to uphold vows]
- (6) *Taraṅga-raṅgiṇī* [delighting in the mundane benefits afforded by *bhakti*]

These unsteady devotional practices specifically indicate the spiritual stage of devotees by exhibiting their respective symptoms.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Once a person has accepted the shelter of a bona fide spiritual master and the association of devotees who are superior and affectionate to himself and who are inclined toward the same spiritual mood, the performance of devotional practices (*bhajana-kriyā*) begins. This refers to engagement in the nine limbs of *bhakti*, such as hearing (*śravaṇa*), chanting

(*kīrtana*), remembering (*smaraṇa*) and worshipping (*arcana*) in accordance with the instructions of *śrī guru*.

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 4.70–72), Śrīman Mahāprabhu spoke the following words to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī:

*bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava-vidhā bhakti
'kṛṣṇa-prema', 'kṛṣṇa' dite dhare mahā-śakti*

*tā'ra madhye sarva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana
niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana*

Although there are many varieties of devotional service (*bhajana*), to engage in the nine limbs of devotion, as described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is best, for those nine limbs possess great power to bestow *kṛṣṇa-prema* (love for Kṛṣṇa) and *kṛṣṇa-sevā* (direct service to Him). Of these nine limbs of devotion, the foremost is *nāma-saṅkīrtana* (for Bhagavān and His name are non-different). Therefore, if the devotee utters Bhagavān's holy names without offence, he will easily attain the wealth of *prema*.

The performance of these nine aspects of devotional service is called *bhajana-kriyā*. *Bhajana-kriyā* is of two types: *aniṣṭhitā* (unsteady) and *niṣṭhitā* (steady). In *niṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*, there is no chance of one's performance of devotion slackening, nor is there any aberration. But in *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*, those risks remain.

Aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā is further divided into six types, listed in the following sequence: (1) *utsāha-mayī*, (2) *ghana-taralā*, (3) *vyūḍha-vikalpā*, (4) *viṣaya-saṅgarā*, (5) *niyamākṣamā* and finally (6) *tarāṅga-rāṅgiṇī*.

In this stage of *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*, these six varieties of unsteadiness arise within the devotee's heart and mind in the aforementioned sequence. By the specific symptoms they exhibit within their host, the devotee, they allow that devotee to identify his own specific stage of *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura now delineates these six stages in detail, by giving examples.

Text 6

Utsāha-mayī – filled with short-lived enthusiasm

tatrotsāha-mayī prathamam eva śāstram adhyetum ārabhamāṇasya sarvaloka-ślokyamāna-pāṇḍityam upapannam iva svasmin manyamāṇasya baṭor iva utsāham svādhikaraṇasya pracurayatīty utsāha-mayī || 6 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: First, the stage within *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā* named *utsāha-mayī* is described. When a student begins his reading of the scriptures, within his mind he thinks, “I have acquired such a level of scholarship that I deserve to be praised by everyone.” With such pride, a profound enthusiasm and zeal temporarily rise within him. He becomes intensely absorbed in his studies, which he has only just begun. A similar kind of excessive enthusiasm is visible in the new *sādhaka*, upon his simply entering the path of devotion. Therefore, this stage is called *utsāha-mayī*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is describing the *sādhaka*’s initial, excited and temporary state of mind as the *sādhaka* is ready to engage in the elementary stage of *bhajana* immediately upon receiving *dīkṣā*. He is like a student who, at the commencement of his studies, quietly concludes that he has become a scholar worthy of everyone’s praise. One can observe that his zeal in study is due to this new-found enthusiasm. A similar sentiment arises in the heart of the *sādhaka* when he begins his practice of *bhajana*. As a result, he thinks he has become a devotee deserving of everyone’s praise and is notably dedicated to his devotional practice.

In summary, a temporary curiosity and fresh enthusiasm are observed in a new *sādhaka*’s devotional practice. This stage is called *utsāha-mayī aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*.

Text 7

Ghana-taralā – “thick and thin”, or irresolute, endeavour

*atha ghana-taralā | prakramyamāṇāni bhakty-aṅgāni kadācin nirvahanti
kadācic ca na veti ghanatvaṁ taralatvaṁ cāsyāḥ yathā vaṭoḥ sāstrābhyāsaḥ
kadācit sāndraḥ kadācit tad-artha-praveśāsamarthatayā sārasyānudayena
śithilāś ca || 7 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: The state called *ghana-taralā* is now described. Sometimes a *brāhmaṇa* student’s method of study is intensive, and sometimes, because he cannot grasp the subject matter or derive any taste from his study, his efforts slacken. In the same way, sometimes the new *sādhaka-bhakta* diligently performs the limbs of devotion, and there is an intensity to his practice; and sometimes he is unable to do so successfully, which reveals a feebleness of practice. Therefore, in the performance of devotional activities, oscillating between an intense, or “thick”, application (*ghanatva*) and a feeble, or “thin”, application (*taralatva*) is called *ghana-taralā*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Previously, the *bhakti-sādhaka*’s initial enthusiasm in his devotional efforts was described. Since the *sādhaka*’s heart at that stage is full of *anarthas* (unwanted vices and impulses), that enthusiasm does not last. It is simply an initial curiosity. For this reason, the example is given of a *brāhmaṇa* student in the elementary stage, who thinks he has become most erudite. It is observed that he applies himself to his studies with remarkable diligence. But when the subjects he studies become complex and he cannot understand them, he loses interest and his efforts slacken. At other times, however, he does grasp concepts presented in the scriptures, and he experiences jubilation. Therefore, in the course of his studies, his efforts are sometimes intense and at other times slack. Likewise, when the new *sādhaka* experiences a taste for executing the aspects of *bhakti* satisfactorily, his devotional activity appears to be staunch. But it is observed that his

devotion slackens when obstacles arise, or when he is unable to properly perform devotional activities. Thus, in this stage of *bhajana-kriyā*, it can be observed that one’s efforts are either “thick” (*ghana*), that is, intense, or “thin” (*taralā*), that is, slack. Therefore, this state is called *ghana-taralā* – “thick-thin”.

Text 8

8a ~ Vyūḍha-vikalpā – oscillation between resolve and doubt

atha vyūḍha-vikalpā | kim ahaṁ saparigraha eva putra-kalatrādīn vaiṣṇavī-kr̥tya bhagavat-paricaryāyām niyojya gr̥ha eva sukhaṁ taṁ bhaje kim vā sarvān eva parityajya nirvikṣepaḥ śrī vṛndāvanaṁ dhyeya-sthānam evāsinaḥ kīrtana-śravaṇādibhiḥ kṛtārthībhaveyam | sa ca tyāgaḥ kim bhukta-bhogasyāvagata-viśama-viśaya-dāva-davathor mama carama-daśāyām eva kim vādhunaiva samucita iti | kim ca “tām ikṣed ātmano mṛtyuṁ tṛṇaiḥ kūpam ivāvṛtam” iti dṛṣṭyā āśramasyāsyā-viśvāsyatayā “yo dustyajān dāra-sutān” ity atra “jahau yuvaiva malavat” ity ādi-dṛṣṭyā tyakta-vilambas tatrāpi “aho me pitarau vṛddau” ity atra “atṛptas tān anudhyāyan mṛto ’ndhaṁ viśate tamaḥ” iti bhagavad-vākyena tyāge ’labdha-balaś ca sampraty eva prāṇa-dhāraṇa-mātra-vṛttir vanam tadaiva praviśyāṣṭāv eva ca yāmān abhyarthayānīti |

Bhāvānuvāda: Thereafter, the unsteady *bhakti* of a *sādhaka* gripped by *vyūḍha-vikalpā* is being described. Such a *sādhaka* ponders, “Should I stay with my family and make my son, wife and other family members Vaiṣṇavas by engaging them also in the service of Bhagavān? In that way, I will remain in my household, happily performing *bhagavad-bhajana*. Or should I completely leave them all – my children, wife and family – and becoming free from all distractions, reside in my most cherished, worshipful place, Śrī Vṛndāvana? There, I will engage in the nine aspects of devotion like *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, and thereby make my life successful.”

He then wonders, “Is it appropriate for me to renounce worldly life in my later days, when my understanding is mature and I have thoroughly experienced the terrible forest fire offered by the objects of sense enjoyment? But scripture states, ‘*tām ikṣed ātmano mṛtyum, tṛṇaiḥ kūpam ivāvṛtam* – an intelligent person should know one’s wife to be like a dry well covered by grass, and therefore death personified’ (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.31.40). From this perspective, household life is not to be trusted. Besides, scripture states, ‘*yo dustyajān dāra-sutān ... jahau yuvaiva malavat* – even at a young age, Bharata Mahārāja abandoned the filth of worldly life, which cannot be renounced easily, just as one abandons stool after evacuating’ (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.14.43). Therefore, according to this scriptural evidence, it is not proper to delay any further in renouncing worldly life.”

Nevertheless, he ponders the state of mind of a person overly attached to household life, as described by the scriptural statement, “*aho me pitarau vṛddhau* – Alas, how will my aged parents and my wife and children survive without me in their distressed and helpless condition?” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.17.57). And he recalls the words of Bhagavān, “*atṛptas tān anudhyāyan, mṛto ’ndham viṣate tamaḥ* – An unwise man who is dissatisfied abandons his family and worldly life prematurely and merely thinks about them till the day he dies. As a result, he makes a journey to extremely fearful planets that are full of darkness” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.17.58). Confronted by such words spoken by Bhagavān Himself, he realizes that because he has not yet attained sufficient strength, his conviction to renounce family life is not yet unflinching. Due to these statements of Bhagavān, the practitioner’s determination to renounce worldly life weakens, and again he thinks, “For now, it’s best I remain in worldly life and sustain my present situation, somehow or other. When the time is right, at a later stage, I will go to the forest of Śrī Vṛndāvana and perform *bhajana* of Bhagavān throughout the eight periods of the day and night.”

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In the stage of unsteady devotional practice, many different resolutions and doubts regarding *bhajana* arise in the mind of the *sādhaka*. That state is called *vyūḍha-vikalpā*.

After taking *dikṣā* and receiving instructions in *bhajana* from *śrī guru*, the *sādhaka* cannot firmly decide whether to remain in household life and do *bhajana* or abandon all worldly ties, go to Vṛndāvana and perform *bhajana* there. As a result, he moves between resolve and doubt. He thinks, “Should I persuade my wife, son and other family members to take initiation and accept instructions in *bhakti*, and thus make them Vaiṣṇavas? In this way, I can stay at home and engage in *bhajana* with my entire family.”

A little while later, he thinks, “If I am to stay in household life, I must engage in many materialistic activities to maintain my family. Inevitably, my mind will be distracted. In that case, should I abandon my children, my family and my dependents, and with a mind free from distraction reside in the most worshipful abode of Vṛndāvana, where I can easily meditate and continuously perform the nine limbs of devotion (*navadhā-bhakti*) such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, thus making my life a veritable success?”

A short while later, however, he thinks, “If I’m to actually renounce material life, then it’s best I do so after first enjoying its pleasures and becoming completely aware of the suffering caused by attachment to sensual happiness. And then, when my understanding is mature, I’ll renounce all pleasures. Otherwise, by merely externally renouncing sense pleasure, thoughts of such pleasures can arise, and that will be an obstacle to devotional service.” Then again, he fears, “If I were to remain immersed in material enjoyment till then, my attachment to pleasure would be so consolidated that at the end of my life, I may not want to give it up. Furthermore, death is unpredictable. Whom death will strike and when cannot be foretold. Perhaps it would be prudent of me to discard worldly pleasures immediately.”

As long as the force of someone’s loving attachment to Bhagavān remains weak, his *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* will depend on the different statements of scripture he encounters. Therefore, such a devotee thinks thus:

*yopayāti śanair māyā / yoṣid deva-vinirmitā
tām īkṣetātmano mṛtyuṁ / tṛṇaiḥ kūpam ivāvṛtam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.31.40)

The female form, which has been created by the divine will, is the representation of *māyā*, and on the pretext of rendering service, she slowly and steadily comes in close proximity to a man. An intelligent person, however, sees her as his death, just as a blind well is covered with grass.

He then understands that it is advised not to put any faith in the *gṛhastha-āśrama*, but to renounce it immediately.

Again, another doubt (*vikalpa*) enters the mind: “Is it proper for me to renounce everything in my old age and not in my youth?” With these thoughts, he comes across a passage from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which reads:

*yo dustyajān dāra-sutān / suhrd rājyaṁ hr̥di-spr̥śaḥ
jahau yuvaiva malavad / uttamaśloka-lālasaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.14.43)

Being desirous of performing *bhajana*, devotional service to Bhagavān Śrī Hari, who is also known as Uttamaśloka (one who is glorified with the best of prayers), Mahārāja Bharata gave up in his youth that which is impossible to renounce – a beautiful wife, children, friends, wealth, an enormous empire and celestial opulences – just as one who passes stool never thinks of it again.

Now the *sādhaka* believes that it is only proper for him to leave his household life that very moment. But again he reconsiders:

*aho me pitarau vṛddhau / bhāryā bālātmaḥājatmajāḥ
anāthā mām ṛte dīnāḥ / katham̐ jīvanti duḥkhitāḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.17.57)

Oh, alas! My parents have become elderly and my children are young. Without me, they will be orphaned, suffer unbearably and become poverty-stricken. How will they possibly survive?

“Therefore,” he thinks, “it is proper that I renounce family life after my mother and father have passed on and my children have grown up. Also, it is said if one dies unsatisfied with material enjoyment, one achieves a dreadful destination.”

*evam grhāśayākṣipta- / hṛdayo mūḍha-dhīr ayam
atṛptas tān anudhyāyan / mṛto ’ndham viśate tamaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.17.58)

Thus, a foolish person whose mind is perplexed due to his desire for household pleasures is never satiated with such sense pleasure. He spends his life wallowing in thoughts of his kith and kin. At the time of his death, he enters the darkest of hells.

Heeding these words spoken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava, the *sādhaka* has the following realization: “My determination to renounce my worldly life is not yet firm; therefore, I’ll remain in household life with the sole intention of sustaining the life within my body. Later, at an appropriate time, I’ll go to the most worshipful abode of Vṛndāvana, where I can easily meditate and live out my days, performing *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa throughout the eight periods of the day and night. It would be improper of me to renounce at the present moment.”

8b ~ Bhakti does not arise from renunciation; rather, true renunciation arises from bhakti and is therefore pure

“na jñānam na ca vairāgyam prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha” ity atra tu vairāgyasya bhakti-janakatve eva doṣo na tu bhakti-janitatve iti tad-anubhāva-rūpatayā tad-adhīnatvam iti | “yad yad āśramam agāt sa bhikṣukas tat-tad-anna-paripūrṇam aikṣata” iti nyāyena kadācid vairāgyam “tāvad-rāgādayaḥ stenās

tāvat kārā-grham grham” iti kadācid gārhashtyam ca niścinvan kim aham kīrtanam eva kim vā kathā-śravaṇam api uta sevām eva utāho tāvad ambarīśādivad anekāṅgām eva bhaktim karavai ity ādi vividhā eva prāptā vikalpā yatra bhavantīti vyūḍha-vikalpā || 8 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: The *sādhaka* in the stage of *vyūḍha-vikalpā* considers the following statement of the scriptures also: “*na jñānam na ca vairāgyam, prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha* – for My devotees on the path of *bhakti*, neither knowledge nor renunciation is beneficial” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.31). According to this statement, the practice of renunciation with the purpose of manifesting *bhakti* is defective. By contrast, the renunciation that arises from *bhakti* is without fault. This is because that renunciation is one of the *anubhāvas* (effects) of *bhakti* and therefore subordinate and favourable to *bhakti*.

At times, the novice *sādhaka* ponders statements such as “Whatever *āśrama* the mendicant enters, he finds it abundant with grains and commodities.” Reflecting on this well-known statement, he sometimes decides to renounce everything and become a mendicant.

Sometimes, however, he thinks: “*tāvad rāgādayaḥ stenās, tāvat kārā-grham grham...* – O Kṛṣṇa, as long as people do not become deeply attached to You, their worldly attachments and desires are like thieves, their houses are like prisons, and their affectionate feelings for their family members are like foot-shackles” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.36). According to this statement of scripture [that if one becomes attached to Bhagavān, his home is no longer a prison], the *sādhaka* decides to remain in family life.

But then he continues to fret. “If I’m to live as a family man, shall I perform *kīrtana* [like Śrī Śukadeva] or just *śravaṇa* [like Śrī Parikṣit]? Or will I perform service [like Śrī Lakṣmī]? Should I execute just one limb of *bhakti* in this way, or like Śrī Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, should I execute all the limbs of *bhakti*?” This state, wherein the mind of the practitioner is plagued by various short-lived resolutions that are then replaced by new ones, is the stage of *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā* known as *vyūḍha-vikalpā*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Uddhava:

*tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya / yogino vai mad-ātmanah
na jñānam na ca vairāgyam / prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.31)

For *bhakti-yogīs*, who are endowed with devotion to Me and immersed in thoughts of Me, apart from union with Me through devotion (*bhakti-yoga*), nothing in existence, including knowledge (*jñāna*) and renunciation (*vairāgya*), can be eternally beneficial. Such practices are unnecessary for them.

This statement of scripture indicates that *bhakti* is not awakened by renunciation (*vairāgya*). Rather, renunciation is seen to be a flaw and an obstruction to the awakening of *bhakti*. However, the renunciation that stems from *bhakti* is flawless and only enhances the experience of *bhakti*. This establishes that renunciation is subservient to *bhakti*. In other words, *yukta-vairāgya* is when, for the purpose of relinquishing material attachment and nourishing attachment to *bhajana*, one appropriately renounces those objects of the senses that are opposed to Kṛṣṇa and service to Him. Such renunciation is not dry renunciation. Because it is favourable to devotion, it is worshipful and appreciable, not repugnant and to be abandoned. Therefore, once one gains some entrance to the realm of worship and devotion (*bhajana*), renunciation is desirable.

It is also written, “*yad yad āśramam agāt sa bhikṣukas, tat-tad-anna-paripūrṇam aikṣata* – wherever that mendicant went, whatever *āśramas* he visited, he saw them abundant with grains [opulence].” By this well-known statement from scripture, sometimes it becomes apparent to the novice *sādhaka* that renunciation is appropriate, but then sometimes, upon pondering the following verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, he decides to remain in the *gṛhastha-āśrama*:

tāvad rāgādayaḥ stenās / tāvat kārā-grham grham
tāvan moho 'nghri-nigaḍo / yāvat kṛṣṇa na te janāḥ

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.36)

O Śyāmasundara, as long as the living entity does not take shelter of Your worshipful feet, attachment and repulsion, like thieves, plunder everything he has. His household life, like a prison cell, becomes the cause of his bondage, and illusion immobilizes him, like shackles placed around his feet.

From this, the *sādhaka* concludes that to remain in the *grhastha-āśrama* is appropriate and beneficial.

Likewise, resolutions and doubts arise in the mind of the *sādhaka* in regard to *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and the other limbs of *bhakti*. Since the scriptures describe the abundant fruit resulting from congregational chanting of the holy name, he sometimes resolves to adopt the process of *kīrtana* to make his life a success. But then he hears the scriptures' lavish praises of another limb of *bhakti* such as *śravaṇa* (hearing) or *arcana* (worship), and he tries to become inclined toward that. Sometimes he thinks he will perform many different *aṅgas* (limbs) of devotion, as Mahārāja Ambarīṣa did. In this stage of *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*, acceptance and rejection arise, as do resolve and doubt, and so it is named *vyūḍha-vikalpā*, or “extensive indecision”.

Text 9

Viṣaya-saṅgarā – battling attachment to the objects of the senses

*atha viṣaya-saṅgarā | “viṣayāviṣṭa-cittānām viṣṇv-āveśaḥ sudūrataḥ | vāruṇī-
dig-gataṁ vastu vrajan naindrīm kim āpnuyāt |” iti bhogā eva balāt svasminn
abhiniveśya mām bhajane śithalayantīti tad amī tyaktvā nāma-grāham
kāṁścana kāṁścana tyaktavato 'pi bhuñjānasya “juṣamāṇas ca tān kāmān*

parityāgo 'py anīśvara" iti bhagavad-vākyaśyodāharānatvam prāptavatas tasya pūrvābhyas tair viṣayais taiḥ saha saṅgaro yuddham kadācit tat-parājayah kadācit sva-parājaya iti viṣaya-saṅgarā || 9 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Thereafter, *viṣaya-saṅgarā*, or battling with attachment to the objects of the senses, is described. Scripture states that for a person whose heart is tainted with desire for sense enjoyment, to become absorbed in *bhakti* to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is distant and seemingly impossible, just as an object placed in the west cannot be found by a seeker travelling east. How can he ever obtain it?

Upon seeing such a statement from scripture, a devotee practising *bhakti* determines, “All these materialistic tendencies to enjoy the objects of the senses are forcibly dragging me toward them and diminishing my attachment to performing *bhajana*. Therefore, I will abandon all these materialistic tendencies and vow to take complete shelter of chanting the holy name.” Yet, even after resolving to renounce enjoying sense objects, from time to time he is cheated by them and ends up enjoying them. As it is said, “*parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ ... juṣamānaś ca tān kāmān –* being incapable of relinquishing material sense pleasure, My devotee enjoys sense objects, feeling resentment and guilt” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.20.27–28). The *sādhaka* at the stage of *viṣaya-saṅgarā* fits this description from *śāstra* spoken by Bhagavān. The *sādhaka* battles with his material tendency to enjoy the sense objects he enjoyed previously. Sometimes he emerges victorious, and sometimes he meets with defeat at their hands. Because this stage of *bhajana-kriyā* involves a battle with the sense objects, it is appropriately called *viṣaya-saṅgarā* (“war with sense pleasure”).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Thereafter, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is discussing the stage named *viṣaya-saṅgarā*, or battling with attachment to the objects of the senses, within unsteady devotional practice. The mind

of the *sādhaka* inclined to *bhajana* runs toward material enjoyment, due to many past impressions in the consciousness since time immemorial. In such a state, he considers:

viṣayāviṣṭa-cittānām / viṣṇv-āveśaḥ sudūrataḥ
vārūṇī-dig-gataṁ vastu / vrajan naindrīm kim āpnuyāt

Viṣṇu Purāṇa

For a person whose consciousness is absorbed in material sense objects, it is extremely difficult to absorb his mind in Kṛṣṇa, just as a man heading east cannot attain an object situated in the west.

From this statement from the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, the *sādhaka* concludes, “Instead of becoming attracted to Bhagavān, I’m being forcibly dragged toward the objects of sense enjoyment, and my power to perform *bhajana* is diminishing. Therefore, it is certainly necessary to give up material sense pleasure and take one-pointed shelter of the holy name.” With such determination, the devotee endeavours to renounce material enjoyment, but due to previous impressions in his consciousness, he ends up again enjoying sense pleasures. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa addresses Uddhava with regard to this type of devotee:

jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu / nirvinṇaḥ sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmaṁ kāmān / parityāge ’py anīśvaraḥ
tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ / śraddhālur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
juṣamānaś ca tān kāmān / duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.27–28)

I am speaking of an aspiring devotee who has become detached from fruitive activities, for he knows them to cause sorrow. He has developed faith in the narrations of My pastimes, and he knows desires for sense enjoyment to be the emblem of misery. Although he knows this as fact, he is unable to abandon sense enjoyment. Even though such a

practitioner sometimes ends up engaging in sense enjoyment, he should know in his heart of hearts that it leads to misery. He should sincerely repent for having performed such activities and understand them to be misfortunes of his own doing. At the same time, he should continue to perform *bhajana* of Me with faith, determination and love, in order to extricate himself from this predicament.

The practitioner of *bhakti* at the stage of *viṣaya-saṅgarā* exemplifies this statement from the *Bhāgavatam*. He is always battling with the objects of sense enjoyment, resulting sometimes in defeat and at other times, when he subdues his desires for enjoyment, in victory.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has commented on the above-quoted two verses in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The essence of that commentary is as follows: “In these two verses, the preliminary behaviour of those qualified to practise *bhakti* is described. The *bhakti-sādhaka* may know that although the sense pleasures resulting from having a spouse, children and a family are actually sources of suffering, he is unable to renounce them. He views the objects of sense enjoyment as causes of sorrow, and with a greatly distressed heart, he makes this firm resolve in favour of his devotion: ‘Let my attachment to my family and home die or let it not; let millions upon millions of obstacles come in the way of my devotional practice or let them not; if I have to suffer in hell because of my offences, let it be; or let lust plague me – but I will never give up *bhakti*. Even if the creator, Brahmā, approaches me in person and orders me to abandon my performance of *bhajana* to pursue monistic knowledge (*jñāna*) or fruitive activity (*karma*), I will never do so.’”

Once he begins to perform *bhajana*, his unflinching determination in *bhakti* far exceeds his attachment to the objects of sense enjoyment. Because he knows that the ramification of sense enjoyment is misery, he derides worldly enjoyment while helplessly continuing to enjoy: “Alas, this sense enjoyment results in so many disadvantages for me and is unfavourable to

my attaining Bhagavān. Countless times, I have vowed on the holy name to reject sense pleasures, but I'm repeatedly compelled to enjoy them.” He thus derides the objects of sense enjoyment, and in course of time enjoys them again. When he scorns them, he overcomes them, and when he enjoys them, he is defeated. The name of this stage of *bhakti* is *viṣaya-saṅgarā*.

Text 10

Niyamākṣamā – the inability to uphold vows

atha niyamākṣamā | 'adhyārabhya iyanti nāmāni grhītavyāni etāvatyāś ca praṇatayaḥ kāryā ittham eva tad-bhaktā api sevaniyā bhagavad-asambandhā vāco 'pi nocčaraṇiyā grāmya-vārttā-vatām sannidhis tyaktavyaḥ' ity ādi prati-dinam api pratijānato 'pi samaye tathā na kṣamatvam iti niyamākṣamā | viṣaya-saṅgarāyām viṣaya-tyāga-kṣamatvam atra tu bhakty-uktarṣākṣamatvam iti bhedaḥ || 10 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Next, the stage of *niyamākṣamā* is described. At this stage, the *sādhaka* makes vows of this sort: “From this day onward, I will chant the holy name this number of times. Each day, I will offer this number of prostrated obeisances to Bhagavān, His associates, His pastime places and the Vaiṣṇavas. I will perform service to Bhagavān and the devotees in this specific manner. I will not speak even one word that is not related to Bhagavān, and I will completely relinquish the association of persons who indulge in mundane talk.” In this way, he makes these promises every day, again and again, but is unable to keep them for long. Therefore, this stage of the *sādhaka*'s development is called *niyamākṣamā*, or the inability to maintain one's vows. The difference between *viṣaya-saṅgarā* and *niyamākṣamā* is that in *viṣaya-saṅgarā*, the *sādhaka* is unable to completely renounce material sense enjoyment, and in *niyamākṣamā*, he is unable to excel in *sādhana* or improve his performance of the practices of *bhakti*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: At this stage, when one’s faith in devotional practice has increased, the *sādhaka* realizes the necessity of following the rules and regulations of devotional practice (*sādhana-bhakti*). However, because his attachment to sense objects has not been destroyed, and because the pull of his worldly needs is stronger [than that of *bhakti*], he is unable to properly maintain the regulative practices of *bhakti*. The only reason for this is his inability to taste *rasa* in *bhajana*. If the *sādhaka* were to relish in his heart even a minute particle of the nectar of Bhagavān’s names, forms, qualities and pastimes, his absorption in various worldly pursuits would cease, and it would be impossible for him to abandon the regulative practices of *bhajana*. The analogy may be given of a little boy who bites into sugar cane and relishes its sweetness on his tongue, and then finds sugar cane impossible to relinquish. Likewise, once a *sādhaka* has experienced the sweet taste of *bhajana*, it is impossible for him to give up the regulative principles of *bhajana*.

In this stage of *niyamākṣamā*, the *sādhaka* vows to chant the holy name one hundred thousand times (one *lākha*) daily, offer one thousand and eight prostrated obeisances to Śrī Viṣṇu and the Vaiṣṇavas, and serve the Vaiṣṇavas in a regulated manner. In fact, he vows to not engage in any discussion not pertaining to the pastimes of the Lord, and he vows to completely abandon the company of those who speak of material enjoyment and criticize or gossip about others.

Thus, despite making such resolutions repeatedly each day, the *sādhaka* is unable to uphold them when it comes time to put them into practice. For this reason, this stage has been called *niyamākṣamā*, or the inability to maintain or improve one’s devotional practices as per one’s resolutions.

In the previous stage, *viṣaya-saṅgarā*, the practitioner resolves to renounce material sense enjoyment, but when the time comes to do so, he cannot. In the stage of *niyamākṣamā*, even though he tries to uphold his vows or self-imposed rules in an effort to further his devotion and improve his devotional standard, he is unable to do so.

Text 11

Taraṅga-raṅgiṇī – delighting in the mundane benefits afforded by bhakti

atha taraṅga-raṅgiṇī | bhakteḥ svabhāva evāyaṁ yat tad-vati sarve 'pi janā anurajyantīti “janānurāga-prabhavā hi sampad” iti prācām vāco 'pi | bhakty-utthāsu vibhūtiṣu lābha-pūjā-pratiṣṭhādiṣu vallī-valitāsūpaśākhāsu taraṅgeṣv ivācarantya asyā raṅga iti taraṅga-raṅgiṇī || 11 ||

iti mādhurya-kādambinyām bhakteḥ śraddhādi-krama-traya-kathana-pūrvakam bhajana-kriyā-bheda-kathanam nāma dvitīyamṛta-vṛṣṭiḥ || 2 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Next, the stage of *taraṅga-raṅgiṇī* is described. *Bhakti*'s nature is such that everyone becomes naturally attracted to that person in whom she appears. Even the thoughtful and wise personalities of ancient times opined, “*janānurāga-prabhavā hi sampad* – the influence that comes from being the object of people’s affection is certainly a wealth.” Yet the wealth, worship, fame and other such prosperity one attains upon the awakening of *bhakti* are in truth parasitic creepers (*upaśākhās*) that cover the wish-fulfilling vine of pure devotion. These *upaśākhās* have been described as “waves” (*taraṅga*) in the great ocean of *bhakti*. At this stage in the *sādhaka*'s practice of devotion, he frolics (*raṅga*) in the waves of worship, fame and so forth. For this reason, it has been called *taraṅga-raṅgiṇī*, or “frolicking in the waves”.

Thus ends the Bhāvānuvāda of the Second Shower of Nectar,
which describes the different types of bhajana-kriyā,
having delineated the first three stages of bhakti –
śraddhā, sādhu-saṅga and bhajana-kriyā – in sequence.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Just as water by nature flows downward, people’s affection naturally flows toward a devotee. Those who engage in one-pointed devotion to Śrī Hari, the Soul of all souls, satisfy the whole of creation by their devotional worship. The *Padma Purāṇa* confirms this:

*yenārcito haris tena / tarpitāni jaganty api
rajyanti jantavas tatra / jaṅgamāḥ sthāvarā api*

All inhabitants of the world are satisfied with a person who has worshipped Śrī Bhagavān. All moving and non-moving entities are attracted to him.

The result of such attraction is that they begin to honour and worship the devotee. Not only that, but the benefit of all three types of happiness resulting from mundane enjoyment, spiritual bliss and mystic powers automatically manifests for him.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described this in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.31):

*siddhayaḥ paramāścaryā / bhuktir muktis ca śāsvatī
nityam ca paramānando / bhaved govinda-bhaktitaḥ*

Those who engage in devotional service to Śrī Govinda easily attain astonishing mystic powers (such as *anīmā*, the power to become smaller than the smallest). In other words, they attain material happiness, the happiness of liberation and eternal spiritual happiness.

Pure devotees want nothing apart from loving devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; they do not want any happiness related to wealth, worship, fame, material enjoyment, liberation, mystic powers or personal happiness, for all such things are unfavourable for *bhakti*. Wealth, worship and fame are the parasitic creepers, *upasākhās*, of the wish-fulfilling vine of pure devotion. Irrigated by the water of the *sādhaka*’s hearing and chanting, these *upasākhās*

flourish, overgrow the vine of pure devotion and stifle it, preventing it from growing. Therefore, it is the *sādhaka*'s duty to cut these *upaśākhās* beforehand. In His instructions to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

*kintu jadi latār saṅge uthe 'upaśākhā'
bhukti-mukti-vāñchā, jato asaṅkhya tāra lekha*

*'niṣiddhācāra', 'kuṭīnātī', 'jīva-himsana'
'labha', 'pūjā', 'pratiṣṭhādi' jato upaśākhā-gaṇa*

*seka-jala pāiyā upaśākhā bāḍi' jāya
stabdha haiyā mūla-śākhā bāḍite nā pāya*

*prathamei upaśākhār karaye chedana
tabe mūla-śākhā bāḍi' jāya vṛndāvana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 19.158–161)

Sometimes, the parasitic creepers of desire for enjoyment or liberation sprout alongside the creeper of devotion. These parasitic creepers are unlimited. They include forbidden behaviour, duplicity, violence to other living entities, and the desire for wealth, fame and adoration. They drink up all the water of the *sādhaka*'s hearing and chanting. In this way, they are nourished and flourish, while the growth of the *bhakti-latā* is curtailed. An intelligent devotee must uproot a parasitic creeper as soon as he spots it, so the original vine of devotion can grow and reach [the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in] Vṛndāvana.

These parasitic creepers have also been described as “waves” in the vast ocean of *bhakti*. In the stage of unsteady devotional service (*aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*), the devotee experiences his activities of devotion as frolicking in these waves. In other words, he takes pleasure in the attainment of praise, worship and wealth, which are the result of his devotional

activities. Consequently, these results are formidable *anarthas*, or unwanted desires that act as obstacles to devotion. This stage of the *sādhaka* is called *taraṅga-raṅgiṇī*.

Within the Third Shower, the topic of *anarthas* arising from *bhakti* will be discussed.

**Thus ends the Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti on the Second Shower of Nectar,
which describes the different types of bhajana-kriyā,
having delineated the first three stages of bhakti –
śraddhā, sādhu-saṅga, and bhajana-kriyā – in sequence.**

Third Shower of Nectar

Elimination of All Impediments to Bhakti



Sādhana-bhakti
Anartha-nivṛtti

Text 1

1a ~ The four types of anarthas & a description of them

athānarthānām nivṛttiḥ | te cānarthāś catur-vidhāḥ—duṣkṛtotthā sukr̥totthā aparādhottā bhakty-utthās ceti | tatra duṣkṛtotthā dūrabhiniveśa-dveṣa-rāgādyāḥ pūrvoktāḥ kleśā eva | sukr̥totthā bhogābhiniveśā vividhā eva | te ca kleśāntah-pātina iti kecit | aparādhottā ity atra nāmāparādhā eva gṛhyante |

Bhāvānuvāda: Next, the destruction of obstacles (*anartha-nivṛtti*) is described. *Anarthas* are of four types: (1) *Duṣkṛtottha* – impediments arising from previous sinful activities. This refers to the miseries (*kleśas*) previously mentioned, such as absorption in material objects (*abhiniveśa*), material attachment (*rāga*) and hatred (*dveṣa*). (2) *Sukṛtottha* – impediments that arise due to past pious activities. This refers to absorption in various types of facilities for material enjoyment. Some also count it among the types of *kleśa*. (3) *Aparādhottā* – impediments arising from past offences. Here, this refers solely to offences to the holy name, *nāma-aparādha* (not to offences in service, *sevā-aparādha*). (4) *Bhakty-uttha* – impediments that arise due to imperfectly performed devotion.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Having described *śraddhā* (faith), *sādhu-saṅga* (saintly association) and *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā* (unsteady devotional service) in the Second Shower of Nectar, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura describes in this Third Shower the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti* (the destruction of impediments). That which has no *artha*, or real value, is known as *an-artha*, worthless.

The general meaning of *artha* is “money” or “wealth”, but in truth, *artha* specifically means the attainment of the supreme spiritual entity (*paramārtha-vastu*). That which is devoid of any worth is known as an *anartha*. The only real wealth (*paramārtha*) is Śrī Kṛṣṇa and loving service to Him. Consequently, any desire other than to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa and lovingly

serve Him is an *anartha*, a worthless desire. The aspiration for material enjoyment is a detrimental desire. Indeed, it is the root of all other *anarthas*. Even the desire for liberation is an *anartha*. Constitutionally, the living entity is a servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; therefore, Kṛṣṇa and pure loving service to Him are factually the living entity's only *artha*, or wealth. Whatever is separate from this or an obstacle to it is not his highest wealth (*paramārtha*) and is known as an *anartha*.

Bhakti, or *bhāgavata-dharma*, is the supremely astonishing, all-powerful *sādhana*. Practitioners who are already free from *anarthas* easily make their life successful simply by coming in slight contact with this *sādhana*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is stated:

śruto 'nupaṭhito dhyāta / ādr̥to vānumoditaḥ
sadyaḥ punāti sad-dharmo / deva-viśva-druho 'pi hi

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.12)

Bhakti, or *bhāgavata-dharma*, is such an extraordinary spiritual process that whoever simply hears about it, speaks its glories, meditates upon it, accepts it within his heart with respect and faith, or appreciates a person who has begun to practise it, becomes purified in a moment, even if he is averse to Bhagavān and the entire world.

Obstacles to practising *bhakti* are called *anarthas*, and they are described in detail in this Third Shower. For this reason, it is incumbent on every *sādhaka* to repeatedly study this Third Shower with care. Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura has said, “*antarāya nāhi jāya, ei se parama bhaya* – my *anarthas* have not gone; hence, I am exceedingly fearful.”

The detrimental desire for material enjoyment that resides in living entities who are bound within the net of the illusory energy since time immemorial is the root cause of their *anarthas*. These *anarthas* are of four types: *duṣkṛtottha*, *sukṛtottha*, *aparādhottha* and *bhakti-uttha*.

- (1) *Duṣkṛtottha-anarthas* arise from past sinful activities and refer to the five types of *kleśa* (suffering): (i) *avidyā* – ignorance, (ii) *asmitā* – false egoism, (iii) *rāga* – material attachment, (iv) *dveṣa* – aversion, or hatred and (v) *abhiniveśa* – material absorption. These have already been described in the Second Shower.

In essence, because living entities who are averse to the service of Kṛṣṇa since a time without beginning possess ill motives, they are bound by ignorance (*avidyā*). As a result, they develop the false egoism (*asmitā*) that the body is “I” and that anything related to the body is “mine”. They thus develop attachment (*rāga*) to their material objects of sense gratification and affection for them. And they feel deep aversion (*dveṣa*) to the threefold miseries¹. The consequence of such attachment to the body and bodily relationships and intense absorption (*abhiniveśa*) in them is that deep impressions are made in the living entity’s heart. These impressions obstruct one’s ability to perform *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* at the time of devotional practice, and are therefore called *duṣkṛti-jāta-anarthas* [*duṣkṛtottha-anarthas*].

- (2) *Sukṛtottha-anarthas* are desires for happiness in the temporary heavenly planets and so forth, and they are the result of performing pious, or selfishly motivated, actions (*sat-karma*, or *sakāma*) in past lives. These desires are the obstacles known as *sukṛtottha-anarthas*.

Desires for material enjoyment arising in the heart of the *sādhaka* at the time of devotional practice are the result of impressions created by past pious activities and are called *sukṛti-jāta-anarthas* [*sukṛtottha-anarthas*]. The desire for liberation is also a *sukṛti-jāta-anartha*. It is

1 The threefold miseries are (1) suffering inflicted by one’s own mind and body, known as *adyātmika*, (2) suffering inflicted by others, known as *adhibhautika* and (3) suffering inflicted by the demigods or material nature generally in the form of drought, floods, famine and so on, known as *adhidaivika*. –Ed.

never possible to taste *bhajana-rasa* as long as the heart yearns for either material enjoyment or liberation. It has thus been said:

*bhukti-mukti-sprhā yāvat / piśācī hr̥di vartate
tāvad bhakti-sukhasyātra / katham abhyudayo bhavet*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.22)

As long as the two witches of the desires for material enjoyment and for liberation from material bondage remain in the heart, how can the transcendental bliss of pure devotion possibly arise?

For this reason, Patañjali and other prominent great sages have included the category of *sukṛti-jāta-anartha* within the previously mentioned five types of miseries (*kleśas*), such as *avidyā* and *asmitā*.

- (3) *Aparādhotta-anarthas* are obstacles arising from offences. These *anarthas* are, for the most part, the greatest impediments in the performance of *bhajana*. It is for this reason that Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has elaborated on them. From a general perspective, offence and sin appear to be synonymous, but devotional scriptures clarify that there is a huge difference between them. Merely a semblance (*ābhāsa*) of *bhajana* vanquishes a host of sins, just as a fire completely destroys a massive stack of cotton. But an offence is not so easily vanquished. It is only by acknowledging one's offence and bitterly lamenting for it that atonement is possible. A sinful person can easily achieve perfection on the strength of his *bhajana*, but it is never possible for an offensive person to attain perfection. To harm another living entity, to steal, to have illicit relations with another's wife, to engage in useless gossip and argument, to use harsh language, to behave in a fiendish manner, to perform improper acts, to give distress to another, to criticize others, to drink liquor, to eat meat, eggs and other forbidden foodstuffs, etc. have all been classified in the *smṛti-śāstra* as *pāpa*, or sin. They have been

divided into nine types: (i) *ati-pātaka*, (ii) *mahā-pātaka*, (iii) *anu-pātaka*, (iv) *upa-pātaka*, (v) *saṅkarī-gaṇa*, (vi) *apātrī-karaṇa*, (vii) *jāti-bhramśa-kara*, (viii) *malāvaha* and (ix) *prakīrṇa*.²

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 8.26–30) states:

*eka 'kṛṣṇa-nāme' kare sarva-pāpa nāśa
premera kāraṇa bhakti karena prakāśa
premera udaye haya premera vikāra
sveda-kampa-pulakādi gadgadāśru-dhāra
anāyāse bhava-kṣaya, kṛṣṇera sevana
eka kṛṣṇa-nāmer phale pāi eta dhana
heno kṛṣṇa-nāma jadi laya bahu-bāra
tabu jadi prema nahe, nahe āśru-dhāra
tabe jāni, aparādha tāhāte pracura
kṛṣṇa-nāma-bīja tāhe nā kare aṅkura*

Uttering *kṛṣṇa-nāma* just once annihilates the entirety of one's sinful acts (*pāpa*), resulting in the manifestation of *bhakti*, which is the cause of *prema*. The awakening of *prema* causes bodily transformations such as perspiration, trembling, horripilation, a faltering voice and tears in the eyes. By uttering *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, a person's cycle of birth and death is easily destroyed and he attains loving service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is so powerful that the fruit of uttering it just once is abundant transcendental wealth. Nonetheless, if a person utters *kṛṣṇa-nāma* repeatedly, but still *prema* does not arise and tears do not fill his eyes, it can be understood that he has committed excessive offences in chanting, and thus the seed of *kṛṣṇa-nāma* does not sprout.

² Please refer to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's commentary on Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (*Madhya-khaṇḍa* 13.54), in which he provides an extensive description of these classifications of sin. –Ed.

From these statements, it can be easily understood how offences pose fearful obstacles to one's progress in *bhakti*.

It is because a person identifies his self with the body that a false ego, or a desire for material enjoyment, manifests in his heart and is the cause of his performing sinful activity, such as stealing another's wealth, committing violent acts, telling lies, and eating meat and fish. The body is called *anātma* ("non-soul"); that is, it is an inert object. Identifying oneself with the body, which is a non-conscious entity, coupled with the desire to enjoy insentient objects with one's body, mind and words, results in impious acts known as sin (*pāpa*). As sinful acts are connected solely with insentient material objects, they cannot touch the *ātmā* (soul); therefore, the effects of such sins are inflicted only upon the insentient material body and mind.

Compared to sinful acts, offences (*aparādhas*) are unlimitedly more severe and dreadful. The effects of offences directly cover the soul. When someone takes shelter of the path of *bhakti* and practises the limbs of *bhakti* such as hearing, chanting and remembering, then such activities are transcendental, or spiritual. They are performed for the soul's progressive spiritual journey. The objects of these activities – Bhagavān, the devotee, the holy name or the holy abodes of Bhagavān – are transcendental. Any neglect or disrespect of them due to perceiving them as material is not merely a sin but an *aparādha*. Thus, a condemnable activity in relation to inert matter is called *pāpa* (sinful activity), and a condemnable act in relation to spiritually conscious entities is called *aparādha* (offence).

The result of sinful activity affects only the temporary, perishable material body, while the result of offence actually covers the soul of the embodied living entity, creating terrible obstacles on the path of his *sādhana-bhajana*.

Offences committed to pure devotees, who are repositories of loving devotional sentiments for Bhagavān, are even more detrimental than offences committed to the object of such love [Bhagavān Himself]. Committing an

offence to a pure devotee results in completely uprooting *bhakti* or in drying her up at the root, causing her to vanish. Offences to Bhagavān, on the other hand, cover the tendency to engage in *bhakti* – or cause *bhakti* to shrink – but when the offence is mitigated, *bhakti* reappears. It is thus understood from the scriptures that an offence to a Vaiṣṇava is more grievous than an offence to Bhagavān.

Upon examination, it is clearly evident that the root cause of *aparādha* is an injurious act performed with envy and is thus the opposite of affection. Because *aparādha* is rooted in this envy and hatred (*dveṣa*), it creates such a barrier between great personalities (*mahāpuruṣas*), who are most worthy of our affection, and *sādhakas*, who actually need the protective umbrella of the *mahāpuruṣas*' affection, that a person considers himself topmost, even though he is factually the lowest, and as most intelligent, even though he is most foolish. His material conception of *mahāpuruṣas* thus leads to his disrespecting or neglecting them.

Śāstra uses the word *mahat* to indicate *śrī gurudeva*, the revered Vaiṣṇavas and the living entities residing in the transcendental abodes of Bhagavān. Their bodies are completely transcendental, beyond the three modes of material nature. One who maintains a material conception of these transcendental personalities will commit the offence of neglecting them. Moreover, even if one respects these great personalities from a material perspective, such alleged respect also equates to disrespect and deprives the *sādhakas* of receiving the affection, benevolence or compassion of these great personalities, who are inherently magnanimous and supremely compassionate.

The meaning of *rādha* is “satisfaction”. *Apa-rādha* (offence) dispels satisfaction, or drives it away. That action which dispels the satisfaction of Bhagavān, *śrī nāma*, *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas is called *aparādha*.

The mercy of *bhakti*, the *bhakta* and Bhagavān are the primary means of attaining Bhagavān. Therefore, not accepting a position of subordination to them, having no faith in them, and disrespecting and criticizing them

create monumental obstacles to attaining Bhagavān. One should never disobey them. One can ensure success by carefully surrendering to them with complete understanding of their spiritual nature and thus engage in affectionate service to them with proper respect and honour. This is the sole method to remove *aparādha*. Only then is it possible to engage in *bhajana* that is free from offence.

1b ~ By chanting the holy name, reciting prayers and constantly performing service, *sevā-aparādhas* are eradicated

sevāparādhānām tu nāmabhis tat-tan-nivartaka-stotra-pāṭhaiḥ sevā-sātatyena ca bhavyasya vivekinaḥ prāyaḥ prati-dinam evopāśamenāṅkurī-bhāvānupalabdheḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: *Sevā-aparādhas*, if committed by persons who are prudent and righteous, are for the most part nullified on a day-to-day basis by taking shelter of chanting the holy name, reciting the various prayers that eradicate these offences, and constantly engaging in the service of the Lord. As a result, *sevā-aparādhas* cannot even sprout.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Thereafter, the author is explaining how the obstacles arising from offences (*aparādhotta-anarthas*) refer only to offences to the holy name (*nāma-aparādha*), and not to offences performed in the service of Bhagavān (*sevā-aparādha*).

Wise, saintly persons, by regularly chanting the holy name of Śrī Hari, singing His eulogies, reciting various prayers and constantly engaging in service to Him, ensure the daily removal of offences committed to Him in service. But if a person repeatedly commits *sevā-aparādhas* on the strength of his chanting of the holy name or on the strength of his recitation of eulogies, then those *sevā-aparādhas* will transform into *nāma-aparādhas*. Therefore, it is necessary for the *sādhaka* to be thoroughly acquainted with the various *sevā-aparādhas*.

In the *Padma Purāna*, thirty-two *sevā-aparādhas* have been described: (1) to enter a temple wearing shoes or slippers, (2) to enter a temple carried on a palanquin or a carrier, (3) to not observe the festivals of one’s worshipful deity, (4) to fail to offer obeisance to one’s worshipful deity when present before Him, (5) to offer prayers to Bhagavān while one still has food in one’s mouth or on one’s hands, (6) to offer prayers to Bhagavān in an impure state, (7) to offer obeisance to the Lord with only one hand, (8) to show one’s back to the deities while circumambulating them, (9) to spread one’s legs before the deity, (10) to sit before the deity with one’s hands binding one’s raised knees, (11) to lay down or sleep before the deity, (12) to eat in front of the deity, (13) to speak falsehoods before the deity, (14) to shout or talk loudly before the deity, (15) to gossip before the deity, (16) to cry before the deity, (17) to show favour to or chastise others in front of the deity, (18) to speak harsh or cruel language before the deity, (19) to cover oneself with a blanket while standing before the deity or while engaged in service to Him, (20) to blaspheme others before the deity, (21) to glorify others before the deity, (22) to use vulgar language before the deity, (23) to pass wind before the deity, (24) to offer the deity items of inferior quality even if one has the ability to offer high quality paraphernalia; for example, simply offering water and second rate items at the time of worship, even though one is capable of offering the primary paraphernalia used in service, like flowers, *tulasī*, incense, ghee lamp and foodstuffs, (25) to eat foodstuffs not offered to the deity, (26) to not offer seasonal fruit and flowers as soon as they are available, (27) to offer the first portion of something to someone and then give the remaining part to the deity, (28) to sit with one’s back to the deity, (29) to offer obeisance to others before the deity, (30) to remain silent before the spiritual master, meaning to not offer him praise or obeisance and not answer his questions, (31) to praise oneself before the deity and (32) to blaspheme the demigods.

The *Varāha Purāna*, also, mentions some offences to be avoided. They are briefly enumerated here as follows: (1) to eat food grains offered

by a king [or by a grossly materialistic person], (2) to worship or touch the Lord in a dark room, (3) to go before the Lord without following the proper procedure, (4) to open the door of the temple without ringing a bell, (5) to collect ingredients of service that have been seen or touched by a dog, (6) to break silence while worshipping the Lord, (7) to leave the worship of the deity to pass stool or urine, (8) to offer incense first without offering scented unguents such as sandalwood pulp or flower garlands, (9) to worship the Lord with forbidden flowers [such as red hibiscus or *dhaturā* flowers], (10) to worship the Lord without having cleaned one's teeth, (11) to worship the Lord without bathing after sexual intercourse, (12) to render service to the Lord after touching a woman on her menstrual cycle, an oil lamp or a dead body, (13) to render service to the Lord while wearing red, blue or unwashed cloth, to wear cloth belonging to someone else or to wear dirty cloth and (14) to touch the deity and offer worship after seeing a dead body, after passing wind, after showing anger, after visiting a crematorium, while suffering from indigestion or after taking an oil massage.

Additional *sevā-aparādhas* are described in other scriptures: (1) to disregard scriptures about Bhagavān and introduce other literatures, (2) to chew betel nut while standing before the Lord, (3) to worship the Lord with flowers kept on or in forbidden leaves such as those from the castor-oil plant, (4) to perform worship at an inauspicious time that is opportune for demons, (5) to perform worship while seated on a wooden stool or while sitting on the floor and not on an appropriate seat, or *āsana*, (6) to touch the deity with the left hand while bathing Him, (7) to worship the Lord with flowers that have wilted or been procured by begging, (8) to spit at the time of worship, (9) to boast, "I am a first-class *pujārī* (priest)", (10) to wear *tiryak-puṇḍra tilaka* [horizontal *tilaka* worn by followers of Lord Śiva] at the time of worship, (11) to enter the temple without washing one's feet, (12) to offer grains to Śrī Hari that have been cooked by non-devotees, (13) to worship the Lord in front of a non-devotee, (14) to worship the Lord without first worshipping Śrī Nṛsimhadeva, the destroyer of obstacles, (15) to worship

the Lord having just seen a *kāpālīka* mendicant³ (16) to bathe the deity with water that has been touched by fingernails, (17) to worship the Lord while one’s body is perspiring, (18) to step over or mistreat the Lord’s remnant (*prasādi*) items [such as foodstuffs and flower garlands] and (19) to take an oath before or in the name of the Lord.

At the time of serving the Lord, intelligent devotees are for the most part very careful to not commit these *sevā-aparādhas*. They are not to be at all lax about this. However, if any offence is committed inadvertently, the devotees’ daily performance of *nāma-sankīrtana*, recitation of various prayers and rendering continuous service nullifies that offence, and there is no possibility of it sprouting again.

1c ~ Performing sin on the strength of the holy name is *nāma- aparādha*

*kintu tat-tad-upāśama-sambhava-balena tatra sāvadhānatā-śaithilye sevāparādhā
api nāmāparādhā eva syuḥ | tathā hy uktam—“nāmno balād yasya hi pāpa
buddhir” iti | tatra nāma ity upalakṣaṇam bhakti-mātrasyaivopāśamakasya |
dharma-śāstre ’pi prāyaścitta-balena pāpācaraṇe na tasya pāpasya kṣayaḥ
pratyuta gāḍhataiva |*

Bhāvānuvāda: If, however, a person thinks, “Chanting the holy name and reciting prayers nullifies *sevā-aparādha*,” and does not carefully avoid committing offences in service, then, due to his laxity, his *sevā-aparādha* culminates in *nāma-aparādha*.

In this way, scripture states that committing sin on the strength of chanting the holy name results in an offence. The term “on the strength of chanting the holy name” is used in a generic sense and indicates that this applies equally to every other devotional practice that absolves sins. Even

³ The *kāpālīka* mendicants are tantric materialists who carry skulls in their hands. They are not Vaiṣṇavas, and they follow a lifestyle that is opposed to *śāstra*. –Ed.

scriptures on religiosity (*dharmā-śāstras*) state that a person may perform an atonement to nullify the effect of a sinful act, but if his intention is to later commit more sinful acts, then his sins will not actually be destroyed. Instead, they will solidify and take an indelible form.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: A person may think, “If I commit offences in the course of my service, those offences will be nullified by my daily performance of prayers, my chanting of the holy name and my regular service, so my *bhakti* will incur no loss.” If, with this idea, he does not attentively avoid *sevā-aparādha*, then it will no longer just be *sevā-aparādha* but will transform into a fearsome *nāma-aparādha*.

Literatures on *bhakti* have stated, “That person who repeatedly commits sin on the strength of chanting the holy name is indeed a great offender.” Even the *dharmā-śāstras* have mentioned that no method of atonement can nullify the sins of an incorrigible and unregretful sinner habituated to performing sinful activity on the strength of various methods of atonement (*prāyaścitta*). Instead, his sins become as hard and as difficult to destroy as a thunderbolt.

Here, sinning on the strength of the holy name has been discussed in a generic sense. Committing sin on the strength of any of the limbs of *bhakti* converts that sin into an offence.

1d ~ On the path of *bhakti*, omitting any *aṅga* (limb) does not constitute an offence

nanv evam—“na hy aṅgapakrame dhvaṁso mad-dharmasyoddhavāṅv api”
iti “viśeṣato daśārṇo ’yaṁ japa-mātreṇa siddhi-da” ity ādi vākya-balena tat-
tad-aṅgānām ananuṣṭhāne vaikalyādāv api vā jāte nāmāparādhaḥ prasajjeta |
maivam | nāmno balād yasyety atra pāpe buddhiś cikīrṣādi | tad eva hi pāpaṁ
yatra sati nindā-prāyaścittādi-śravaṇam | na ca karma-mārga iva bhakti-mārgē
’pi aṅga-vaikalyādau kvāpi nindā-śravaṇam iti na tatrāparādha-śankā |

Bhāvānuvāda: It is stated in scripture (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.29.20), “My dear Uddhava, once begun, there is never any loss in the unmotivated attempt to perform devotional service, even if there is some defect in one’s practice.” Furthermore, it is emphasized, “Simply chanting the ten-syllable *mantra* grants one all perfection.” But if, on the basis of these statements from *śāstra*, a person does not engage in performing certain limbs of *bhakti* or performs them imperfectly, won’t it result in *nāma-aparādha*?

Certainly not. Committing sin on the strength of the holy name only results in offence when one possesses *pāpa-buddhi*. In this statement, *pāpa-buddhi* is defined as deliberately committing sinful activity on the strength of the holy name. Wicked acts are condemned in the scriptures, and processes of atonement can be found for them. Unlike the path of *karma*, however, any discrepancy or failure to perform a limb of *bhakti* is not condemned in *śāstra*. Therefore, in this regard, there is no question of any offence.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: It has been described that *aparādha* is a very powerful obstacle in *bhakti*, or *bhajana*. It has also been said that committing sinful activity on the strength of the holy name is a frightful *nāma-aparādha*. Now in this regard, one more doubt is being addressed. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Uddhava:

*na hy aṅgopakrame dhvaṁso / mad-dharmasyoddhavāṅv api
mayā vyavasitaḥ samyaṅ / nirguṇatvād anāśiṣaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.29.20)

My beloved Uddhava, *bhāgavata-dharma* (*bhakti*) has such an astonishing influence that once practice of it begins, any result attained is not even fractionally lost, even if one does not attain complete perfection in that practice. No type of obstacle can bring about the slightest variation in the effects of *bhakti*. Since it is devoid of any self-interest (*niṣkāma*) and since it is transcendental (*nirguṇa*), I Myself have determined it to be topmost.

In other words, *karma*, *yoga* and other processes only produce results if, from the inception of one's practice until completion, every limb is performed in a consummate and unhindered manner, otherwise such processes are useless.

But this is not the characteristic of *bhakti*, or *bhāgavata-dharma*. Even if a person begins his practice and abandons it without seeing it through to completion, or even if he does not practise some of its constituent parts, still, his practice of *bhakti* can never be fruitless. The nature of *bhakti* is completely devoid of any contamination by the material modes. There is no question of a transcendental object ever being destroyed. A piece of gold may accidentally fall among filthy objects or into a filthy place. After the filthy objects have completely decayed, decomposed and vanished, however, the gold nugget has not been destroyed and can be recovered. In the same way, a person may practise *bhāgavata-dharma* to a certain extent and then encounter obstacles [and cease his practice], but when these obstacles are later removed, he certainly returns to the stage from which he had discontinued. In other words, he resumes his practice of *bhakti* from where he left off, and gradually that practice becomes complete and certainly yields the fruit of *prema*. Similarly, merely the act of reciting the ten-syllable *mantra* grants all perfection. This is understood.

Naturally, upon reading this, the following doubt may arise: "Is the omission of any limb of *bhakti* not also an offence to the holy name, committed on the strength of the other *aṅgas* of *bhakti* or on the strength of chanting one's *mantra*?"

A person achieves perfection even though he may not have completed his practice of a particular *aṅga* of *bhakti*, or he may not have practised all of the other *aṅgas* of *bhakti* but merely recites the ten-syllable *mantra*. This perfection is rooted in the strength of a specific *aṅga* of *bhakti*: chanting the holy name. As a result, the practitioner is excused of all offences and of the scriptural rules and regulations and still attains the fruit of perfection. Is this [incomplete practice of an *aṅga* or the omission of some *aṅgas*], therefore, not a type of offence to the chanting of the holy name?

In answer to this, the author says, “No, this does not constitute *nāma-aparādha*.” One who commits misdeeds on the strength of the holy name thinks as follows: “Let me sin now, and then I will eradicate the sinful reaction by performing devotional service, giving a certain amount in charity, performing a certain amount of pious activity, and chanting a certain amount of *harināma*.” When sin is committed with this mentality it becomes *nāma-aparādha*. Sinful activities are those despicable deeds for which one is criticized in society. They are described in the scriptures, which also prescribe forms of penance.

However, the incomplete performance of a limb of *bhakti* or omitting it is not described as sinful in the scriptures. Nor is any penance prescribed. Scripture does not instruct us to practise *bhāgavata-dharma* or to recite *mantras* while carrying a desire to sin in the heart. Both are performed solely with the desire to attain Bhagavān. If in the performance of *bhakti*, the *sādhaka* becomes afflicted with some disease or dies, or if he undergoes some other impediment and consequently does not perfect his practice and attain his ultimate goal, there is no question of his incomplete practice being categorized as sin, for he had no trace of an intention to commit sin.

Specifically, on the path of *karma* (fruitive action), a slight shortcoming in following the prescribed rules and regulations in regard to the recitation of one’s *mantras* or in one’s conduct is considered a deficiency in following the limbs of *karma*. As a result of these shortcomings, the path of *karma* is not able to bestow its fruit.

But the path of *bhakti* is not like this. By its very nature, *bhakti* is self-manifesting, all-powerful and fully independent, so there is no possibility of an *aṅga* being incomplete. The performance of any *aṅga* is automatically complete. Even if it is left incomplete, it surely bestows its fruit. It is never fruitless, and the devotee is not criticized by anyone in society. The scriptures also never criticize such a devotee and do not prescribe any form of atonement for him. Therefore, according to the above-mentioned scriptural statements, there is no danger of there being any *nāma-aparādha*.

In essence, it is *nāma-aparādha* to chant the holy name or perform any limb of devotion with a conscious desire to sin. In other words, it is *nāma-aparādha* to desire to purify oneself of sinful activities knowingly performed on the strength of the holy name or on the strength of any other limb of *bhakti*. Such a sin becomes as hard as a thunderbolt, and one cannot get free from it.

1e ~ By taking shelter of bhāgavata-dharma, all obstacles are destroyed

yad uktam—“ye vai bhagavatā proktā upāyā hy ātma-labdhaye | añjah pumsām aviduṣām viddhi bhāgavatān hi tān || yān āsthāya naro rājan na pramādyeta karhicit | dhāvan nimīlya vā netre na skhalen na pated iha ||” iti | atra nimīlyeti karṣṭṛ-vyāpāra-liṅgena vidyamāne eva netre mudrayitvā tatrāpi dhāvan pāda-nyāsa-sthalam atikramyāpi vrajan na skhaled iti akṣarārthā-labdher bhagavad-dharmam āśritya tad-aṅgāni sarvaṇi jñātvāpi ajña iva kānicid ullāṅghyāpi anuṣṭhan na pratyavāyī syāt nāpi phalād bhraśyed ity eṣaiva vyākhyā upapadyate |

Bhāvānuvāda: The following statement is seen in *sāstra*: “Even ignorant persons easily attain their eternal well-being – Śrī Bhagavān – by following all the methods He has prescribed. Know these methods to be *bhāgavata-dharma* (*bhakti*). O King, by taking shelter of *bhāgavata-dharma*, a person will never be hindered by any obstacle. Even while running on this path with his eyes closed – that is to say, with some lapse in his proper observance of the prescribed rules and regulations – he will not stumble or fall from it, nor will he be cheated of its ultimate result” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.34–35).

Here the words *nimīlya-netra* mean “by closing the eyes” and refer to the action a person performs. Indirectly, *nimīlya* indicates “despite having eyes, one closes them.” That is, it suggests wilful closing of the eyes. The word *dhāvan* (“running”) refers to taking longer strides than normal

without stumbling. Similarly, a person may take shelter of *bhāgavata-dharma* and may have knowledge of the limbs of *bhakti*, but still, like an ignorant person, he may skip over some of the secondary *aṅgas*. If, however, he continues to follow the primary limbs (hearing, chanting, remembering, etc.), then there will neither be the fault of neglect nor will there be any hindrance, and he will not be cheated of the fruit of *bhāgavata-dharma*. This analogy is indeed appropriate.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In the previous section, while describing the different types of offences, which are powerful obstacles to *bhakti*, or *anarthas*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura also explains that *bhāgavata-dharma* bestows the full result of devotional practice, even if a person fails to perform some of its *aṅgas*. In other words, there is no possibility of such omission constituting *aparādha*. Now the revered author explains how a person makes rapid advancement on the path of *bhajana*, despite breaching the *aṅgas* of *bhakti*, or *bhāgavata-dharma*. There is no fear of his falling down or committing an offence. The author establishes this on the evidence of verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.34–35). Śrī Kavi Yogīndra says to King Nimi:

*ye vai bhagavatā proktā / upāyā hy ātma-labdhave
aṅgaḥ puṁsām aviduṣām / viddhi bhāgavatān hi tān*

*yān āsthāya naro rājan / na pramādyeta karhicit
dhāvan nimīlya vā netre / na skhalen na pated iha*

By following all the methods Bhagavān has prescribed, even ignorant persons easily attain their eternal well-being: Śrī Bhagavān Himself. Know these methods to be *bhāgavata-dharma*. O King, by taking shelter of *bhāgavata-dharma*, a person will never be hindered by any obstacle. Even while running on this path of *bhakti* with his eyes closed – that is to say, with some lapse in his proper observance of the prescribed rules and regulations – he will not stumble or fall from it, nor will he be cheated of its ultimate result.

Various ṛṣis and *munis* (sages and seers) have articulated aspects of their respective religious processes, but no one besides Śrī Bhagavān Himself can describe *bhāgavata-dharma* (*bhakti-dharma*) and His own real nature (*svarūpa*). It is for this reason that Bhagavān has done so. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava:

*kālena naṣṭā pralaye / vāṇīyaṁ veda-samjñitā
mayāḍau brahmaṇe proktā / dharmo yasyāṁ mad-ātmakāḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.3)

My dear Uddhava, with the inevitable passing of time came the period of annihilation, and the transcendental message of the Vedas was lost. For this reason, at the time of the following creation, I again instructed this Vedic knowledge to Brahmā in accord with My resolve. My instructions to him enunciate the path of devotion to Me (*bhāgavata-dharma*).

The fruit of *bhāgavata-dharma* is the attainment of *prema* for Bhagavān and direct service to Him. Since Bhagavān has personally explained with His own lotus mouth how to attain such *prema* and loving service, that explanation is trustworthy and flawless. Such an authentic and accurate exposition is impossible for others. It is for this reason that Bhagavān Himself has described *bhāgavata-dharma* with His own lotus mouth: “*Bhāgavata-dharma* is the process by which even an ignorant person can easily attain Me, the Supreme Soul.” By these words of Śrī Bhagavān, every human being has been granted eligibility for *bhakti*.

In the same manner, it has been explained that since *bhāgavata-dharma* easily bestows all perfection, it is far more feasible to attain perfection by the process of *bhakti* than by the rigorous practices of impersonal knowledge (*jñāna*) and mysticism (*yoga*). By taking shelter of the process of *bhāgavata-dharma*, even if a person runs with closed eyes, there is no possibility of his stumbling or falling from the path. Here the words *netre nimīlya*, meaning “with eyes closed”, indicate the specific action performed by the doer. [That

is, the performer of *bhakti* is closing his eyes.] The word *dhāvan* (“running”) here indicates that due to running very rapidly toward his destination, a person is taking longer strides than normal.

In other words, if someone runs very quickly toward a specific destination, his feet will extend beyond where they would land in his normal stride. Since his vision remains completely fixed on his destination, it is impossible for him to look at the path he is traversing, even if his eyes are wide open.

In the same way, having taken shelter of the path of *bhāgavata-dharma*, the *sādhaka* may be cognizant of all the different limbs of *bhakti*. In order to arrive quickly at his destination, however, he may skip the practice of some *aṅgas* just as an ignorant man would, and only practise the very essence of devotional service itself. Despite these omissions, he is not guilty of the fault of neglect, nor is he deprived of the result of his endeavours. This explanation is to be understood here.

If ~ “Closing the eyes” does not mean ignorance

nimīlanam nāmājñānam tasyāpi śruti-smṛti viṣayāv ity eṣā tu na saṅgacchate mukhyārtha-bādha-yogāt |

Bhāvānuvāda: Here, the word *nimīlana* (“closed”) does not indicate ignorance of the Śrutis or Smṛtis, because this would obstruct the primary meaning of the verse.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Here, the word *nimīlana*, or proceeding on the path of *bhakti* with eyes closed, should not be taken to mean ignorance of the Śruti or Smṛti scriptures, as this conclusion is not logical. One can accept the indirect intended, meaning (*lakṣaṇa-artha*) of a word only when the direct, literal meaning (*mukhya-artha*) is difficult to comprehend. For example, the literal meaning of the phrase *gaṅgāyām ghoṣaḥ* is “the cowherd village exists in the Gaṅgā”. This statement is absurd, because it is impossible for anyone

to live in the current of the Gaṅgā River. Therefore, the phrase is correctly understood from the intended meaning, which indicates that the cowherd village is located on the bank of the Gaṅgā.

However, in the previous section, the direct meaning [that closing one's eyes indicates ignorance] obscures the intended meaning of the statement. It is mentioned that a person closes his eyes despite having eyes, or the ability to see. In other words, although he is conversant with the instructions of saintly persons, the scriptures and the spiritual master, he does not follow standard practices and regulative principles, because he is moving at great speed. His not doing so is due to the power of his attachment to attain his goal. There may also be another good reason for him to violate the standard injunctions. Nevertheless, the devotee neither fails to reach his destination nor acquires any demerit. This is the verse's intended meaning. We should not think that not practising all the prescribed aspects of *bhakti* indicates a deliberate disregard or laxity.

1g ~ The sevā-aparādhas mentioned in scripture cannot be disregarded

na ca dhāvan nimīlyety etad eva dvātrimśad-aparādhā-bhāvam api kroḍi-karotv iti vācyam | yān bhagavatā proktān upāyān āśrityety uktatvāt | “yānair vā pādukair vāpi gamanaṁ bhagavad-grhe” ity ādayas tu tatra niṣiddhā eva | sevāparādhe tu “harer apy aparādhān yaḥ kuryād dvi-pada-pāmsanaḥ” ity ādiṣu śrūyanta eva nindāḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: One may ask if the words *dhāvan* (“running”) and *nimīlya* (“with eyes closed”) in this verse also exempt one who commits any of the thirty-two types of *sevā-aparādhas* (offences in devotional service). The answer is that *śāstra* does not say so. Previously, it was explained that a person who accepts the shelter of the process described by Bhagavān Himself will never suffer. Bhagavān has made statements forbidding

entering a temple on a palanquin or wearing shoes, so to not obey them certainly constitutes *sevā-aparādha*. Also, in regard to *sevā-aparādha*, we hear from the scriptures’ condemnation of a person who commits an offence to Śrī Hari, declaring him to be a two-legged animal.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Someone may assert that here, the words *dhāvan* and *nimīlya* also apply to exemption from the thirty-two types of *sevā-aparādhas*. In other words, if a *sādhaka* who runs on the path of *bhakti* at great speed with closed eyes commits *sevā-aparādha* in ignorance, he is not to be faulted in any way and commits neither a sin nor an offence. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, however, says that this interpretation is not logical here. It was stated previously, “By taking shelter of the methods personally spoken by Śrī Bhagavān, ...” Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān would never support anyone’s *sevā-aparādha*. It has been stated, “*yānair vā pādukair vāpi, gamanam bhagavad-grhe* – it is forbidden to commit the *sevā-aparādha* of entering the temple either wearing shoes or being carried in a palanquin.” How could Bhagavān sanction acts forbidden in the scriptures? In regard to *sevā-aparādha*, we certainly hear condemnation of *sevā-aparādha* in this statement of the Purāṇas: “*harer apy aparādhān yaḥ, kuryād dvipada-pāmsanaḥ* – those who commit an offence to Śrī Hari are two-legged animals.”

1h ~ Nāma-aparādha committed in ignorance is eradicated by constantly chanting the holy name

kiṁ ca te nāmāparādhāḥ prācīnā arvācīnā vā yadi samyag anabhijñāta-prakārāḥ syuḥ kintu tat-phala-liṅgenānumīyamānā eva tadā teṣāṁ nāmbhir evāviśrānta-prayuktair bhakti-niṣṭhāyām utpadyamānāyām kramenopasamaḥ | yadi te jñāyanta eva tadā tv asti kvacit kaścid viśeṣaḥ || 1 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Furthermore, one may have committed *nāma-aparādha* unconsciously, either long ago or recently. One can understand the

existence of *nāma-aparādha* by noting the symptoms. However, if one then develops firm faith (*niṣṭhā*) in *bhakti* by constantly chanting the holy name, gradually all these offences will be eradicated. If the offence has been committed intentionally, however, then some special means to mitigate it are recommended.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Moreover, unconsciously, one may have committed multitudinous offences to the holy name, either long ago or recently. One can understand the existence of offence by observing its resultant signs, such as carelessness in executing the *aṅgas* of *bhakti* and absorption in matters unrelated to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, one should then chant the holy name continuously, so as to develop firm faith in *bhakti*. At the stage of *bhakti-niṣṭhā*, the offence is gradually mitigated. *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* states:

*jāte nāmāparādhe 'pi / pramādena kathañcana
sadā sañkīrtayan nāma / tad-eka-śaraṇo bhavet*

*nāmāparādha-yuktānām / nāmāny eva haranty agham
aviśrānta-prayuktāni / tāny evārtha-karāṇi ca*

If out of negligence or error, a *sādhaka* commits offences to the holy name, then, with one-pointed focus, he should take shelter of the holy name, continuously performing *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. The holy name alone will free the offender from his *aparādha*. Constant utterance of the holy name will help the *sādhaka* achieve all perfection.

The result of unknowingly committing offences to the holy name is not so ghastly. For the *sādhaka* who constantly utters the holy name, *harināma* dispels all his offences and ultimately bestows *prema* upon him, thus making his life completely blessed.

If one commits offences consciously, in a premeditated fashion, however, the result will be most terrible. According to the severity of the *nāma-aparādha* committed, there is a special, corresponding regulation by which to eradicate it.

Text 2

2a ~ Blasphemy of devotees – the first offence to the holy name

yathā “satām nindā iti” daśasu nāmnah prathamō ’parādhaḥ | tatra nindety
anena dveṣa-drohādayo ’py upalakṣyante |

Bhāvānuvāda: Blasphemy (*nindā*) of saintly persons, or *bhaktas*, is the first of the ten kinds of offences to the holy name. Here the word *nindā* also indicates envy, malevolence and other similar dispositions.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: There are ten types of offences to the holy name. *Padma Purāṇa* presents a poignant analysis of them.

- (1) *satām nindā nāmnah paramam aparādham vitanute
yataḥ khyātim yātam katham u sahate tad-vigarhām*
- (2) *śivasya śrī-viṣṇor ya iha guṇa-nāmādi-sakalam
dhiyā bhinnam paśyet sa khalu hari-nāmāhita-karah*
- (3) *guror avajñā*
- (4) *śruti-śāstra-nindanam*
- (5) *tathārtha-vādo*
- (6) *hari-nāmni kalpanam*
- (7) *nāmno balād yasya hi pāpa-buddhir / na vidyate tasya yamair hi śuddhiḥ*
- (8) *dharmā-vrata-tyāga-hutādi-sarva- / śubha-kriyā-sāmyam api pramādaḥ*
- (9) *āsraddhadhāne vimukhe ’py aśṛṅvati / yaś copadeśaḥ śiva-nāmāparādhaḥ*
- (10) *śrute ’pi nāma-māhātmye / yaḥ prīti-rahito narah
aham-mamādi-paramo / nāmni so ’py aparādha-kṛt*

Padma Purāṇa

quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (11.283–287)

- (1) Blaspheming saintly persons produces the most grievous offence to the holy name. How can Śrī Nāma Prabhu tolerate blasphemy of those exalted souls who are devoted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name and who propagate

the glory of *harināma* throughout the world? This is why blasphemy of *sādhus* is the primary offence to the holy name.

One should never criticize devotees, who are exclusively devoted to the holy name. Rather, understanding that they are the best of saintly persons, one should always associate with them and perform *nāma-kīrtana*. By doing so, the holy name will speedily bestow its mercy.

- (2) The second offence to the holy name is mentioned in the verse above, beginning *śivasya śrī-viṣṇor*. It can be explained in two ways:
 - (i) To consider the names, qualities and so on of Sadāśiva, the leader of the demigods, to be separate from those of Śrī Viṣṇu is an offence to the holy name, because considering Sadāśiva an independent controller separate from Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu leads to the faulty doctrine of multiple supreme controllers (*bahu-īśvara-vāda*). This will impede one's attainment of unalloyed devotion to Bhagavān. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Controller, and it is solely through His potency that Śiva and the other demigods attain the position of being controllers. They have no power separate from His. One who chants *harināma* with this conviction will not commit this offence to the holy name.
 - (ii) A person commits an offence to the holy name if, with his mundane intelligence, he distinguishes between the all-auspicious, transcendental holy names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Viṣṇu and Śrī Viṣṇu Himself, who is the possessor of that name. Such chanting is certainly harmful.
- (3) It is an offence to disobey the *guru* who is conversant with the absolute truths regarding the holy name (*nāma-tattva*), considering him an ordinary mortal with a material body. That person who teaches how the holy name is the topmost spiritual truth is the *nāma-guru*, and it is one's duty to be unwavering in one's devotion to him. Some persons

neglect the *nāma-guru*, thinking that his understanding of the scriptures is limited to scriptures delineating the holy name, and that scholars of Vedānta philosophy and other *śāstras* have a more complete scriptural understanding. Such persons are offenders to the holy name. In truth, no *guru* is superior to that *guru* who is conversant with *nāma-tattva*. It is an offence to consider him inferior.

- (4) It is an offence to blaspheme the Vedas and scriptures like the *sāttvata Purāṇas* (Purāṇas on *bhakti*), for throughout the Vedas and Upaniṣads one can find the glories of the holy name. Belittling the *mantras* that illuminate the glories of *śrī nāma* is an offence. Unfortunately, some people neglect such *mantras* of Śruti and show greater honour for other instructions contained therein. This is an offence to *harināma*, and the result is an absence of taste for the holy name.
- (5) To consider the glories of the holy name to be exaggerated is also *nāma-aparādha*. It is known as *artha-vāda*, the conception that *śāstra*'s descriptions of the glories of *śrī nāma* are not factual but an exaggeration, written solely to arouse an interest in the holy name. By committing this offence to the holy name, one will have no taste for uttering *harināma*.
- (6) To consider Bhagavān's name to be imaginary is an offence. Those who think that the *ṛṣis* have concocted names like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in order to achieve their own objectives are offenders to *śrī nāma*. The holy name is not fabricated; its syllables are eternal and transcendental. Only by *bhakti* does *harināma* manifest in the spiritualized senses. This is taught by bona fide preceptors and the Vedic scriptures. Therefore, it is necessary to accept *śrī harināma* as the Supreme Truth. One who considers the holy name to be imaginary will never attain the mercy of the holy name.
- (7) One who has a tendency to commit misdeeds on the strength of the holy name cannot be purified, even if he performs contrived *yoga* processes such as *yama*, *niyama*, *dhyāna* and *dhāraṇā*. This is certain.

- (8) To consider religiosity, vows, renunciation, the offering of oblations into fire and other mundane pious acts to be equal to or comparable with the transcendental name of Bhagavān reveals neglect, or carelessness, and is an offence. No pious activity can equate with the utterance of *harināma*. Those who consider them equivalent are offenders to the holy name. A person who prays to the holy name of Śrī Hari for the insignificant results of these pious acts is also an offender to *harināma*, because within his mind, he is equating it with those activities.
- (9) It is also an offence to the holy name to give instructions on chanting to those who are faithless and disinclined to even hear the name. Of all the instructions given in the Vedas, the instructions to chant *harināma* are superlative. Those who have developed faith in exclusive devotion (*ananya-bhakti*) are truly qualified to chant the holy name of Śrī Hari. It is an offence to give instructions on *harināma* to those who do not have such faith, who are opposed to transcendental service to Śrī Hari, and who have no taste in hearing *harināma*.
- (10) Those who hear the astonishing glories of the holy name but still consider this body (composed of flesh, blood and skin) to be the self, and objects of material sense gratification to be their property, do not show any love or enthusiasm for uttering *śrī nāma*. They are offenders to the holy name, which destroys the sins and offences of those who have committed *nāma-aparādha*. By continuous chanting, one attains the ultimate goal of life, the wealth of *prema*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has thoroughly deliberated on these offences to the holy name. Blasphemy of the *mahāpuruṣas*, or saintly Vaiṣṇavas, who have taken shelter of the name, is the first of the ten offences to *śrī nāma*. Some people assume that it is not an offence to criticize a *sādhu* who has engaged in an objectionable activity, because one is only stating facts. But Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda has written in his commentary on the

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, “*nindanam doṣa-kīrtanam* – whether the criticism is based on fact or not, the vocalization of a saintly person’s faults is nonetheless counted as *nindā* (blasphemy).”

Here a question may arise: “If one does not see a guilty person’s faults, will that person ever be able to rectify himself?” The answer is that persons like *śrī guru*, *mahāntas* (great souls) and those who protect and guard the society of Vaiṣṇavas will certainly make all arrangements for the rectification of such a person. If an ordinary *sādhaka* gossips about others and criticizes them, the only result will be that he will become an offender. He will not actually be rectifying the fault of the wrongdoer.

*nindāya nāhiko kārya, sabe pāpa-lābha,
eteke nā kare nindā mahā-mahābhāga*

*aninduka hoi je sakṛt ‘kṛṣṇa’ bole
satya satya kṛṣṇa tāre uddhāribe hele*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 9.245–246)

No benefit results from criticizing others; it only results in sin. Those who do not criticize are the most fortunate. Śrī Kṛṣṇa will most surely deliver that person who, while uttering His name, never criticizes anyone.

Here the word *nindā* is used to indicate envy and blasphemy. In the *Skanda Purāṇa*, it is written:

*hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi / vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no harṣam / darśane patanāni ṣaṭ*

Six types of offences to devotees cause one’s downfall: (1) to beat or kill a Vaiṣṇava, (2) to criticize a Vaiṣṇava, (3) to be hateful toward a Vaiṣṇava, (4) to not welcome a Vaiṣṇava, (5) to show anger toward a Vaiṣṇava and (6) to not feel happiness upon seeing a Vaiṣṇava.

The following are also categorized as *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*: to be envious of a Vaiṣṇava, to speak profanities against a Vaiṣṇava, to have no faith in a Vaiṣṇava, to disobey a Vaiṣṇava, to show intolerance of the activities of a Vaiṣṇava and to behave maliciously toward a Vaiṣṇava.

Because of the gravity of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*, it is the most serious offence and is therefore listed first. Being most severe, it nearly always intensifies and becomes the greatest obstacle in the *sādhaka*'s devotional practice. In His instructions to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu said:

*jadi vaiṣṇava-aparādha uṭhe hātī mātā
upāḍe bā chinḍe, tāra śukhi' jāya pātā*

*tāte mālī jatna kori' kare āvaraṇa
aparādha-hastīr jaiche nā haya udgama*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 19.156–157)

When the mad elephant of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* is born, it either uproots or tears to pieces the vine of devotion, the leaves of which dry up. Therefore, the gardener, or practising devotee, carefully erects a protective fence, so that the mad elephant of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* cannot enter.

Through these words of Mahāprabhu, we can understand the fearsome effects of *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. The *sādhaka* should remain particularly vigilant to protect himself from this offence.

2b ~ Repenting and pleasing a Vaiṣṇava one has offended

*tataś ca daivāt tasminn aparādhe jāte—“hanta pāmareṇa mayā sādhuṣu
aparāddham iti” anutapto janaḥ “kṛṣṇānu śāmyati taptāḥ kṛṣṇanunā evāyam”
iti nyāyena tat-padāgra eva nipatyā prasādayāmīti viṣaṇṇa-cetasā praṇati-
stuti-sammānādibhis tasyopaśamaḥ kāryaḥ | kadācit kasyacana kair api
dusprasādanīyatve bahu-dīnam api tan-mano ’bhīrociny anuvṛttiḥ kāryā |
aparādhasyāti-mahat tvāt kathaṅcit tayāpy anivarttya kopatve “dhiṅ mām*

akṣīṇa-bhaktāparādham niraya-koṭiṣu patantam” iti nirvidya sarvaṁ parityajya samāśrayaṇīyā nāma-saṅkīrtana-santatis tayā ca mahā-śakti-matyā ’vaśyam eva kāle tataḥ syād evoddhāraḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: When a person understands that he has inadvertently committed an offence to the holy name by blaspheming a saintly person (*sādhu*), he should lament as follows: “Alas, alas! A low-class person such as I has offended a *sādhu*.” While repenting in this way, and according to the principle that one burned by fire finds relief by fire alone⁴, he should think, “I will fall at the feet of that *sādhu* and please him.” In this way, to mitigate his offence, he should sorrowfully offer that *sādhu* obeisances, prayers and all respect. If that *sādhu* is still not pleased, then that person who committed the offence must continuously serve him for many days, in accordance with the *sādhu*’s particular preference.

If the offence to that great soul is so grievous that it is not alleviated by any means, then one should abandon all activities and the endeavour for anything temporary and take full shelter of the holy name, uttering it continuously and repenting in the following way: “Fie on me! My offence to a devotee has not been mitigated. I will have to fall into countless hells!” By the power of this superlatively potent *śrī nāma-saṅkīrtana*, that offensive person will surely be delivered in due course of time.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: If, by chance, one has committed an offence at the feet of an exalted soul, then one should deeply repent and reproach oneself as follows: “Alas, alas, I am most wicked! I have committed an offence at the lotus feet of a saintly person.”

As stated previously, repentance is the actual process of atonement (*prāyaścitta*) for *aparādha*. The offender may even please the pure devotee he has offended by begging forgiveness from him, but unless the offender’s heart burns in the fire of repentance, it will never be purified. Just as applying

⁴ This refers to a heating medicinal ointment, used in Āyurveda for treating burns. –Ed.

heat [in the form of a medicinal ointment] relieves a person burned by fire, a repentant *sādhaka* should quell his offence by remorsefully offering obeisance, praise and respect at the feet of the great soul he has offended. If that great devotee is still not satisfied, then in order to please him, one should serve him both directly and indirectly for many days, endeavouring to fulfil all his inner heart's desires. This will definitely melt that merciful devotee's heart, and he will happily forgive the offender.

If the offence is so grave that the aforesaid means do not pacify or somehow abate the anger of the person offended, then one should deeply grieve, "Alas, alas! Nothing can mitigate my offence to this pure devotee. I shall surely be damned to millions upon millions of hells." With such humble submission, one should abandon all other activities and take complete, uninterrupted shelter of *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. Engaged in this way, the supremely powerful process of *harināma-saṅkīrtana* will surely deliver such a repentant person, at one time or another.

2c ~ The constant chanting of unrepentant offenders is offensive

kiṁ me muhur muhur eva pāda-patanādibhiḥ svāpakaṛṣa-svikāreṇa "nāmāparādha-yuktānām nāmāny eva haranty agham" ity asyaiva paramopāyaḥ sa eva samāśrayaṇīyaḥ iti bhāvanāyām pūrvavad eva punar api nāmāparādhaḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: Nonetheless, an offender might consider the following statement of *sāstra*: "*nāmāparādha-yuktānām nāmāny eva haranty agham* – one will become free from an offence to a saintly person simply by performing constant *nāma-saṅkīrtana*." If, as a result, he concludes that instead of accepting his lowliness by falling repeatedly at the feet of the great personality he has offended, he should take shelter of the ultimate means – *nāma-saṅkīrtana* – in order to mitigate his offence, then, instead of eradicating the *nāma-aparādha*, he commits further *nāma-aparādha*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: A person overcome by embarrassment and shame may think, “The scriptures say that one who has committed *nāma-aparādha* can mitigate an offence simply by engaging in *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, so what is the use of displaying my inferiority by falling repeatedly at the feet of the *sādhu* who is displeased with me? I will nullify my offence by taking shelter of *nāma*, the supreme remedy.” By this, one commits the severe *nāma-aparādha* of acting immorally on the strength of chanting the holy name.

2d ~ Devotees are saintly even if devoid of qualities such as mercy

na ca “kṛpālur akṛta-drohas titikṣuḥ sarva-dehinām” ity ādi sampūrṇa-dharmakā eva santas teṣām eva nindā aparādha iti vācyam | ‘sarvācāra-vivarjitāḥ śaṭha-dhiyo vrātyā jagad-vañcakāḥ’ iti tat-prakaraṇa-vartinā vacanena tādr̥ṣa-duṣcaritānām api bhagavantāṁ bhajatāṁ kaimutika-nyāyena sac-chabda-vācyatvena sūcitavāt |

Bhāvānuvāda: Someone could say that only a person endowed with all the good qualities described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.29), such as mercifulness, freedom from malevolence toward all beings and tolerance, is a *sādhu*, or Vaiṣṇava, and that criticism only of such a person constitutes an offence. But this is not the case, since the statement of the *Padma Purāṇa* indicates by a fortiori logic (*kaimutika-nyāya*⁵) that the word *sat* (“saint”) refers even to devoted worshippers of Bhagavān who are wretched, devoid of all good conduct, duplicitous, fallen and total cheaters.

5 *Kaimutika-nyāya*. This type of logic (*nyāya*) is used when the import of a previous statement either establishes or precludes the meaning of a subsequent statement. For example, “The weight that can be borne by a weak person can certainly be borne by a strong person.” In other words, if even a wretched person (*sudurācārī*) who fully engages in *bhagavad-bhajana* is to be considered a *sādhu*, then a *bhagavad-bhakta* who appears to lack the good qualities described in the scriptures, such as mercy and tolerance, must necessarily be considered a *sādhu*. Any wrongdoing toward him is considered an *aparādha*. –Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Blasphemy of a *sādhu* is said to be the greatest and most powerful obstacle in *bhajana*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.11.29–31), Bhagavān describes to Uddhava the symptoms of *sādhus*, or the pure devotees of the Lord:

*kṛpālur akṛta-drohas / titikṣuḥ sarva-dehinām
satya-sāro 'navadyātmā / samaḥ sarvopakāraḥ*

*kāmair ahata-dhīr dānto / mṛduḥ śucir akiñcanaḥ
anīho mita-bhuk śāntaḥ / sthīro mac-charaṇo munīḥ*

*apramatto gabhīrātmā / dhṛtimāñ jita-ṣaḍ-guṇaḥ
amānī māna-daḥ kalyo / maitraḥ kāruṇikaḥ kavīḥ*

Beloved Uddhava, My devotee is verily the personification of mercy. He never harbours feelings of enmity for any living entity, and he happily endures the most horrible suffering. The essence of his life is truth. Never at any time does any type of immoral thought arise in his mind. He is equal to all, and he acts for the benefit of everyone. His intelligence is never contaminated by material desires. He is self-controlled, sweet-natured and pure. He is free from feelings of possessiveness and does not endeavour for anything worldly. He eats moderately and remains peaceful. His intelligence is steady and he completely depends on Me only. He always remains immersed in thoughts of the nature of the soul. He is free from confusion, and he is sober and patient. He has conquered the six material qualities: hunger, thirst, lamentation, illusion, birth and death. He does not desire respect from anyone, yet he always gives honour to others. He is highly expert at explaining topics about Me to others. He deals with everyone in a friendly manner, his heart brimming with compassion, and he has factual knowledge of the truth (*tattva*) about Me.

Some people may say that a person who possesses all these symptoms is a genuine saint, and therefore, an offence at his feet is truly *nāma-aparādha*, whereas criticism of a man in the garb of a saint who does not embody the

qualities mentioned above is not offensive. If such a person becomes angry, having been offended by something trivial, and cannot be pacified by any means, it clearly indicates an absence of the above qualities. They thus conclude that criticism of him would not be categorized as *nāma-aparādha*.

The respected author states that whoever thinks like this is utterly mistaken. In the *Padma Purāna*, Śrī Sanat Kumāra speaks to Śrī Nārada about *nāma-aparādha*:

*sarvācāra-vivarjitāḥ śaṭha-dhiyo vrātyā jagad-vañcakā
dambha-ahankṛti-pāna-paiśuna-parāḥ pāpās tyajā niṣthurāḥ
ye cānye dhana-dāra-putra-niratāḥ sarva-adhamās te 'pi hi
śrī-govinda-padāravinda-śaraṇā muktā bhavanti dvija*

O *brāhmaṇa*, wretched persons are devoid of all virtuous practices. They are duplicitous, fallen, deceitful, conceited and egotistical, addicted to intoxication, violent, irreligious, base, cruel-hearted and grossly infatuated with their wealth, sons and wife. Surrendering unto Śrī Govinda's lotus feet liberates even such extremely fallen persons from material existence.

From these words of *śāstra*, we should understand that even persons who behave in such a lowly way are *sādhus* if they perform *bhajana* of Śrī Hari. The Lord Himself said to Arjuna:

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

Bhagavad-gītā (9.30)

Even if a person of abominable character engages in exclusive devotion to Me (*ananya-bhajana*), he is still to be considered a *sādhu*, because his intelligence is completely fixed in *bhakti* to Me.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in his *Sārārtha-varṣiṇī* commentary on this verse, “That devotee who exclusively worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa

and not any demigod or goddess, who never performs fruitive acts (*karma*) or cultivates knowledge (*jñāna*), and who never desires any worldly happiness – only the happiness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa – is exclusively devoted to Him (*ananya-bhāk*) and is indeed a *sādhu*.”

When such exclusive devotion awakens within a practitioner, he develops a natural renunciation and distaste for anything unrelated to Kṛṣṇa. If, by chance, abominable behaviour is seen in him because of his strong detrimental impressions from a previous life – even extreme abominations such as violence to others, theft of another’s wealth, and illicit relations with someone else’s wife – still, we should accept him as a *sādhu*. This is because exclusive devotion is not contaminated by such things. *Bhakti* quickly awakens a mood of repentance within him, causes him to become virtuous and grants him eternal peace.

*kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā / śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi / na me bhaktaḥ praṇāśyati*

Bhagavad-gītā (9.31)

That most debauched person quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, boldly proclaim that My devotee never perishes.

The scriptures deem as saintly a person devoted to *bhajana*, even though he may be observed to behave abominably. Even if faults such as anger or intolerance are visible in him, still he must be considered a *sādhu*. Without a doubt, criticizing him will result in the first *nāma-aparādha*: blasphemy of saints. Therefore, one should not disregard the severity of this offence but carefully strive to rectify oneself in the manner previously mentioned. There is no other recourse.

In a life dedicated to *bhajana*, there is never room for any type of criticism or malevolence. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has therefore given instructions on humility to those performing *nāma-bhajana*:

*je-rūpe loile nāma, prema upajaya
tāra lakṣaṇa-śloka śuno, svarūpa-rāma-rāya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 20.20)

Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Rāmānanda Rāya, please hear the verse that indicates how to chant the holy name in such a way as to awaken *prema*.

*trṇād api sunīcena / taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena / kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka (3)

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 20.21)

Only he who feels lower than a blade of grass and who is more tolerant than a tree, who expects no honour for himself but is able to give due respect to all others, is qualified to perpetually chant the holy names of Śrī Hari.

*uttama haiyā āpanāke māne trṇādhama
dui prakāre sahiṣṇutā kare vṛkṣa-sama*

*vṛkṣa jeno kāṭileha kichu nā bolaya
śukāiyā maileha kāre pānī nā māgaya*

*jei je māgaye, tāre deya āpana-dhana
gharma-vṛṣṭi sahe, āner karaye rakṣaṇa*

*uttama haiyā vaiṣṇava habe nirabhimāna
jīve sammān dibe jāni 'kṛṣṇa'-adhiṣṭhāna*

*ei-mata haiyā jei kṛṣṇa-nāma laya
śrī-kṛṣṇa-carāṇe tāra prema upajaya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 20.22–26)

Although a devotee is most exalted, he considers himself to be more insignificant than grass, and like a tree, he tolerates everything in two ways: at the time of being cut, a tree raises no protest, and when drying up, it does not ask for water. Yet to anyone who requests something from it, the tree will offer its wealth [fruit, flowers, wood, bark, sap and so forth]. The tree, while itself tolerating heat and rain, offers shelter to others. Being most elevated, a Vaiṣṇava is devoid of false ego, and he offers respect to everyone, knowing each and every person to be the resting place of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Uttering the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this way, he obtains love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Not to speak of ordinary *sādhakas*, even an extremely powerful person cannot protect himself from the ill-effects of an offence to a devotee. *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Madhya-khaṇḍa 13.388, 391)* states:

*śūlapāṇi sama jadi bhakta-nindā kare
bhāgavata-pramāṇe tathāpi śīghra mare*

If a great person, even one as powerful as Lord Śiva, blasphemes a devotee, then, as evidenced in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.10.25)*, he will very soon wither and die.

*sarva mahā-prāyaścitta je kṛṣṇera nāma
vaiṣṇava-aparādhe seha nā milaye trāṇa*

Of all types of penance, the chanting of the name of Kṛṣṇa is best, but if a person who utters the name of Kṛṣṇa blasphemes a Vaiṣṇava, he will never be delivered.

Therefore, to become blessed and obtain the fruit of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, the following is advised:

*nā loibe kāro doṣa, nā koribe kāro roṣa,
praṇamaho sabāra caraṇa*

Śrī Prema-bhakti-candrikā (9.19)

Do not see anyone’s faults, do not become angry with anyone, and offer respects at the feet of everyone.

Only when a person adopts these principles will he obtain supreme auspiciousness, and only then will the supremely merciful Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari become pleased with him. For this reason, Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (*Madhya-khaṇḍa* 10.312) states:

*kāhāre nā kare nindā, ‘kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa’ bole
ajaya caitanya sei jinibeka hele*

One who never criticizes anyone and always chants the name of Kṛṣṇa will conquer Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is unconquerable.

2e ~ The holy foot-dust of the mahā-bhāgavata cannot tolerate an offence

kim ca, kaścīn mahā-bhāgavatatvāt mahāparādhiny api yadyapi na kupyati tad api tatrāparādhavatā sva-śuddhy-arthaṁ praṇaty-ādibhir anuvartaniya eva saḥ | “serṣyam mahāpuruṣa-pāda-pāṁsubhir nirasta-tejaḥsu tad eva śobhanam” iti satām vākyena tac-caraṇa-reṇūnām asaḥṣṇutayā tat-phala-pradatvāvagamāt |

Bhāvānuvāda: Due to their supremely forgiving natures, some *mahā-bhāgavata* Vaiṣṇavas do not become angry, even though a grievous offence to them has been committed. Nevertheless, for the offender’s own purification, he should beg forgiveness by offering obeisance to that Vaiṣṇava and rendering service to him.

It is stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.4.13): “The foot-dust of the pure devotees will deprive an offender of all his power. Criticism of saintly personalities befits only the wicked [as they will receive an appropriate consequence].”

Such words spoken by great personalities indicate that the foot-dust of those pure devotees cannot tolerate any offence to that devotee and that this holy foot-dust certainly gives the offender the result of his *aparādha*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: In regard to the characteristics of pure devotees, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.45) states:

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

[Śrī Havi Yogīndra said to Śrī Nimi Mahārāja:] O King, one who sees his own mood of attraction to Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, the Soul of all souls, in all *jīvas*, and who also sees all living entities residing within the shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is an *uttama-bhāgavata*.

Such *mahā-bhāgavatas* roam this earth absorbed in *prema*, unconscious of the external world. If anyone blasphemes them or acts with hostility toward them, they do not become indignant and do not take offence. Hearing this, some may conjecture that if they never become angry or take offence, such acts as criticizing them cannot be deemed *aparādha*.

In this regard, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains that although these pure devotees are not offended by anyone, the heart of the offender becomes extremely foul. Thus, if a person by chance criticizes or commits an offence to such a pure devotee in some way, then, to purify his heart, he should please that devotee by falling at his feet, praising him and begging for his forgiveness. Knowing him to be an exalted saint exclusively dedicated to chanting the holy name, he should perform *nāma-kīrtana* while staying in his company. By doing this, the offender will quickly attain the mercy of Nāma Prabhu.

Here, another question may arise: If pure devotees regard praise, obeisance, blasphemy and malice to be the same, then they cannot possibly

become angry when criticized, and likewise, it is not possible to please them by praising them or offering them *praṇāma*. How then can the offender purify his heart and remove the offence simply by following their footsteps, offering praise, obeisance and so on?

The author quotes *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the words of Śrīmatī Satī-devī, who became enraged upon seeing her husband, Śrīman Mahādeva (Lord Śiva), being disrespected at the fire sacrifice conducted by her father, Dakṣa. This demonstrates that although a *mahā-bhāgavata* never takes offence, his foot-dust cannot tolerate it. Therefore, in order to pacify the foot-dust of the Vaiṣṇava, it is incumbent upon a person to earnestly glorify and offer obeisance to him.

*nāścaryam etad yad asatsu sarvadā
mahad-vinindā kuṇapātma-vādiṣu
serṣyaṁ mahāpūruṣa-pāda-pāṁsubhir
nirasta-tejaḥsu tad eva śobhanam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.4.13)

It is no wonder that those wretches who consider the corpse to be the self repeatedly and enviously deride great souls. Such blasphemy certainly befits them. Although these exalted personalities pay no heed to the activities of such persons, their foot-dust cannot tolerate the offence and will destroy their power.

Through this great teaching, it is to be understood that although the impudent behaviour of wicked persons does not stimulate anger in the heart of a great devotee, nevertheless, to pacify the dust of the holy feet of that pure devotee, such wicked persons must follow in that devotee's footsteps and worship him by glorifying him and offering him obeisance. If they do not, the dust of the devotee's holy feet will unfailingly mete out the appropriate punishment for their offence. Of this, there is no doubt.

2f ~ The mahā-bhāgavata can bestow his mercy independently and indiscriminately

kim ca, duravagama-niškāraṇake kvacit kṛpā-dṛṣṭau prabhaviṣṇau svacchanda-carite kvacin mahā-bhāgavata-maulau tu na kāpi maryādā paryāpnoti | yathā śivikām vāhayati kaṭūkti-viṣa-varṣiṇy api rahūgaṇe śrī-jaḍa-bharatasya kṛpā | yathā ca pāṣaṇḍa-dharmāvalambini sva-himsārtham upaseduṣi daitya-samūhe uparicarasya vasoś cedi-rājasya | yathā vā mahā-pāpini sva-lalāṭe rudhira-pātiny api mādhave prabhu-varasya nityānandasyeti |

Bhāvānuvāda: Only those saintly persons who are the crest jewels among *mahā-bhāgavatas* are independent and fully qualified to bestow mercy for a reason that is unknown, or even without any reason at all. In this regard, no rules and regulations of any kind, nor any limit or boundary, can be applied to them. For example, King Rahūgaṇa engaged Jaḍa Bharata in carrying his palanquin, and then showered poison-like words upon him that were full of bitter, harsh criticism. It is legendary that despite this, Jaḍa Bharata conferred mercy upon the king. Demons, who abide by heretical principles, came to harm the King of Cedi, Uparicara Vasu, but Uparicara Vasu bestowed mercy upon them. Similarly, Lord Nityānanda bestowed mercy upon the greatly wicked Mādhāi, even after Mādhāi had struck Him on the head, causing blood to flow.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Absorbed in the rapture of spiritual bliss (*bhāva*), *mahā-bhāgavata* devotees are devoid of material attachment, envy and so on. They thus wander throughout the world, unperturbed by praise or criticism. It is impossible for them to favour or punish anyone. However, as stated previously, one who criticizes them commits a most grievous offence. Nevertheless, the same rules do not apply in every situation. By nature, the *mahā-bhāgavatas* are independent and fully competent to bestow causeless mercy. Therefore, they sometimes shower their incessant compassion and merciful glance even on

great offenders who have wronged or blasphemed them. The revered author has illustrated this with the three following examples.

Once, the king of Sindhu and Sauvīra, King Rahūgaṇa, was being carried on a palanquin along the river Ikṣumatī. On the way, one of the palanquin bearers fell ill and the commander in charge of the king’s transportation needed someone to replace him. The commander chanced to see a *brāhmaṇa* youth from the Āṅgīrasa dynasty, the *parama-bhāgavata* Śrī Jaḍa Bharata. Free from any bodily conception, Śrī Jaḍa Bharata was a well-wishing friend of all living entities and devoid of malice. Seeing his stout, well-built physique, the commander engaged him in carrying the king’s palanquin.

Without saying a word, Jaḍa Bharata lifted the palanquin and silently began walking with the other carriers. He studied the path intently, taking each step with care to avoid crushing any ants and insects. Hence, he was unable to keep pace with the other carriers, and Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa was jolted about. The king chastised the carriers a few times. Fearing punishment, they said, “Your Highness, this new bearer is walking unevenly, causing the palanquin to not proceed smoothly.”

Enraged, the king spoke scornfully: “Why, you look exhausted! Are you carrying this contraption alone? Are you a skinny weakling beset with old age? Walk properly! Don’t you know who I am!”

Despite being ridiculed with these derisive words, Jaḍa Bharata did not retort and continued carrying the king’s palanquin as before. How could disdainful, taunting words generate an anger that has no purpose in the heart of one who is beyond the false ego of bodily identification? Such words did not have the slightest effect on Jaḍa Bharata and he proceeded as before. When the palanquin again began to totter and jolt, Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa became infuriated.

“What are you? The living dead? Are you not the least afraid of disobeying my order? Remember this: Just as Yamarāja gives punishment to all, I, also, will mete out a most fearful punishment, and then you will walk properly.”

With a slight smile, Jaḍa Bharata then used the king's own words to convey wonderful, unprecedented instructions that were full of spiritual knowledge. He spoke of the bodily conception of being fat or thin, he spoke of birth and death, and of knowledge of the ultimate transcendental reality. Upon hearing these authentic instructions on spiritual truth, the king was mortified and immediately descended his palanquin, placed his head upon Jaḍa Bharata's lotus feet and pleaded forgiveness for his offence.

Finally, King Rahūgaṇa's many inquiries were satisfactorily answered and his life became successful. Relinquishing his identification with the body, he became dedicated to *bhagavad-bhajana* and achieved the supreme destination. Despite his committing offences, he still received the mercy of the *mahā-bhāgavata* Jaḍa Bharata and was blessed. The history of Jaḍa Bharata and Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa is described in detail in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The second example describes the king of Cedi, named Mahārāja Uparicara Vasu. In *Bhakti-sandarbhā* (*Anuccheda* 176), Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda tells the history of Uparicara Vasu from the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara*. This account shows how great souls bestow mercy, even upon severe offenders.

In order to aid the demigods, Mahārāja Uparicara Vasu annihilated the demons. Repentant for inflicting violence on others, he became detached from material enjoyment, and with an anxious heart, he entered Pātāla-loka [a subterranean planet] with a desire to continuously meditate on Śrī Hari.

The demons learned that their former enemy had desisted from violence and had gone to Pātāla-loka without weapons. Seeing an opportune moment to take revenge, they went to Pātāla-loka and approached Uparicara Vasu, desiring to kill him. The moment they raised their weapons to behead him, their weapons froze mid-air, and they were unable to strike that great devotee. This took place by the power of his devotion to Bhagavān.

The demons went to their preceptor, Śukrācārya, and after receiving his counsel, they returned to Pātāla-loka, where they proceeded to impart instructions on atheism. It should be noted that upon hearing the demons'

entire account of this incident, Śukrācārya had concluded that as long as the heart of Uparicara Vasu remained immersed in remembrance of Bhagavān, no one could touch a hair on his body. But if Uparicara Vasu disobeyed or disregarded Bhagavān in his heart, then he could be destroyed. Śukrācārya therefore told the demons, “Go to Uparicara Vasu and loudly announce, ‘There is no God! The Vedic scriptures are false!’”

As they followed Śukrācārya’s instruction to loudly propagate atheism within the hearing of Uparicara Vasu, his meditation was slightly disturbed. Seeing their misfortune, his heart filled with compassion. He thought, “Alas, what a tragedy for these demons! In order to take my life, they desire even to obscure the existence of Bhagavān, who is the Lord of all, the cause of all causes and the supreme controller of everything. O supremely merciful Bhagavān, please be kind to them, purify their meagre intelligence and immerse them in the nectar of devotion to Your lotus feet.” Due to this merciful prayer by the devotee of Bhagavān, all of those demons became devotees of the Lord.

A second history of Uparicara, King of Cedi, is elaborately described in the *Mahābhārata* (*Ādi-parva* 63 and *Śānti-parva* 337).

Uparicara was the son of King Pīrava. He was constantly engaged in dharmic practices. On one such occasion, he performed such great austerities that Indra and the other demigods suspected that he was doing so in order to attain Indra’s position. They approached him about this and he peacefully desisted from his austerities. They thus awarded him the kingdom of Cedi, and Indra presented him with a most tremendous celestial, jewel-encrusted airship that remained in the sky, ready for his use. Indra also gave him a *vaijayantī-mālā*, a special flower garland that would protect whoever wore it in battle from all types of weapons. When the appropriate time came, the king crowned his sons the kings of his various realms and then took up residence in his airship, travelling here and there.

One day, there was a dispute between the demigods and the *brahmarṣis* (sages realized in *brahma*, the Absolute Truth). The prominent scriptures prescribing the path to attain material enjoyment (*karma-kāṇḍa*) state that

yajña is performed with *aja*. What exactly is *aja*? The *brahmarṣis* said that the word *aja* means *anna-bīja*, or food grains. In other words, fire sacrifices are performed with food grains as the offering. But the demigods argued that *aja* here indicates the offering of a sacrificial male goat. In other words, one should perform *yajña* with the ritual of killing a goat. The *brahmarṣis* said, “This is Satya-yuga, and *yajña* that is injurious to any animal cannot be the religious practice (*dharma*) of a saintly person; it is considered sacrilegious.”

As the debate was going on, Śrī Uparicara Vasu came by and alighted his airship. “O demigods,” the *brahmarṣis* said, “this King Vasu is supremely religious. His performance of *yajña* is unsurpassed, and he is extremely generous and truthful. Let him settle this debate.” The demigods accepted this proposal. After they explained the details to King Uparicara, he said, “First, please tell me honestly, who among you interpreted *aja* to mean ‘a male goat’ and who interpreted it to mean ‘food grain?’” When both sides had answered, King Uparicara took the side of the demigods.

The *brahmarṣis* were incensed. “You know perfectly well that here, *aja* means food grains, but still you have sided with the demigods. You must now fall from heaven by the power of our curse, penetrate the earth and descend directly to Pātāla. If your verdict has contradicted the Vedas and *sūtras*, our curse will surely be effective. And if what we have said is discordant with the scriptures, then let it be we who fall down.”

At that moment, King Uparicara Vasu fell to Pātāla-loka. However, despite residing there, he constantly chanted Bhagavān’s holy name. Lord Nārāyaṇa soon became pleased and sent Garuḍa to bring King Uparicara Vasu to Him in Vaikuṅṭha.

The purport is that despite Uparicara Vasu’s offence to the *brahmarṣis* and virtuous personalities, Bhagavān still showed him favour and he attained residence in Vaikuṅṭha.

In essence, although someone may offend saintly persons, whose nature is independent, the offender may still be delivered. In this way, the constraints of [ordinary] morality cannot restrict the *mahā-bhāgavata*.

In the third example, the respected author, Śrī Cakravartī Ṭhākura, mentions the mercy bestowed upon Mādhāi by the supremely blissful Lord Nityānanda, who never becomes angry. The deliverance of Jagāi and Mādhāi is one of Śrī Gaura-Nityānanda’s celebrated pastimes.

One day, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu called Śrī Nityānanda and Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura and said, “Nityānanda and Haridāsa, spread My teachings far and wide. Go from house to house, to everyone’s door, and tell them, ‘Learn the ontological truth (*tattva*) about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and worship Him. Tell everyone to daily chant His holy names: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare / hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare.*”

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura, having received this order from Śrīman Mahāprabhu, would daily go from house to house, begging alms from everyone: “Chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa and worship Him! Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the soul, the wealth and the life breath of the entire world. One should worship Him exclusively.” Thus, they both preached in this way, going from door to door.

Once, while Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura were promulgating *bhakti* in the town of Navadvīpa, they happened upon two drunkards, Jagāi and Mādhāi, drinking liquor on the main road. Although Jagāi and Mādhāi were *brāhmaṇas* by birth, their appearance and temperament were terrifying. They would drink alcohol and they would loot and murder. There was no sin they had not committed. When Śrī Nityānanda saw them, His heart filled with compassion.

People tried to dissuade Nityānanda Prabhu from going near them, but He had resolved to deliver Jagāi and Mādhāi. He approached them and ordered them to utter Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s holy name. Both were hopelessly intoxicated, and as soon as they heard Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name from the mouth of Nityānanda Prabhu, they made chase, intending to beat Him. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura ran away, with the two scoundrels pursuing them. Sight of this made wicked people chuckle and saintly people lament. Somehow, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura escaped.

The next day, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Haridāsa Ṭhākura again went to that place, where both drunkards were guzzling from an earthen pot containing wine. Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu again approached them and instructed them to utter the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whereupon Mādhāi seized a shard from a broken pot and struck the head of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, causing it to gush blood. When it was reported to Mahāprabhu that Jagāi and Mādhāi had wounded Nityānanda, Mahāprabhu was outraged and ran to where they were. When He saw blood flowing from the head of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, He summoned His discus weapon, crying out, “*Cakra, cakra!*”

Immediately, the Sudarśana *cakra* appeared in Mahāprabhu’s hand. But Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu cried out, “Jagāi saved Me by telling his brother Mādhāi not to strike Me! And because of this, Mādhāi did not try to strike Me a second time.” Mahāprabhu embraced Jagāi, who then called out, “Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!” and fell to the ground unconscious in *prema*. The heart of Mādhāi was also transformed, and he fell at the lotus feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who told him, “As long as Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu does not forgive you, you cannot be delivered by any means whatsoever.”

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu prayed on Mādhāi’s behalf: “O Lord, please bestow *kṛṣṇa-prema* upon Mādhāi as well.”

Śrīman Mahāprabhu placed His hand upon the head of Mādhāi and granted him *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Jagāi and Mādhāi then began to dance and call out, “Hare Kṛṣṇa!”

By the mercy of the moon-like Nitāi, these two wicked rascals quickly became *mahā-bhāgavatas*. They daily swept and cleansed that very bathing place on the bank of the Gaṅgā where they used to disturb others. All the ladies and gentlemen could then again go there to bathe, without any apprehension.

2g ~ Disregarding śrī guru – the third offence to the holy name⁶

*evam eva guror avajñā ity atrāpi jñeyam | śivasya śrī-viṣṇor ity atraivam
vivecanīyam || 2 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: What we have understood about offending saintly persons (*sādhu-nindā*) also applies to the offence of neglecting the spiritual master (*guru-avajñā*).

Next, the difference between the names and forms of Lord Viṣṇu and those of Lord Śiva will be discussed.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Thus, in regard to this third offence to the holy name, the author says that just as the offence of blaspheming saintly personalities is a severe obstacle on the path of devotional service, the offence of disregarding the spiritual master (*guru-avajñā*) also poses a great obstacle to *bhakti*. If somehow one has committed an offence at the feet of *śrī gurudeva*, then, without duplicity, one should fall at his feet in a mood of repentance and beseech him for forgiveness. Surely, the supremely compassionate *śrī gurudeva*, the embodiment of affection for his disciples, will be pleased with him and forgive him.

Text 3

3a ~ Two types of sentient beings: independent and dependent

*caitanyam hi dvi-vidham bhavati svatantram asvatantram ca | tatra prathamam
sarva-vyāpakam īśvarākhyam dvitīyam deha-mātra-vyāpi-śaktikam jīvākhyam
īśitavyam | īśvara-caitanyam dvi-vidham māyā-sparśa-rahitam līlayā svikṛta-
māyā-sparśam ca |*

⁶ The second offence to the holy name will be elaborated on in Text 3.

Bhāvānuvāda: Sentient beings (*caitanya*) are of two types: independent and dependent. Of these, the all-pervading being known as Īśvara (the Supreme Lord) is an independent sentient being. The latter category is known as the *jīva* (living entity), who is able to pervade only the body he resides in. The living entity is subordinate to Īśvara, and is thus a dependent sentient being.

Of these two types of sentient beings, the former, the supreme sentient being, is also of two types: untouched by the deluding material energy (*māyā*) and touched by the deluding energy, willingly, for *līlā* (pastimes).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is now discussing the second offence to the holy name: to consider the names, qualities and so on of Śrīman Mahādeva to be different from [or independent of] those of Śrī Viṣṇu. In other words, it is an offence to consider Śiva and Śrī Viṣṇu to be two separate independent lords, each perfect with distinct potencies. Because *śiva-tattva* is abstruse, the author is explaining it comprehensively.

The fundamental nature of sentient beings is of two types: independent and dependent. The sentient being known as the all-pervasive Īśvara is independent. Although He appears in a [human-like] medium-size form, by His inconceivable potency, that form is also all-pervading and limitless. And, although in His sweet pastimes the Lord is brought under the control of His devotees, He nevertheless remains fully independent.

The infinitesimal sentient living entity is a special energy of the Lord that pervades only the material body he resides in and remains dependent. In other words, he is under the control of the Supreme Controller (Parameśvara). The infinitesimal sentient living entity is atomic by constitution. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.16.11), Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava, “*sūkṣmāṇām apy ahaṁ jīvaḥ* – of minute objects, I am the *jīva*.” The Śrutis (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*) state the same: “*eṣo ’nur ātmā cetasā veditavyo* – the individual soul is as minute as an atom.” *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (5.9) likewise affirms:

*bālāgra-śata-bhāgasya / śatadhā kalpitasya ca
bhāgo jīvaḥ sa vijñeyaḥ / sa cānantyāya kalpate*

If the tip of a hair is divided into one hundred parts, and if one part is again divided into one hundred, that is considered the size of the *jīva*. Such *jīvas* are said to be eternal.

It is for this very reason that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written in his *Paramātma-sandarbhā* (*Anuccheda* 33), “*sūkṣmatā-parākāṣṭhā-prāpto jīvaḥ* – the individual soul is the ultimate limit of minuteness. It is impossible for anything to be more minute.” Yet because the individual soul is a conscious entity, consciousness pervades his material body. As a dependent sentient being, the living entity is subordinate to the Supreme Controller, and his capacity to perform action is subordinate to Him. The individual soul is thus regulated by the Supreme Lord.

It is written in *Vedānta-sūtra* (2.3.33), “*kartā śāstrārthavattvāt.*” By this aphorism, it is understood that the living entity has the capacity to perform action. Here a question arises: If the living entity is the doer, then why has Śrī Kṛṣṇa stated the following in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.27)?

*prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni / guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ
ahaṅkāra-vimūḍhātmā / kartāham iti manyate*

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.

In answer to this, Śrī Rāmānujācārya explained, “The purport of this verse from *Gītā* is that when engaged in mundane activities, the living entity bewildered by *māyā* is impelled by the modes of nature – goodness, passion and ignorance.” The aforementioned aphorism [from *Vedānta-sūtra*] speaks of the *jīva*’s inherent nature as being a performer of action. Despite the fact that the *jīva* is the doer, he is not independent; he is dependent upon Parameśvara. For this reason, Śruti states:

*eṣa hy eva sādhu-karma kārayati taṁ yam ebhyo unnīṣate
eṣa hy evāsādhu-karma kārayati taṁ yam adho ninīṣate*

(Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad 3.8)

The Supreme Lord engages a person in pious activities if He desires to elevate him to the higher planetary systems, but He engages a person in impious activities if He wants to demote him to lower planets.

This raises another question: If it is actually the Lord who engages the living entity in good or bad works, why does the living entity have to take responsibility for his actions? Why does he have to experience the good or bad results of his activities?

The answer is that it is not that a *jīva* has no authority to act and that he is simply impelled to act by the Lord. Parameśvara is the effective cause of action and the *jīva* is the dependent performer of action. In other words, the Lord simply gives the energy to perform action. It is impossible for the *jīva* to perform any activity without the energy of the Lord. By that energy, the *jīva* is able to perform action according to his own desire. Therefore, it is not Īśvara who is responsible for the living entity’s action, which bears consequences; the living entity alone is responsible. “*Sva-karma-phala-bhuk pumān* – everyone enjoys or suffers the result of his actions.”

3b ~ The first type of independent sentient being, such as Śrī Nārāyaṇa, is beyond māyā

*tatra prathamam nārāyaṇādy-abhidham | yad uktam—“harir hi nirguṇaḥ
sākṣāt puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ” iti |*

Bhāvānuvāda: The first type of independent conscious controller who is untouched by *māyā* is known by names like Śrī Nārāyaṇa. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.88.5) states, “*harir hi nirguṇaḥ sākṣāt, puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ* – Śrī Hari is beyond material nature and has no connection with the

material modes. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and situated in absolute transcendence.”

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Independent conscious controllers are of two types: those who are untouched by *māyā* and those who, for the sake of pastimes, accept the touch of *māyā*.

Sentient beings without any contact with *māyā* are known by names like Śrī Nārāyaṇa. This refers to the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the pastime expansion (*vilāsa-mūrti*) of the non-dual Absolute Truth; to Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa; and to the other forms of the Lord such as Śrī Rāma, Nṛsiṃha, Varāha and Vāmana. These forms of Bhagavān are beyond the influence of the illusory potency, beyond the influence of time and beyond the material modes of nature. In other words, They are composed of eternality (*sat*), cognizance (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*). Because all these forms of Bhagavān are *sac-cid-ānanda*, we see that they are simultaneously localized and all-pervading. Material illusory objects, however, cannot possibly possess two contradictory inherent natures simultaneously.

All the forms of the Lord are eternal, and because of their magnitude, they pervade space, time and all things. It is to be understood that the concept of any tangible form being localized is applicable only to the illusory objects of the mundane world. Śrī Bhagavān’s nature and form are non-different from each other, and because all His forms are composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss, they are each everlasting, self-manifesting, beyond the influence of *māyā* and entirely devoid of inert matter.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 5.58) states: “*kāraṇa-samudra māyā paraśite nāre* – beyond the material nature lies the Causal Ocean, which *māyā* cannot touch.” Beyond the Causal Ocean lies the Spiritual Sky, which is also beyond the influence of *māyā*. Because *māyā* is absent from that place, illusory, mundane objects, also, do not exist there. There, Bhagavān, in His innumerable forms, remains ever immersed in the rapture of sweet pastimes with His beloved associates. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.88.5) explains:

*harir hi nirguṇaḥ sāksāt / puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ
sa sarva-dṛg upadraṣṭā / tam bhajan nirguṇo bhavet*

Certainly, Śrī Hari Himself is directly the Supreme Person, who is beyond the modes of material nature. He is the all-seeing witness. Those who worship Him also transcend the modes of nature.

Because Śrī Hari is transcendental to *māyā* and without any material qualities, His worshippers also become free from material qualities. Without worshipping Him, it is impossible to become free of them.

3c ~ The second type of independent sentient being, such as Lord Śiva, accepts the touch of māyā

dvitīyam śivādy-abhidham | yad uktam—“śivaḥ śakti-yutaḥ śasvat tri-liṅgo guṇa-saṁvṛta” iti | atra guṇa-saṁvṛta-liṅgenāpi tasya jīvatvaṁ nāśaṅkanīyam | “kṣīram yathā dadhi vikāra viśeṣa yogāt, sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ | yaḥ sambhutām api tathā samupaiti kāryād, govindam ādi puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi ||” iti brahma-saṁhitokteḥ | anyatra ca purāṇāgamādiṣu bahutra īśvaratvena prasiddheś ca |

Bhāvānuvāda: The second type of independent conscious controller is willingly touched by the material energy for the sake of pastimes (*līlā*), and is known by names such as Śiva. Scripture explains, “*śivaḥ śakti-yutaḥ śasvat, tri-liṅgo guṇa-saṁvṛta* – Śrī Śiva has a perpetual relationship with the material energy. He manifests himself in three features and is enveloped by the three modes” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.88.3).

It is inappropriate, however, to suspect that “enveloped by the three modes” means that Lord Śiva is an ordinary living being (a *jīva*). It has been stated in *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.45), “By adding a special transformative substance such as yoghurt culture, milk is transformed into yoghurt. The yoghurt, however, is never a fully separate substance, independent of its

cause, milk. I offer my obeisance to that primeval Lord, Śrī Govindadeva, who has assumed the form of Śrī Śiva for a distinct purpose.”

Many Purāṇas and Āgama scriptures establish Lord Śiva as having the position of Īśvara (the Controller).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The second type of conscious controller touches the material nature for the sake of *līlā* (transcendental pastimes) and is known by names such as Śiva. Here the word *līlā* means that Śrī Śiva, in accordance with his own independent desire, slightly contacts the illusory energy to accomplish his cosmic duties. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.88.3) also explains this:

*śivaḥ śakti-yutaḥ śaśvat / tri-liṅgo guṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ
vaikārikas taijasaś ca / tāmasaś cety ahaṁ tridhā*

Śiva is eternally endowed with his potency. Being a *guṇa-avatāra*⁷ of Śrī Hari, he is all-powerful. He is *tri-liṅga*, meaning he is the presiding deity of the three types of material ego – goodness, passion and ignorance. In other words, the three modes of material nature are thoroughly embodied in him.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states that although the words *guṇa-saṁvṛtaḥ* in the above-mentioned verse indicate that Śrī Śiva is covered by the modes of nature, it is improper to think that he is an atomic conscious living entity (*jīva-tattva*). The *jīva* is bewildered by the actions of the three modes of nature, but Śrī Śiva voluntarily embraces those modes.

In his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, known as *Śrī Bṛhad-vaiṣṇava-toṣaṇī*, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī sheds further light on this in the introduction to his explanation of this verse. In essence, he says that Śrī Śiva is a *guṇa-avatāra* of Bhagavān. Therefore, although he is non-different

⁷ *Guṇa-avatāra* refers to manifestations of the Supreme Lord (*avatāras*) that rule over the modes of material nature (*guṇas*). –Ed.

from Bhagavān, he voluntarily embraces the modes of material nature in order to quickly fulfil the desires of those practising *bhakti* with material motives. Consequently, devotees of Lord Śiva receive material opulence in accordance with their desires. Śrī Hari is supremely merciful, because even if His devotees are full of material desires, He never gives them material wealth, opulence and so forth, because these desired material objects bind a person to *māyā*. Instead, Śrī Hari gradually minimizes their material hankerings by making them relish His charming sweetness (*mādhurya*). In this way, by awarding His devotees the treasure of *prema*, which is beyond the material modes, He reveals His true greatness and makes their life successful.

Parīkṣit Mahārāja once asked Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, “O great sage, Lord Śiva has rejected all material enjoyment, but it is seen that almost all of those who worship him are wealthy and have all material comforts. On the other hand, Śrī Hari is the husband of the goddess of fortune and He revels in all sorts of enjoyment and opulence, but for the most part, His devotees are materially impoverished. So those who worship the renunciant are enjoyers, and the devotees of the enjoyer are renounced. What is the mystery behind these diametrically opposite outcomes?”

In response, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī elaborated on the nature and worship of Lord Hari and Lord Śiva, on Śiva’s being touched by the illusory potency and on Śrī Hari’s being beyond the influence of material nature. These topics are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.88).

Although Bhagavān Śrī Hari and Lord Śiva are not the same, they are nonetheless one in *tattva*. They represent two different types of lordship. Śrīman Mahādeva voluntarily accepts the qualities of material nature, but we should not think that he is subjugated by *māyā* like the *jīvas* swallowed up by her. While Śrīman Mahādeva is endowed with the qualities of material nature, he is certainly not in the category of *jīva-tattva*. The *jīva* is bound and controlled by the modes of material nature, but Lord Mahādeva, being the predominating deity and controller of those modes, is not bound by them. The author substantiates this by quoting *Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.45):

*kṣīraṁ yathā dadhi vikāra-viśeṣa-yogāt
 sañjāyate na hi tataḥ pṛthag asti hetoḥ
 yaḥ śambhutām api tathā samupaiti kāryād
 govindam ādi-puruṣam tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

The purport of this verse is that just as milk is transformed into yoghurt by contact with a transforming agent, he who assumes the form of Śambu [Lord Śiva] for a specific purpose is non-different from the root cause of his manifestation, Śrī Govinda. Yet his controllership is subordinate to that of Govinda, the Supreme Controller. He is not a controller separate from Him. For the purpose of accomplishing a special *līlā*, the Supreme Controller assumes a separate form, who accepts subordination to Him.

A special transformation occurs when the following three combine: (1) the material potency's (*māyā's*) quality of ignorance, (2) the marginal potency's (*taṭasthā-śakti's*) quality of minuteness and (3) the transcendental potency's (*cit-śakti's*) quality of cognizance (*saṁvit*) mixed with a touch of transcendental bliss (*hlādinī*). This special transformation is known as Lord Śiva, who is the very embodiment of the three types of egotism. He is celebrated as a *guṇa-avatāra* of Śrī Govinda. Therefore, Śrī Śiva is non-different from Śrī Hari.

In his commentary on this verse from *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī quotes a *mantra* from the *Ṛg Veda*: “*atha nityo deva eko nārāyaṇaḥ, brahmā nārāyaṇaḥ, śivaś ca nārāyaṇa ity ādi* – Nārāyaṇa is the only eternal Lord. Brahmā and Śiva also have the same nature as Śrī Nārāyaṇa; there is no difference between them.” In this way, knowing that Lord Śiva is endowed with the illusory potency, one should never consider him to be *jīva-tattva*. He is certainly *īśvara-tattva*. If, therefore, a need arises for one who is exclusively devoted to Śrī Hari (an *ananya-bhakta*) to worship Śiva, he can worship him with the understanding that Śrī Hari is situated within Lord Śiva's heart.

In this regard, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, in his *Bhakti-sandarbhā* (*Anuccheda* 106), cites a history from the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara*.

Once a devotee *brāhmaṇa* named Viṣvaksena, who was exclusively devoted to Śrī Hari, was traversing the earth. One day, when he was sitting alone in the forest, the son of the village chief approached him and inquired about his identity. When the devotee *brāhmaṇa* introduced himself, the son of the village chief said, “Today I have a headache. Please act as my representative and do *pūjā* to my worshipful deity, Lord Śiva.”

Upon hearing his request, the devotee *brāhmaṇa* replied, “O young man, I am exclusively devoted to Śrī Hari. I never worship any demigod, only the deity of Śrī Viṣṇu. Please go away.”

The son of the village chief repeatedly implored that devotee, but the devotee *brāhmaṇa* would not agree to perform that worship under any condition. Enraged, the son of the village chief readied himself to decapitate the stunned *brāhmaṇa*. “Death at the hands of this youth is not at all desirable,” he thought. “What shall I do?”

After some reflection, he agreed to perform the worship. As he approached the *śiva-līṅga*, he thought, “At the time of devastation, Lord Śiva, in order to destroy the creation, increases the mode of ignorance. Bhagavān Śrī Nṛsimhadeva desires to destroy ignorant demons and remove that ignorance. For this reason, He appears among them, like the sun dissipating thick darkness. This son of the village chief is also among the ignorant demons. I shall therefore worship Śrī Nṛsimhadeva at this site of Lord Śiva, to destroy the wicked mood of these rascal Śiva worshippers.”

Having decided this, he recited the *mantra*, *om nṛsimhāya namaḥ*. Just as he was about to offer flowers to the deity of Lord Śiva, the young son of the village chief, engulfed by wrath, raised his sword to cut off the *brāhmaṇa*’s head. At that moment, Lord Nṛsimhadeva suddenly burst out of the Śiva deity. He destroyed the young son of the village chief, along with his entire family. This legendary pastime place of Śrī Nṛsimhadeva named Līṅga-sphoṭa is in South India, and the worship of Śrī Nṛsimhadeva continues there to this day. This story illustrates how Śrī Hari and Lord Śiva are non-different.

3d ~ Lord Brahmā, a jīva, is also invested with the potency of the Supreme Lord

yat tu “sattva rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇā” ity atra “sthity-ādaye hari-viriñci-harā” ity anena tat-sādhāranyāt brahmaṇy apīśvaratvam avagamyate tad-īśvarāveśād eveti jñeyam | “bhāsvān yathāśma-śakaleṣu niṣeṣu tejah, svīyam kiyat prakatayaty api tadvad atra | brahmā ya eṣa jagad-aṇḍa-vidhāna-kartā” iti brahma-saṁhitokteḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: Furthermore, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.23) states, “*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇāḥ* – goodness, passion and ignorance are the three modes of material nature. The transcendental Lord of these three modes of nature, Śrī Hari, in order to perform the three separate functions of universal maintenance, creation and destruction, is known by the names Hari (Lord Viṣṇu), Viriñci (Lord Brahmā) and Hara (Lord Śiva), respectively.”

A general understanding of this verse suggests that Brahmā, too, has the quality of Godhood (*īśvaratā*). Yet it should be understood that Brahmā’s Godhood is a result of his being invested with the power (*śaktyāveśa*) of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Brahma-saṁhitā (5.49) states, “Just as the sun partially manifests its energy in the jewel known as *sūrya-kānta*, similarly, Śrī Govinda manifests some of His potency in a qualified living entity, who as Brahmā, creates the material universe. I worship that primeval Lord, Govinda.”

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Lord Śiva’s Godhood is celebrated within scriptures such as the Purāṇas and Āgamas. Lord Śiva is not the original controller, independent of Śrī Hari. This is clearly stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.23):

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti prakṛter guṇās tair
yuktaḥ paraḥ puruṣa eka ihāsyā dhatte
sthity-ādaye hari-viriñci-hareti saṁjñāḥ
śreyāmsi tatra khalu sattva-tanor nṛṇāṁ syuḥ*

Material nature consists of three qualities: *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (ignorance). Accepting these three in order to perform the activities of creation, maintenance and dissolution, the one non-dual Paramātmā adopts the three names of Hari (Viṣṇu), Viriñci (Brahmā) and Hara (Rudra), respectively. Even so, Śrī Hari, who accepts the material mode of goodness, bestows the supreme benefit upon human society.

The one Supreme Absolute Truth manifests Himself as Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahādeva, in order to create, maintain and destroy the universe, respectively. All three are *guṇa-avatāras* of Parabrahma. Brahmā is assigned the mode of passion, and Śiva is assigned the mode of ignorance. Unlike Śrī Viṣṇu, they do not have the quality of being the Supreme Lord. They bestow religiosity (*dharma*), economic development (*artha*) and sense gratification (*kāma*). Śrī Viṣṇu, the *guṇa-avatāra* endowed with the mode of goodness, is able to bestow *mokṣa*, or liberation from *māyā*. Here, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains that in a general sense this verse establishes that Brahmā, like Śiva, also possesses the quality of a controller, but that this is because he has been invested with the potency of Bhagavān. In other words, an aspect of the Lord's potency is conferred upon him. The *Brahmā-samhitā* (5.49) states:

*bhāsvān yathāśma-sakaleṣu nijeṣu tejah
svīyaṁ kiyat prakāṣayaty api tadvad atra
brahmā ya eṣa jagad-aṇḍa-vidhāna-kartā
govindam ādi-puruṣam tam aham bhajāmi*

Just as the sun manifests its potency to a minute degree within jewels such as *sūrya-kānta*, and invests in them the power to burn, similarly, Śrī Govinda also infuses His creative potency within the secondary creator of the universe, Brahmā. I worship that original personality, Śrī Govinda.

The *sādhaka* should understand that the glories of the Lord are comprehended according to the type of worship performed – *upāsānā-bhede jāni īśvara-mahimā* (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 2.27). Worship of the *guṇa-avatāras* Brahmā and Śiva is mixed with the modes of material nature (*guṇas*); it is not transcendental (*nirguṇa*). It can bestow no more than religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation. Only the Supreme Lord, Bhagavān Śrī Hari, is transcendental and beyond the influence of *māyā*. Worship of Him is also transcendental. *Bhakti* alone is the transcendental method of worship that results in the *sādhaka*'s attainment of the fifth goal of life, *kṛṣṇa-prema*, thus crowning his life with complete success. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in *Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*:

*santv avatārā bahavaḥ pūṣkara-nābhasya sarvato bhadraḥ
kṛṣṇād anyah ko vā latāṣv api prema-do bhavati*

Śrī Hari, whose navel is like a lotus, has limitless incarnations, all of whom are auspicious in all ways. But who except Śrī Kṛṣṇa can give the gift of *prema* even to vines, trees and shrubs, let alone to conscious living entities?

Only Śrī Kṛṣṇa bestows *prema*. The author further clarifies this topic later in this work.

3e ~ According to one perspective, the mode of ignorance is superior to the mode of passion

*tathā “pārthivād dāruṇo dhūmas tasmād agnis trayīmayah | tamasas tu rajas
tasmāt sattvam yad brahma-darśanam |” ity atra tamasaḥ sakāśāt rajasaḥ śraīṣṭhye
’pi vastuto rajasi dhūma-sthānīye śuddha-tejah-sthānīyasyeśvarasyānupalabdheś
ca | sattve samjvalanāgnau śuddha-tejasaḥ sākṣād iva pārthive dāru-sthānīye
tamasy api tasyāntarhita tayopalabdhir asty eva | tat-kārya-susuptau nirbheda-
jñāna-sukhānubhava ivety ādi vicārya tattvam avaseyam |*

Bhāvānuvāda: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.24) states that smoke is superior to wood, which is a transformation of earth, and that fire is superior to smoke, because the fire into which oblations are offered bestows a good destination (such as heavenly enjoyment). In the same way, the mode of passion is superior to the mode of ignorance, and the mode of goodness is superior to the mode of passion, because it gives direct perception of undifferentiated, impersonal *brahma*.

This verse characterizes the mode of passion as superior to that of ignorance; nonetheless, in the mode of passion, which is compared to smoke, it is impossible to perceive Īśvara (the Supreme Lord), who is compared to pure, effulgent fire. He, in His impersonal feature, can only be perceived in the mode of goodness, which is similarly compared to blazing fire. Īśvara is also present in the mode of ignorance, which is compared to wood, but imperceptibly so. Just as fire is present in a latent manner within wood and manifests externally as a result of friction, Īśvara is present within the quality of ignorance in an unmanifest form [making ignorance, from one perspective, superior to passion]. The function of the mode of ignorance is to induce deep, dreamless sleep, likened to the happiness of monistic knowledge. Considering this, the truth of the matter is to be understood.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: At the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the sages headed by Śrī Śaunaka Ṛṣi inquired from Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī about the various *avatāras* of Bhagavān. Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī described the Godhood of the undivided, non-dual source of all *avatāras*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is devoid of the following three differences:

- (1) *Svajātīya* [difference within the same category, meaning separateness between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His various manifestations]
- (2) *Vijātīya* [difference across categories, meaning separateness between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His different potencies, such as the material nature and the living entities]

- (3) *Svagata* [difference within His own being, meaning separateness between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and any aspect of Him, such as His names, form, attributes and pastimes]

Just as innumerable streams flow from an inexhaustible reservoir of water, the primeval Absolute Truth manifests unlimited *avatāras*. In this way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has been declared *Svayam Bhagavān* [the original form of Bhagavān, who has no source other than Himself]. Those who are conversant with *tattva* (ontological truths) refer to His bodily lustre as *brahma*, His partial expansion as *Paramātmā* (the Supersoul), and His pastime expansion as *Bhagavān Śrī Nārāyaṇa*.

In this way, the non-dual Supreme Absolute Truth, *Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, performs many varieties of pastimes in this universe. As the cause of all causes, He performs the activities of creation, maintenance and annihilation through His forms as the *guṇa-avatāras*, who preside over the material modes of nature, *sattva*, *rajaḥ* and *tamaḥ*. As Śrī Viṣṇu, the presiding deity of the mode of goodness (*sattva-guṇa*), He maintains the universe. As Śrī Brahmā, the presiding deity of the mode of passion (*rajo-guṇa*), He creates the material universe. As Lord Śiva, the presiding deity of the mode of ignorance (*tamo-guṇa*), He destroys the creation.

Although Śrī Viṣṇu is the presiding deity of *sattva-guṇa*, He always remains aloof from and uncovered by that mode. Śiva, however, remains covered by *tamo-guṇa*, and Brahmā by *rajo-guṇa*.

Because the modes have functional differences, it has been explained that the mode of passion is superior to the mode of ignorance, and that the mode of goodness is superior to the mode of passion. An example of this is given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.24). Smoke is superior to wood because smoke moves, while wood does not. Also, in smoke, one experiences a small amount of heat. Fire is superior to smoke, because in fire there is illumination. In the same way, the mode of passion is superior to the mode of ignorance, and the mode of goodness is superior to the mode of passion.

The mode of goodness is also superior because it can lead to realization of impersonal *brahma*. This is corroborated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.25.24):

*kaivalyam sāttvikam jñānam / rajo vaikalpikam ca yat
prākṛtam tāmasam jñānam / man-niṣṭham nirguṇam smṛtam*

[Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:] O Uddhava, knowledge aimed at attaining monistic liberation (*kaivalya-jñāna*) is in the mode of goodness, knowledge based on the bodily conception is in the mode of passion, and foolish, materialistic knowledge is in the mode of ignorance. Knowledge in relation to Me, however, is transcendental.

In his explanation of this verse given in his *Śrī Krama-sandarbha*, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī writes, “*kevalasya nirviśeṣasya brahmaṇaḥ śuddha-jīva-abhedena jñānam kaivalyam* – knowledge of the oneness of the pure living entity (*śuddha-jīva*) and the featureless aspect of the Absolute (*nirviśeṣa-brahma*) is called *kaivalya-jñāna*.” This *kaivalya-jñāna* is awakened by the influence of the mode of goodness. Thus, the word *kevala* indicates *nirviśeṣa-brahma*. In other words, the mode of goodness awakens knowledge of the oneness of the pure soul with *nirviśeṣa-brahma*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura makes the point that firewood is compared to the quality of ignorance, smoke to the quality of passion, and blazing fire to the quality of goodness. The impersonal aspect of the Absolute (*nirviśeṣa-brahma*) manifests in *sattva-guṇa*, not in the smoke-like mode of passion, but some heat is felt due to the fire. Fire, which manifests from friction, is present in firewood, which represents the mode of ignorance. Similarly, *sac-cid-ānanda-tattva* is present within Lord Śiva, who is the presiding deity of the mode of ignorance.⁸ Consciousness exists even in deep, dreamless sleep, which is a function of *tamo-guṇa*. This indicates that

8 Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura raises this point because one could consider that since smoke is superior to wood, Brahṁā (who represents the quality of passion) may be superior to Śiva (who represents the quality of ignorance). –Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

the non-dual Absolute Truth permeates Lord Śiva. That same Supreme Truth manifests Himself as the *guṇa-avatāras* of Śrī Brahmā to create, of Śrī Viṣṇu to maintain, and of Lord Śiva to annihilate the universe. The systematic analysis of ontological truth reaches this conclusion.

3f ~ Two types of dependent entities: those covered by ignorance & those not covered by ignorance

atheṣitavyaṃ caitanyaṃ ca sva-daśā-bhedena dvi-vidham; avidyayāvṛtam anāvṛtam ca | tatrāvṛtam deva-manuṣya-tiryag-ādi | anāvṛtam dvi-vidham; īśvareṇaiśvarya-śaktyānāviṣṭam āviṣṭam ca |

Bhāvānuvāda: Sentient beings controlled by Īśvara, the Supreme Lord, are known as *jīvas*. They are classified in two ways, according to their condition: those covered by ignorance and those not covered by ignorance.

Sentient beings not covered by ignorance are also of two types: those invested with the Lord’s potency of divine majesty and those not invested with that potency.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: For the reader to understand the difference between Lord Śiva, who is counted as a manifestation of the Lord, and Śrī Brahmā, who is counted as a living entity, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura first differentiates between types of sentient living entities. At the beginning of this section, it was stated that there are two categories of sentient beings: independent (*svatantra*) and dependent (*asvatantra*). *Asvatantra-caitanya* refers to the sentient entities under the control of the Lord.

These dependent sentient entities are further divided into two categories: those engrossed in ignorance and those not engrossed in ignorance. Five kinds of miseries (*kleśas*) afflict those engrossed in ignorance: nescience (*avidyā*), a false conception of “I” and “mine” (*asmitā*), material attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dveṣa*) and absorption in material objects (*abhiniveśa*).

Such sentient beings are covered by ignorance and controlled by the results of their actions. Since time immemorial, they have taken birth in species of demigods, humans, birds and beasts, agonizing in the blazing fire of the threefold miseries.

The second type of sentient beings are not engrossed in ignorance. Since time immemorial, they have been free from ignorance and untouched by the mundane conceptions of “I” and “mine”. They are further divided into two types: those invested with the Lord’s potency of divine majesty (*aiśvarya-śakti*), who perform superhuman acts, and those not invested with that potency.

ॐg ~ Jīvas liberated from ignorance: the jñānī merges with brahma, but the bhakta relishes the charming sweetness of Bhagavān

anāviṣṭam sthūlato dvi-vidham; jñāna-bhakti-sādhana-vaśāt īśvare līnam alīnam ca | prathamam śocyam; dvitīyam tan-mādhuryāsvādy-aśocyam |

Bhāvānuvāda: The sentient beings who do not possess the potency of divine majesty can be broadly categorized into two groups: those who have merged into Īśvara through the cultivation of *jñāna* and those who have not merged with Him [and have been established in eternal servitude].

The sentient beings in the former category are in a deplorable state. The sentient beings in the latter category can taste the Lord’s *mādhurya*, so they are not at all pitiable but full of transcendental bliss.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Those not invested with the Lord’s potency of divine majesty are also of two types. The first are those who cultivate *brahma-jñāna*, thinking themselves to be one with transcendence. Such living entities merge with the featureless aspect of the Absolute Truth (*nirviśeṣa-brahma*). That is, they attain *sāyujya-mukti*.

Some achieve *īśvara-sāyujya*, meaning they merge with the form of the Lord, who is replete with divine attributes. We should understand that even though the *jñānīs* think themselves to be *brahma*, they cannot possibly become *brahma*. Their separate existence remains, because they are not independent sentient beings but eternally dependent sentient beings. They are not personal expansions of the Lord (*svāmśa*); rather, they are eternally separated expansions (*vibhinnāmśa*).

The situation of these *jñānīs* is said to be lamentable, because they are unable to savour any of the qualities of *brahma*. In merging with the impersonal *brahma*, that which is relished, the person relishing and the act of relishing are one and the same. These *jñānīs* are thus deprived of the ecstatic taste, or innate bliss, of service to the Lord. Intelligent persons therefore prefer hell to *brahma-sāyujya*.

Merging with the form of the Lord (*īśvara-sāyujya*) is even more lamentable than merging with the featureless aspect of the Lord (*brahma-sāyujya*), because while *nirviśeṣa-brahma* contains no variety, the form of the Lord is the abode of innumerable, variegated qualities, forms and pastimes, and the *jīvas* who merge with Him are deprived of relishing that variety. Who is more unfortunate than one who lives inside a storehouse of honey yet remains deprived of tasting even a drop of it? Therefore, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 6.269) states, “*brahmā-sāyujya haite īśvara-sāyujya dhikkāra* – merging with the form of the Lord is even more pitiable than merging with His bodily effulgence.”

The second type of sentient entity that is not invested with the Lord’s *śakti* does not merge with the Lord. Rather, by practising *bhakti* in moods such as servitude and friendship, he attains the Supreme Lord in the form of His servant, friend and so on. He thus becomes fortunate to relish the immense, sweet happiness of serving the Supreme Lord. He is not at all unfortunate; rather, he is glorious. According to the nature of his cherished mood of service, he tastes the inexhaustible sweetness of *Śrī Bhagavān*, who is composed of eternity, cognizance and bliss, thereby perfecting his life.

3h ~ The two types of living entities invested with the potency of Bhagavān

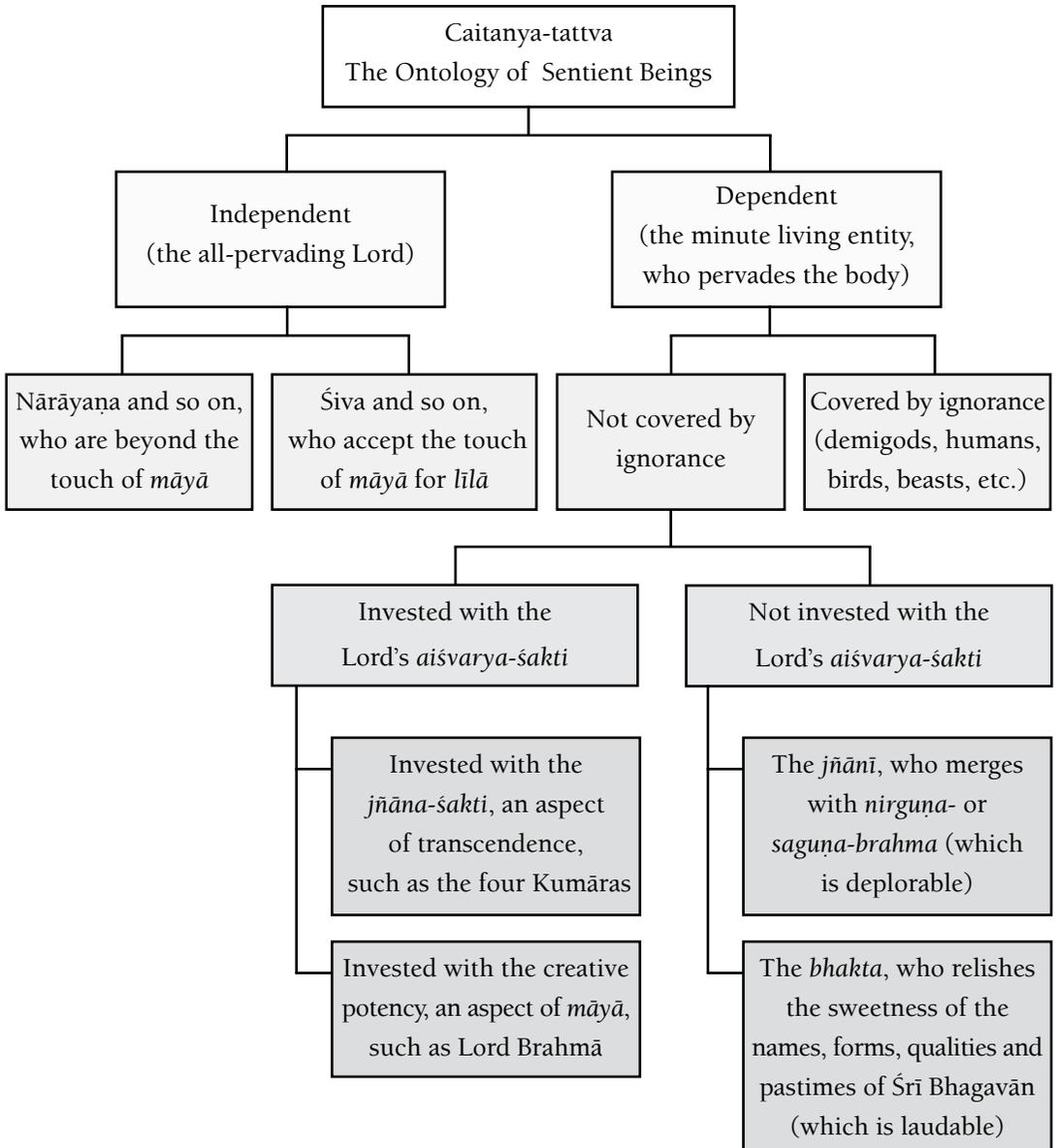
āviṣṭam ca dvi-vidham—cid-amśa-bhūta-jñānādibhir māyāmśa-bhūta-sṛṣṭy-ādibhiś ceti | prathamam catuḥsanādi; dvitīyam brahmāditi |

Bhāvānuvāda: Sentient beings empowered with divine majesty are also of two types: those who are empowered with knowledge arising from an aspect of the internal potency of the Lord (*cit-śakti*) and those who are invested with the creative potency, which arises from an aspect of the illusory energy (*māyā-śakti*).

The former category includes the four sons born from the mind of Brahmā, namely Catuḥsana (Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanandana and Sanat-kumāra). The latter category includes Brahmā and others.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Those invested with the Lord's *aiśvarya-śakti* are also of two types. The first are invested with the Lord's transcendental potency (*cit-śakti*), or the Lord's divine majestic potency of transcendental knowledge, arising from the Lord's internal potency. Examples are the four sons born from the mind of Lord Brahmā: Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanat-kumāra. Being always immersed in transcendental knowledge of Śrī Hari, they wander here and there, unconnected to the creation of the material universe.

The second type are invested with a portion of the Lord's external potency (*māyā-śakti*), to perform acts such as creation. This refers to Lord Brahmā, the grandfather of this universe, whom Śrī Bhagavān invests with His *māyā-śakti* to accomplish the creation of the material world. In *Śrī Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā*, Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura has identified the four Kumāras as *līlā-avatāras* (pastime expansions), and Śrī Brahmā as a *guṇa-avatāra*. In this way, the ontology of sentient beings can be easily understood.



3i ~ Although Śrī Viṣṇu and Śiva are non-different, only Śrī Viṣṇu is to be worshipped

evam ca viṣṇu-śivayor abheda eva prasaktaś caitanyaika-rūpyāt | niṣkāmair upāsyatvānupāsyatve tu nirguṇatva-saguṇatvābhyām evety avagantavyam |

Bhāvānuvāda: As they are both in the category of independent controllers, it is established conclusively that Śrī Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva are non-different. Nevertheless, for the practitioner who is free from material desires, the subject of who is to be worshipped and who is not to be worshipped should be discerned after carefully deliberating upon the object of worship's *nirguṇatva* or *saguṇatva* (attribute of being beyond material nature or within material nature).

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: It is understood from the previous section that Śrī Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva are non-different in terms of *tattva* solely because they are in the same category of sentience (*īśvara-caitanya*). In other words, by accepting the mode of ignorance, the all-pervading sentient being, Śrī Viṣṇu, for the sake of pastimes, has become Śiva. It is also understood that only Śiva accepts this material mode, not Śrī Sadāśiva. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in his *Śrī Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā*, “*kim ca sadāśivaḥ svayaṁ-rūpāṅgo-viśeṣa-svarūpo nirguṇaḥ sa śivasyāmśī* – Śrī Sadāśiva is not a *guṇa-avatāra*. Just like Śrī Nārāyaṇa, who is transcendental to material nature, Sadāśiva is a special expansion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself and the origin of the *guṇa-avatāra* Śiva.” Śrī Sadāśiva resides in Sadāśiva-loka, above the Causal Ocean, which is beyond *māyā*, while the *guṇa-avatāra* Śiva resides on Mount Kailāsa.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has established the oneness of Śrī Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva from the perspective of their both being independent sentient beings. He now considers the matter further from the perspective of worship. A selfless *sādhaka* must determine his object of worship only after ascertaining whether or not his object of veneration is touched by the material modes.

It was previously stated that Lord Śiva and Lord Brahmā fulfil the desires of those who worship them with a yearning for the fruit of their worship. People who desire material wealth are naturally inclined to worship the demigods and goddesses, who are within the material modes. But selfless *sādhakas* [of *bhakti*] do not have a trace of desire for any temporary, illusory object. They desire only the eternal treasure of *prema*. Leaving aside the worship of Śiva and Brahmā, who are of the material modes, they worship Śrī Hari, who is transcendental to those modes and untouched by *māyā*. Because their worship is transcendental, they remain constantly immersed in relishing Śrī Hari's names, forms, qualities, pastimes and their ambrosial service to Him. Not to speak of worldly wealth, they would not accept even the four types of liberation, such as living on the same planet as Bhagavān (*sālokya*), if it were offered to them.

*sālokya-sārṣṭi-sāmīpya- / sārūpyaikatvam apy uta
dīyamānam na grhṇanti / vinā mat-sevanam janāḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.13)

[Śrī Kapiladeva said:] My dear mother, despite being offered the various kinds of liberation – living on the same planet as Me (*sālokya*), possessing the same opulence as Me (*sārṣṭi*), residing near Me (*sāmīpya*), possessing a form like Mine (*sārūpya*) and merging into My effulgence (*ekatva*, or *sāyujya*) – My pure devotees do not accept them. They accept only transcendental loving service to Me.

Those who worship the demigods and goddesses are materially motivated. Their reward is insignificant, temporary wealth and opulence, which ultimately results in suffering. Indeed, it is necessary for such motivated worshippers to remember that, although the demigods and goddesses, who are materially covered, are easily pleased and thus bestow material wealth and opulence upon the worshipper, as soon as there is the slightest discrepancy in that worship, they curse him.

Sometimes, the demigods and goddesses fall into difficulty as a result of the benedictions they offer, having failed to anticipate the repercussions. We see in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.88) that Śrīman Mahādeva offered the demon Vṛkāsura the benediction that if Vṛkāsura placed his hand on someone’s head, that person would die. Upon receiving this benediction, Vṛkāsura wanted to test it by placing his hand upon Mahādeva’s head.

Mahādeva fled in fear, and Vṛkāsura gave chase. After traversing the earth, Mahādeva fled to the heavenly planets, but no demigod was able to give him refuge. Finally, he went to Vaikuṅṭha, beyond the material realm. Śrī Nārāyaṇa, taking the form of a young *brāhmaṇa* boy, asked Vṛkāsura why he had come so far. Upon hearing Vṛkāsura’s story, Śrī Nārāyaṇa said, “Because Lord Śiva was cursed by Dakṣa, he has become a ghoul, constantly wandering about in the company of witches and ghosts. His words can never be true. Put your hand on your own head and see for yourself.” Thus bewildered by Śrī Nārāyaṇa’s words, Vṛkāsura placed his hand on his head and immediately collapsed in a heap of ashes.

Lord Brahmā, also, offered rare benedictions to the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu without considering the repercussions. Bhagavān Śrī Nṛsiṃhadeva descended and killed Hiraṇyakaśipu, while carefully protecting the integrity of the benedictions given by Lord Brahmā. He reproached Lord Brahmā for offering such boons to the demon, likening it to feeding milk to a serpent. This, also, has been described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

3j ~ Sometimes, a living entity invested with the potency of Bhagavān becomes Śiva

*viṣṇu-brahmādyos tu bheda eva caitanya-pārthakyād eva | kvacit tu sūryasya
tad-āviṣṭa-sūrya-kānta-maṇer abheda iva viṣṇu-brahmaṇor abhedaś ca purāṇa-
vacaneṣu dṛṣṭaḥ | kim ca kvacin mahā-kalpe śivo ’pi brahmeva īśvarāviṣṭā jīva
eva bhavet | yad uktam—“kvacij jīva-viśeṣatvaṁ harasyoktaṁ vidher iva” iti |
ataeva—“yas tu nārāyaṇaṁ devaṁ brahma-rudrādi-daivataiḥ | samatvenaiva*

manyeta sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam ||” iti vacanam api brahma-sāhacaryeṇa saṅgacchate iti |

Bhāvānuvāda: The difference between Śrī Viṣṇu and Brahmā lies in their distinct type of sentience: the sentience of an independent controller (*īśvara-caitanya*) and the sentience of a dependent living entity (*jīva-caitanya*). In some places, Puranic statements highlight the non-difference between Śrī Viṣṇu and Brahmā, but it is to be understood that this is like the non-difference between the sun and the *sūrya-kānta-maṇi*, a gemstone imbued with the potency of the sun. In certain lifetimes of Brahmā (*mahā-kalpas*), a living entity invested with the potency of the Lord (*śaktyāveśa*) attains the attributes of Śiva. That is, just as Lord Brahmā is classed as a *jīva* (minute spirit soul), Lord Śiva is sometimes classed as a *jīva*, also. It has been said in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (1.73), “Anyone who sees the best of divine beings, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, to be the same as Rudra or Brahmā is certainly an atheist.” This statement can be reconciled by considering Rudra to have the same characteristic as Brahmā.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: We should understand that Śrī Viṣṇu and Brahmā are distinguished by their sentience. In other words, Śrī Viṣṇu is an independent sentient being, while Lord Brahmā, being *jīva-tattva*, is a dependent sentient being. Some Purāṇas highlight the non-difference between Śrī Viṣṇu and Brahmā, but it should be understood that this non-difference is like that between the sun and the *sūrya-kānta* jewel, which is invested with the potency of the sun. The jewel and the sun are separate objects; therefore, there is a permanent difference between them. But when the power of the sun is reflected in the *sūrya-kānta* gemstone, then the gemstone is able to burn objects such as cloth. Because the *sūrya-kānta* gemstone is invested with the burning quality of the sun, it is considered to be non-different from the sun. Similarly, because Lord Viṣṇu has partially invested Brahmā with the material potency to create, some Purāṇas describe Śrī Viṣṇu and Brahmā to

be non-different from each other. In truth, however, they are not identical, as Brahmā is a dependent sentient being.

Moreover, although Śrī Viṣṇu and Lord Śiva are described as non-different, independent sentient beings, during some lifetimes of Brahmā, a *jīva* who is invested with the special potency of the Lord performs the activities of Śiva. Therefore, *Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.27) states, “*kācij jīva viśeṣatvaṃ harasyoktaṃ vidher iva* – just like Brahmā, Śiva is also sometimes a *jīva* (*jīva-tattva*).”

The second *nāma-aparādha* enjoins that those who see a difference between the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu and those of Lord Śiva are offenders to the holy name. Nonetheless, it has been written elsewhere:

*yas tu nārāyaṇaṃ devaṃ / brahmā-rudrādi-daivataiḥ
samatvenaiva manyeta / sa pāṣaṇḍī bhaved dhruvam*

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (1.73)

One who considers Brahmā and Rudra (Śiva) to be on an equal level with Lord Nārāyaṇa is certainly an atheist.

Regarding Śrī Viṣṇu and Śiva as different from each other constitutes an offence to the holy name, but one who regards them as identical becomes an atheist. These scriptural statements appear contradictory. One may reconcile them, however, by understanding that these statements refer to the fault of regarding that form of Śiva who is in the category of *īśvara* as different from Śrī Viṣṇu, or the fault of regarding that form of Śiva who is in the category of a *jīva* as non-different from Śrī Viṣṇu.

In the same way, although Brahmā generally belongs to the category of a *jīva*, scripture mentions that sometimes an expansion of Śrī Hari may also assume the post of Brahmā. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.24.29) states:

*sva-dharma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān
viriñcatām eti tataḥ param hi mām*

A *jīva* who properly executes his occupational duty [within the *varṇāśrama-dharma* system] for one hundred births without fruitive desire becomes qualified to occupy the post of Brahmā.

Thus, at the beginning of creation, a qualified *jīva* manifests from the lotus navel of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and occupies the post of Brahmā. Bhagavān invests him with the potency of creation. In that age (*kalpa*), in which there is no such qualified *jīva*, Śrī Hari personally takes the post of a *guṇa-avatāra*, becoming Brahmā and performing the work of creation. He is then called Hiranyagarbha Brahmā, or that Brahmā who is in the category of Īśvara.

3k ~ Confusing the position of Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu – the second offence to the holy name

evam aparyālocayatām viṣṇur eveśvaro na śivaḥ śiva eveśvaro na viṣṇur vayam ananyā naiva paśyāmaḥ śivaṁ vayam ca na viṣṇum ity ādi vivāda-grastamatīnām aparādhe jāte kālena kadācit tat-tātparyālocana-vijñā-sādhu-jana-prabodhitatve teṣām eva śivasya bhagavat-svarūpād abhinnatvena labdha-pratītīnām nāma-kīrtanenaivāparādha-kṣayah |

Bhāvānuvāda: Without thoroughly reflecting on the spiritual truths that have been described thus far, some persons could wrangle as follows:

“Śrī Viṣṇu is the Supreme Lord, not Lord Śiva!”

“Lord Śiva is the Supreme Lord, not Śrī Viṣṇu!”

“We are one-pointed worshippers of Śrī Viṣṇu, and will not even glance at Lord Śiva!”

“We are one-pointed worshippers of Lord Śiva, and will not even look toward Śrī Viṣṇu!”

One whose intelligence is engrossed in debate in this way only makes offences to the holy name. By the ordinance of Bhagavān, such an offender

may obtain the association of an exalted saintly personality, who is conversant with all spiritual truths. He then becomes enlightened on this topic and develops faith that the *svarūpa* of Lord Śiva is non-different from that of Lord Viṣṇu. Following this, exclusively through *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, he becomes free from his above-mentioned offence to the holy name.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: While raising the topic that Lord Śiva's name, form, etc. are independent of or different from those of Śrī Viṣṇu, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura clearly describes the cause and the method by which one can become free from this *aparādha*. The root cause of offence to *bhagavat-tattva* is a lack of understanding Bhagavān's intrinsic form and nature (*svarūpa*). In regard to *tattva-vastu* (transcendental truth), the teaching is that one certainly commits an *aparādha* when one misunderstands the nature of *tattva-vastu*, taking it to be something else.

Generally, those who do not thoroughly reflect on *viṣṇu-tattva* and *śiva-tattva* and the correlation between them – in other words, those who do not have the good fortune of associating with saints conversant with such transcendental truth and hearing from them about it – will commit this [second] *aparādha*.

Those who worship Viṣṇu think, “Śrī Viṣṇu is the one Supreme Controller (*īśvara*); Śiva is not. We are His exclusive devotees and will not take *darśana* of Lord Śiva.” On the other hand, those who worship Śiva think, “Śiva is the one Supreme Controller; Viṣṇu is not. We are the exclusive devotees of Lord Śiva and will not take *darśana* of Lord Viṣṇu.” Those with such a belligerent attitude commit *aparādha*.

It was previously mentioned that *aparādha* is an act that displeases one's worshipful deity. When the worshippers of Śrī Viṣṇu and those of Lord Śiva speculate about the difference between their worshipful Lords, those Lords become displeased. Will a person be pleased by a servant who attends to one limb, while piercing or giving pain to another? Śrīman Mahādeva is indeed a part of Śrī Viṣṇu. To consider him different from Lord Viṣṇu will invariably lead to *aparādha*.

Now Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains the method to mitigate this offence. Lack of knowledge of *viṣṇu-tattva* and *śiva-tattva* is the root cause of this *aparādha*. As long as one is devoid of proper knowledge, it cannot be nullified. If a person committing this offence is fortunate to receive the association of and to hear from a realized saint, who is well-versed in the actual truth regarding *viṣṇu-tattva* and *śiva-tattva*, he will have true realization of spiritual reality. He will then understand that *viṣṇu-tattva* and *śiva-tattva* are non-different. This is because true knowledge of the nature of Bhagavān is possible only through the association and mercy of *sādhus*.

The Upaniṣads also enunciate this conclusion. *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* concludes with a description of the incomprehensibility of *brahma*. In other words, it shows how *brahma* is beyond the reach of mind and speech. How, then, can *brahma* possibly be understood? In answer to this question, it explains:

*naiva vācā na manasā / prāptuṁ śakyo na cakṣuṣā
astīti bruvato 'nyatra / katham tad upalabhyate*

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.3.12)

Indeed, *brahma* can never be attained by the mind, words, eyes or any other sense organ. How can *brahma* be understood? In answer, it is said, “*Brahma* can be understood by keeping the close association of saints, who are faithful.”

In *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34), Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna:

upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ / jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ

O Arjuna, persons who are conversant with spiritual reality will enlighten you with knowledge of *brahma*.

By this, it is understood that no matter how expert one becomes in studying and understanding the revealed scriptures, there is no possibility of gaining true knowledge about the Supreme Personality of Godhead until one receives the association and mercy of great personalities, who are

endowed with direct realization and vision of the Absolute Truth. But it is also not guaranteed that this *aparādha* will be destroyed upon receiving true knowledge of *viṣṇu-tattva* and *śiva-tattva* from such personalities. The real atonement for this *aparādha* is remorse. If one performs *nāma-saṅkīrtana* with repentance, taking shelter exclusively of Nāma Prabhu, this offence may be eradicated.

31 ~ Blasphemy of the revealed Vedic literatures – the fourth offence to the holy name

evam ca 'naitā bhagavad-bhaktim spṛśanti bahir-mukhyo vigītā' iti jñāna-karma-pratipādikāḥ śrutīr yenaiva mukhena nindams tenaiva mukhena tās tad-anuṣṭhātrmś ca janān muhur abhinandya nāmabhir uccaiḥ saṅkīrtitaiḥ śruti-sāstra-nindana-rūpāc caturthāparādhān nistareyuḥ | yatas tāḥ śrutayo bhakti-mārgeṣv anadhikāriṇaḥ svacchanda-vartinaḥ parama-rāgāndhānām api vartma-mātram adhyārohayitum udyatāḥ parama-kāruṇikā eveti tat-tātparyavijña-jana-prabodhitā yadi bhāgya-vaśād bhaveyus tadaiveti | evam evānyeṣām api ṣaṅṅām aparādhānām udbhava-nivṛtti-nidānāni avagantavyāni || 3 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Some persons blaspheme the Śrutis that recommend the path of fruitive action (*karma*) and monistic knowledge (*jñāna*), saying, “These Śrutis do not even touch devotional service to Bhagavān. They are superficial and thus abhorrent.” If, rather than using their speech in this way to blaspheme the Śrutis, they use it to repeatedly extol those same Śrutis and their adherents, all the while remaining immersed in voluble *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, they can be absolved of the fourth offence to the holy name: to blaspheme the Vedic literatures.

If by immense good fortune such offenders to the Vedic literatures obtain the association of exalted saintly personalities who are conversant with the full import of the Śrutis and hear from them, the offenders can understand that these supremely compassionate Śrutis are meant for

wayward people, who are strongly attached to sense gratification and unqualified for the path of *bhakti*. The Śrutis endeavour to bring such people to the path sanctioned by scripture. With this understanding, the *aparādha* arising from such blasphemy is eradicated by appropriate efforts.

The causes and destruction of the other six *aparādhas* can also be understood in accordance with the elucidations of the first four offences.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Now Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura presents the fourth offence to the holy name, *śruti-sāstra-nindā* – blasphemy of the Vedic literatures. He discusses its cause and the means by which it can be eradicated.

There are many varieties of Śrutis. Some establish the path of devotion to Bhagavān, while others establish the paths of *jñāna* and *karma*. In this way, by describing the activities of *yajña* and so forth, they sanction the many varieties of material enjoyment available in the heavenly planets. It is completely impossible for those who have taken to the path of *bhajana*, or *bhagavad-bhakti*, to blaspheme those Śrutis that promote the path of *bhakti*. This is because faith (*śraddhā*) means having unflinching conviction in the words of the scriptures. Such faith is the very first step on the path of *bhakti*. It is therefore impossible for devotees who have taken shelter of the path of *bhakti* and who have faith in *sāstra* to blaspheme *sāstras* about the path of *bhakti*. Nonetheless, there is a chance that they may blaspheme those Śrutis that promote the paths of *karma* and *jñāna*.

Having understood that worldly and heavenly objectives, and even liberation, are insignificant, some who have taken to the path of *bhakti* become angry when they see that certain Śrutis, as well as scriptures that follow the Śrutis, propound *karma* and *jñāna* without describing or praising the practices of *bhakti*, such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*. Since these Śrutis do not touch on *bhakti*, these devotees consider them to be averse to *bhakti* (*bahirmukha*) and reprehensible. Those who think like this commit the fourth offence to the holy name.

The Śrūti that propound *karma* and *jñāna* actually make a specific endeavour to bring those qualified for *karma* and *jñāna* to the entrance of the temple of *bhakti*. Those who have attained transcendental faith as a result of receiving the association and mercy of the Lord's devotee are eligible for *bhakti*: *śraddhāvān jana haya bhakti-adhikārī* (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya-līlā* 22.64).

Persons deprived of such fortune desire the happiness of *brahma-sāyujya* (liberation by merging into the effulgence of *brahma*). Scriptures dealing with the path of *jñāna* engage them in the practice of *jñāna* and thus guide them on the path leading to the bliss of impersonal *brahma*, which is devoid of variety. When those pursuing the path of *jñāna* attain the association of pure devotees, they become enchanted by the unlimitedly variegated rapture of *bhagavad-rasa*. Since the happiness of *jñāna*, or impersonal liberation, is devoid of variety, they therefore deem *jñāna* insignificant. Forsaking that path, they take shelter of the path of *bhakti* and thus become blessed. This is the actual intention of the *jñāna* division of the Śrūti.

In the same way, that section of the Śrūti dealing with *karma* allures wanton, intoxicated sense enjoyers, who are not qualified for *bhakti*, toward the immediate, sweet pleasure of the heavenly planets and engages them in the path of materially motivated pious action (*sakāma-karma*), in which they perform acts such as making offerings (*yāga*) and oblations (*yajña*) into a sacred fire. In this way, the Śrūti strive to bring such people to the path of *bhakti*.

The implication is that if wayward persons engrossed in sense pleasure are not encouraged to attain heavenly enjoyment and the like, they will become opposed to religiosity (*dharma*), prescribed duty (*karma*) and so on, and thus become even more undisciplined. Mercifully, the section of the Śrūti dealing with pious action (*karma-kāṇḍa*) gives instructions to such persons to bring them to the path of *karma*. In the course of performing the pious acts prescribed in these scriptures, such as making offerings and offering oblations into a sacred fire, these people will certainly receive the

association of an exalted devotee. As a result, they understand that the results of *karma* are actually a source of misery. Eventually, by the mercy of a *sādhu*, they will become blessed and take shelter of the path of *bhakti*. For this reason, blasphemy of these most merciful Śrutis constitutes an *aparādha*.

If the *sādhaka* of *bhakti* happens to commit this offence, then he can be freed from it by receiving the association of a great saint who comprehends the true import of Śrutis dealing with *karma* and *jñāna*. By that saint's mercy, he can understand the actual intention of those Śrutis and must then glorify them with the same mouth that blasphemed them. He should repeatedly honour those who engage in *karma* and *jñāna* under the shelter of those scriptures. Moreover, he should loudly call out the holy name.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has lucidly described the first four of the ten offences to the holy name: (1) to blaspheme saintly persons, (2) to consider Lord Śiva's name, form and so forth as independent of those of Śrī Viṣṇu, (3) to disobey the spiritual master and (4) to blaspheme the Vedic scriptures. He explains that the causes of the remaining six types of *aparādha* to the holy name and the means to mitigate them are to be understood in the same way as described for the first four *aparādhas*.

Using the methodology of the esteemed author, we shall now describe the emergence of the remaining *aparādhas* and the means to remove them.

To consider the glories of the holy name to be an exaggeration is the fifth *aparādha*. The unequalled glories of *śrī harināma* are found throughout *śāstra*. To regard these glories to be mere praise is to consider the glories of the holy name to be exaggerated. The scriptures and great saints proclaim that whatever may be said about the glories of *śrī harināma* cannot amount to even a drop of the ocean of *harināma*'s glories. To think that *śāstra*'s glorification of the holy name is meant for the general public so as to arouse an interest in *nāma* constitutes the grave *aparādha* of considering the glories of the holy name to be exaggeration (*artha-vāda*).

Actually, the glories of the holy name found in the words of *śāstra* or spoken by great devotees are insignificant, like a tiny firefly before the sun.

No one is capable of fully describing the glories of the holy name, so there is no reason to conjecture that the *śāstra*'s descriptions of these glories are an exaggeration.

It is because a person lacks the association of an exalted personality who properly understands the glories of the holy name that he commits the offence of considering those glories to be mere hyperbole. If that offender gets the association of such a saintly person, who is devoted to chanting the holy name, and hears the glories of *harināma* from his mouth, his contaminated mind will be purified. Then, taking exclusive shelter of Nāma Prabhu, incessantly chanting and feeling great remorse, this *aparādha* will be gradually dispelled.

To think that the holy names of the Lord are imaginary is the sixth *aparādha*. Māyāvādīs and materialistic followers of *karma* consider the Supreme Truth to be impersonal *brahma*, devoid of form, potency and a name. Those who think that great ṛṣis have fabricated some names like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, just to serve their own purpose, are offenders. *Harināma* is not imaginary; it is eternal and spiritual. Nāma Prabhu manifests only upon spiritualized senses through the process of *bhakti*. This teaching is imparted by the bona fide spiritual master and the Vedic scriptures. Consequently, *harināma* must be accepted as the ultimate truth. One who thinks Nāma Prabhu to be imaginary can never obtain His mercy.

To commit sinful activities on the strength of the holy name is the seventh *aparādha*. By the performance of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, all types of obstacles and *anarthas* are dissipated. But if someone utters *harināma* and repeatedly performs sinful activities on the strength of their chanting, their problems and obstacles will not be dispelled. Rather, a most fearful *aparādha* will be committed. The holy name is composed of *śuddha-sattva* (pure, transcendental goodness). Uttering *harināma* with faith will dispel all of the obstacles and impediments caused by weakness of heart (*hrdaya-daurbalya*), and one will not be inclined to commit sinful acts. Rather, the desire to sin and even ignorance will be removed.

If a devotee, due to previous impressions (*saṁskāras*), inadvertently commits a sinful act, there is no need for him to atone for it. Rather, Śrī Hari, who is present in his heart, will remove that sin. Someone may think, “*Harināma* purifies one of all sins, so there is no harm if I sin. My chanting of Śrī Hari’s sacred name will remove my sin.” Repeatedly committing sinful acts on the strength of the holy name leads to *nāma-aparādha*. The offender must repent, “Alas, what a grievous offender I am! I have used the supremely powerful, transcendental *harināma*, which easily bestows direct service to Bhagavān and *prema* for Him, to commit detestable, sinful acts. Alas! I will not be delivered even after suffering millions upon millions of torments in the hellish planets.” By grievously lamenting in this way and incessantly engaging in *harināma-sankīrtana* while offering obeisances and serving the Vaiṣṇavas, this *aparādha* will be dispelled.

To consider religiosity, vows, offering of oblations into fire and other ordinary pious activities to be equivalent to chanting the holy name is the eighth *aparādha*. All our Gosvāmīs have said, and it has been written in all the Śrūtis, Smṛtis and other scriptures, that there is no difference between *nāma* (the holy name) and *nāmī* (the possessor of the name, Śrī Hari). The holy name is the direct manifestation of Śrī Hari in the form of syllables, and is therefore not accessible to the material senses. The holy name is self-manifesting. When the practitioner becomes inclined to utter *harināma*, it will directly manifest on his tongue.

To consider the performance of mundane pious activities such as offering oblations into fire to be equal to the omnipotent, self-effulgent *śrī harināma* constitutes a grievous offence to *harināma*. It is indicative of significant negligence in chanting the holy name. This offence will be dispelled by abandoning worldly company, faithfully hearing the glories of *harināma* in the association of great devotees dedicated to chanting, surrendering oneself in a mood of repentance and ceaselessly uttering *harināma*.

Giving instructions on the chanting of the holy name to faithless persons constitutes the ninth *aparādha*. Only those with faith in the holy name are truly qualified to chant it. If one gives [instructions on] the holy name to

faithless persons, they will neglect it. The names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are everything, the sole treasure, for all souls. If given to faithless, stool-eating hog-like sense enjoyers, they will not appropriately honour the priceless jewel of *harināma*, but will fully neglect and reject it. This *aparādha* will ruin them, and render the spiritual master who instructed them on the holy name an offender.

Some people perform *nāma-kīrtana* loudly, but not with the intention of making a particular person hear it, even though it is heard by both the faithful and the faithless. The loud performance of *kīrtana* is not being discouraged here. Rather, the meaning is to discourage one from imparting instructions on *harināma* to one who lacks faith. When faith awakens in the heart of the disciple, instructions on chanting the holy name may be given to him, but it is never appropriate to instruct faithless persons on the holy name. If one who commits such an offence remorsefully takes full shelter of *śrī harināma* and chants continuously, this *aparādha* will be dispelled.

To have developed no affection for the holy name even after hearing its unlimited glories is the tenth *aparādha*. Some persons, despite hearing the glories of *harināma*, still regard the perishable body to be their identity and objects related to the body to be their own. Those with this false ego remain intoxicated by sense gratification and as a result, they do not respect *harināma* but become offenders to *nāma*. One who has committed this *aparādha* should remain in the company of saintly persons and serve them, while chanting *harināma* with full remorse. By doing so, one will develop love for Bhagavān's names and this offence will be eradicated.

Text 4

4a ~ Anarthas that arise from the practice of bhakti

atha bhakty-utthās te ca mūla-sākhāta upasākhā iva bhaktyaiva dhanādi-lābha-pūjā-pratiṣṭhādyaḥ sva-vṛttibhiḥ sādḥaka-cittam apy uparajya sva-vṛddhyā mūla-sākhām iva bhaktim api kuṅṭhayitum prabhavantīti |

Bhāvānuvāda: Next, *anarthas* that arise from *bhakti* are discussed. These *anarthas* spring like parasitic creepers from the main branch of the wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti* and awaken the yearning for wealth (*lābha*), adoration (*pūjā*) and recognition (*pratiṣṭhā*). They arise from [the imperfect performance of] *bhakti*, and the heart of the practitioner is tainted by their influence. In this way, they grow so extensively that they can even stunt the main branch of the creeper of *bhakti*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: At the beginning of this Third Shower of Nectar, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has given an elaborate description of *anarthas*. They are of four types: (1) those arising from impious activities, (2) those arising from pious activities, (3) those arising from offences and (4) those arising from *bhakti*. The author has already described the first three and is now describing the fourth. Such *anarthas* are known as *bhakty-uttha* because they arise from the [imperfect] practice of *bhakti*.

Everyone is naturally attracted to those who engage in *bhajana* of Śrī Hari. Therefore, when a devotee is doing *bhajana*, automatically all types of wealth, respect, worship and position come to him. They pose formidable obstacles to the practitioner’s progress in *bhajana*, the path leading to *prema*. The *sādhakas* desiring to attain *prema* should be extremely cautious to protect themselves from desires for these things and proceed on the path of *bhakti* with great humility and a feeling of worthlessness. Once the desires for wealth, adoration and recognition taint the heart of a *sādhaka*, his devotional practice will only intensify these *anarthas*.

For this reason, the *bhakty-uttha-anarthas* of wealth, adoration and recognition are said to be like the parasitic creepers (*upaśākhās*) of the root of the wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti*. The *upaśākhās* grow from the main tree. They stunt its growth by nourishing themselves with the water sprinkled on it and, taking its sap, eventually dry it up. Similarly, the *bhakty-uttha-anarthas* of wealth, adoration and recognition taint the heart of a *sādhaka* with their tendencies and stunt the growth of the original wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti*.

In His instructions to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

*kintu jadi latār saṅge uṭhe ‘upaśākhā’
bhukti-mukti-vāñchā, jato asankhya tāra lekhā*

*‘niśiddhācāra’, ‘kuṭināṭī’, ‘jīva-himsana’
‘lābha’, ‘pūjā’, ‘pratiṣṭhādi’ jato upaśākhā-gaṇa*

*seka-jala pāiyā upaśākhā bāḍī’ jāya
stabdha haiyā mūla-śākhā bāḍite nā pāya*

*prathamei upaśākhār karaye chedana
tabe mūla-śākhā bāḍī’ jāya vṛndāvana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 19.158–161)

Sometimes, the parasitic creepers (*upaśākhās*) of the desire for enjoyment or liberation sprout alongside the vine of devotion. These *upaśākhās* are unlimited. They include forbidden behaviour, duplicity, violence to other living entities and the desire for wealth, fame and recognition. They drink up all the water of the *sādhaka*’s hearing and chanting. In this way, they are nourished and flourish, while the growth of the *bhakti-latā* is impaired. An intelligent devotee must uproot a parasitic creeper as soon as he spots it, so that the original vine of devotion may flourish and reach the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.

Here, Śrīman Mahāprabhu is saying that the desire for material enjoyment and liberation, as well as improper conduct, duplicity, harming other living entities, and desiring wealth, adoration and recognition, are called *upaśākhās*. For the *jīvas*, who are Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eternal servants, desires for anything other than Him and devotion to Him are nothing but duplicity; they represent the *jīvas*’ corrupt tendencies. When even one of these tendencies arises in the heart, many other such desires begin to take shelter

there also, and it becomes full of ill longings. In such a condition, the desire for *bhakti* will disappear.

With a heart full of desires for sense gratification, wealth, adoration and fame, the practitioner will engage in wicked, forbidden acts to obtain them, acts that are condemned in the scriptures, such as speaking lies and deceitful words, behaving with arrogance, harming others and stealing. Externally adorned with *tilaka* and *tulasī* neck beads, he mechanically goes through the motions of hearing and chanting. He puts on a show of humility to make sure that his wicked behaviour does not come into public view and to avoid censure from the community of devotees. All the while, he is secretly engrossed in depraved activities and other kinds of duplicity. Finally, his heart fills with so much of that deceit that not even the slightest trace of desire for *bhajana* remains. Therefore, Śrīman Mahāprabhu gives the instruction to first cut these parasitic creepers.

The desires for material enjoyment and liberation may have already been cut, but it is extremely difficult to remove the desire for recognition (*pratiṣṭhā*). Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī writes in the epilogue of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*:

*sarva tyāge 'py aheyāyāḥ / sarvānartha bhuvāś ca te
kuryuḥ pratiṣṭhāviṣṭhāyā / yatnam asparśane varam*

Even if one has relinquished everything else, the desire for recognition, which is the root cause of all *anarthas*, is extremely difficult to give up. For this reason, the practitioner is to remain extra vigilant to save himself from the stool of this desire.

When this desire for *pratiṣṭhā* finds a place in the heart, then *pratiṣṭhā*'s most beloved companion, envy (*mātsarya*), also takes shelter there. They cohabit because of their reciprocal conjugal mood. The dog-eating outcaste of envy impregnates the witch of desire for recognition, who begets the twins, violence (*himsā*) and jealousy (*īrṣā*).

Their combined devastating dance completely destroys all good tendencies of the heart. And in such an impure heart, where is there room for the desire for *bhakti*? The *sādhaka* should therefore not desire honour (*amānī*) but instead offer all respects to others (*mānada*), thus carefully abandoning the desire for honour forever.

4b ~ The five stages of eradication of *anarthas*

teṣāṃ caturṇām anarthānām nivṛttir api pañca-vidhā | eka-deśa-vartinī bahu-deśa-vartinī prāyikī pūrṇā ātyantikī ceti |

Bhāvānuvāda: The eradication of the four types of *anarthas* occurs in five stages: (1) partial (*eka-deśa-vartinī*), (2) extensive (*bahu-deśa-vartinī*), (3) almost complete (*prāyikī*), (4) complete (*pūrṇā*) and (5) absolute (*ātyantikī*).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Within the stages of *bhakti-sādhana* mentioned, from *śraddhā* to the attainment of *prema*, there is the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti* (cessation of impediments to *bhakti*). Now the removal (*nivṛtti*) of these four types of *anarthas* is being explained. These *anarthas* do not vanish immediately, but are eradicated in five stages: (1) *eka-deśa-vartinī*, (2) *bahu-deśa-vartinī*, (3) *prāyikī*, (4) *pūrṇā* and (5) *ātyantikī*.

- (1) *Eka-deśa-vartinī*, the partial clearance of *anarthas*, can be likened to the deduction of two or four *annas* from a rupee. [One *anna* equals one sixteenth of a rupee.] This stage is called *eka-deśa-vartinī-nivṛtti*.
- (2) *Bahu-deśa-vartinī*, the extensive eradication of *anarthas*, can be likened to the deduction of twelve *annas* from a rupee. This stage is called *bahu-deśa-vartinī-nivṛtti*.
- (3) *Prāyikī*, the almost complete clearance of all *anarthas* with only a little remaining, can be likened to the deduction of ninety-eight *paisā* from

a rupee. [One *paisā* equals one hundredth of a rupee.] This stage is called *prāyikī-anartha-nivṛtti*.

- (4) *Pūrṇā*, the complete eradication of *anarthas*, with nothing remaining, can be likened to the full deduction of sixteen *annas* from a rupee. This stage is called *pūrṇā-anartha-nivṛtti*.
- (5) *Ātyantikī*, the absolute annihilation of *anarthas*, sees no possibility of *anarthas* regenerating again. In the previous stage of *pūrṇā-nivṛtti*, *anarthas* are destroyed, but there is still a possibility that they may regenerate for some reason. At *ātyantikī-nivṛtti*, however, there is no possibility of this happening.

4c ~ The sequence in which *anarthas* arising from *aparādha* are vanquished

tatra 'grāmo dagdhaḥ paṭo bhagna' iti nyāyenāparādhottthānām anarthānām nivṛttir bhajana-kriyānantaram eka-deśa-vartinī niṣṭhāyām utpannāyām bahula-deśa-vartinī ratāv utpadyamānāyām prāyikī premni pūrṇā śrī-bhagavat-pada-prāptāv ātyantikī |

Bhāvānuvāda: “*Grāmo dagdhaḥ paṭo bhagnaḥ* – the village is burned; the cloth is torn.”

According to this logic, after commencing the practice of devotional service (*bhajana-kriyā*), the eradication of *anarthas* arising from past *aparādhas* is partial. Upon developing firm faith (*niṣṭhā*), the eradication is extensive. When one develops transcendental affection (*rati*) for Śrī Bhagavān, the eradication is almost complete. When the sun of love of Godhead (*prema*) rises, its destruction is complete. And when one obtains the lotus feet of Bhagavān [that is, becomes His direct associate], the eradication of this *anartha* is absolute.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura illustrates the point under discussion with the logic “*grāmo dagdhaḥ paṭo bhagnaḥ* – the village is burned; the cloth is torn.” From these statements, we understand that the village was only partially consumed by fire and that the cloth is now in two or more pieces. It does not indicate that the village or cloth is destroyed entirely.

Likewise, after commencing *bhajana-kriyā*, which we have discussed previously, there is a gradual eradication of *anarthas* arising from offences (*aparādhotta-anarthas*). But this removal is only partial (*eka-deśa-vartinī*); it is not complete. Similarly, when *niṣṭhā* arises in the *sādhaka*, the removal of *anarthas* is extensive (*bahu-deśa-vartinī*). When *rati*, or *bhāva*, develops, the destruction of *anarthas* is almost complete (*prāyikī*). When *bhāva* condenses, it is called *prema*. At this stage, the devotee’s *anartha-nivṛtti* is complete (*pūrṇā*). And when the devotee who is continuously engaged in love-laden *bhakti* receives the mercy of *bhakti*, he obtains direct service to the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān. At this stage, the eradication of *anarthas* is absolute (*ātyantikī*). There is not even the slightest chance that they will return.

Here, one may ask if the tendency to commit *aparādha* can possibly arise in the heart of a devotee in whom *rati* or *prema* has arisen. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.3.54) explains:

*bhāvo ’py abhāvam āyāti / kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāparādhataḥ
ābhāsatām ca śanakair / nyūna-jātīyatām api*

By an offence against Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇa’s dearest devotee, even *bhāva* will disappear if the offence is serious. That *bhāva* will become a shadow of *bhāva* (*bhāvābhāsa*) if the offence is medium, and will become *bhāva* of a lesser category if the offence is slight.

A gorilla named Dvividā was an associate of Śrī Rāmacandra, but because he had committed an offence at the feet of Śrī Lakṣmaṇa, he underwent

many torments and was eventually killed at the hands of Śrī Baladevajī at the end of Dvāpara-yuga. By such precedents, the severity of committing an offence at the lotus feet of a great devotee is understood. It is not impossible for those *sādhakas* in whom *bhāva* has arisen (*jāta-rati-sādhakas*) and those in whom *prema* has arisen (*jāta-prema-sādhakas*) to commit offences to a pure devotee. Only when the *premī-bhakta* receives the full mercy of Śrī Bhagavān and obtains direct *darśana* of Him and service to Him does the absolute cessation (*ātyantikī-nivṛtti*) of *aparādhotta-anarthas* take place, with no possibility of *aparādha* being committed again.

4d ~ The offence of Citraketu Mahārāja is, in truth, not an offence

yas tu tatrāpi citraketau kādācitko mahad-aparādhaḥ sa prātītika eva na vāstavaḥ | satyām prema-sampattau pārśadatva-vṛtratvayor vaiśiṣṭyābhāva-siddhāntāt |

Bhāvānuvāda: We hear that once, Mahārāja Citraketu committed an offence to a pure devotee, even after receiving the audience of Bhagavān. His committing an offence was only apparent, however; it was not real. Since the same treasure of loving devotion to Bhagavān remained in his heart, both as an associate of the Lord and as Vṛtrāsura, there is no difference between these two distinctive features of his. This is the conclusion (*siddhānta*).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: After attaining Bhagavān, the cessation of *anarthas* arising from *aparādha* is absolute (*ātyantikī*). This means that it is impossible to commit an offence to an exalted devotee (*mahad-aparādha*). Here a question may arise. If this is so, then how did Citraketu Mahārāja, even after attaining Bhagavān, develop the propensity to offend Śrīman Mahādeva? In response, the revered author says that although we hear that Citraketu

Mahārāja committed *aparādha* to a great soul, this is not the reality; the offence was only apparent. It is said that the result of committing an offence to a pure devotee is that one's *bhakti* diminishes or vanishes. Pārvatī cursed Citraketu Mahārāja and he became a demon, but still, his *bhakti* remained unaffected. “*Phalena phala-kāraṇam anumīyate* – we can infer the cause by the result alone.” Therefore, Citraketu Mahārāja did not actually commit *mahad-aparādha*.

The history of Śrī Citraketu Mahārāja is narrated in the Sixth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Chapters 14–16. He was the sovereign ruler of the land of Śūrasena. Despite possessing unmatched royal opulence, he remained downcast because he had no son. King Citraketu had accepted the hands of ten million beautiful women in the hope of having a son, but he remained without progeny.

One day, by the desire of Bhagavān, the great sage Aṅgirā Ṛṣi came to his royal palace. The king revealed his anguish and implored him repeatedly for a son. Mahārṣi Aṅgirā prepared *caru* (a special sweet rice used in oblations) and offered it into a sacred sacrificial fire. He fed the remnants to the principal queen, Kṛtadyuti, saying, “May this produce a son who will give the king both happiness and distress.” He then left.

After eating the sweet rice, the queen became pregnant and in due course gave birth to a most beautiful baby boy. The child began to grow, just like a waxing crescent moon. Naturally, King Citraketu's attachment to Queen Kṛtadyuti increased. Seeing this, the other queens became stricken with envy and hatred, and they killed the child by feeding him poison.

The great sage had previously stated that the king would have a child that would cause him happiness and distress. Upon hearing of his son's death, Mahārāja Citraketu became overwhelmed with sorrow. At that time, the supremely merciful Śrī Nārada arrived, along with Śrī Aṅgirā Ṛṣi. Śrī Nārada gave the king much instruction and offered him solace. Nonetheless, it was extremely difficult for the king to understand his teachings. Finally, those great sages summoned the soul of the departed child and had the child

pacify the king by imparting instructions about the unsubstantial nature of this material world and the fleeting nature of relationships between father and son, mother and father, and so forth.

Becoming detached from this world, the king engaged in *bhajana* under the direction of Śrī Nārada and achieved the direct audience of Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, who, being pleased with him, instructed him on the fundamental truths of *dharma* and *jñāna*. The king ascended a divine airplane and became the ruler of the Vidyādharas⁹, wandering freely in the valleys of Mount Sumeru.

One day, Mahārāja Citraketu saw Bhagavān Śrī Śaṅkara in an assembly of great *munis*, *siddhas* and *cāraṇas*, with his arm around Pārvatī, who was seated on his lap. As Mahārāja Citraketu came closer, he laughed loudly in the presence of Pārvatī-devī. “Just see the situation of the great instructor of *dharma*, the *guru* of the whole world, Śrī Mahādeva!” he said. “In such a learned assembly, he has placed his wife on his lap? How shameless!”

Bhagavān Śrī Śaṅkara knew that Citraketu was a dear devotee of Bhagavān, so he simply smiled and said nothing. Pārvatī-devī, however, could not tolerate Citraketu’s behaviour – his ridicule and disrespect. She therefore immediately cursed him: “You will take birth in a most sinful, demoniac race. In that way, you will never be able to disrespect great souls [due to having no contact with them].”

King Citraketu was not even slightly distressed by this. To please Pārvatī, he glorified her, accepted the curse, offered obeisance and went on his way. He did not retaliate. His power was such that had he so desired, he could also have cursed Pārvatī, but he did not.

Having been damned by the goddess, Citraketu took birth as the son of Tvaṣṭā Ṛṣi and became known as Vṛtrāsura. His body was enormous and terrifying, and all the demigods feared him. During a great battle with the demigods, Indra, carrying a thunderbolt made from the bones of Dadhīci

9 A race of celestial beings who are attendants of Lord Śiva and who possess material mystic knowledge.*

Ṛṣi, came to kill him. Ready to fight, Indra appeared before Vṛtrāsura, riding the elephant Airāvata. Śrī Bhagavān had instructed Indra to kill Vṛtrāsura with the thunderbolt weapon, but it fell from his hand. Vṛtrāsura picked up the weapon, but being greatly devoted to *dharma*, he personally returned it to Indra, saying, “Kill me with this. I am not afraid, not even of Time. Bhagavān Śrī Śyāmasundara is before me, and I consider it my great fortune to be able to relinquish this demoniac material body as I gaze upon Him.” While having direct realization of Bhagavān, he prayed (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.11.24–27):

*aham hare tava pādaika-mūla-
dāsānudāso bhavitāsmi bhūyaḥ
manaḥ smaretāsu-pater guṇāms te
grṇīta vāk karma karotu kāyaḥ*

O Lord, please bestow such mercy upon me that in my next birth I may obtain the opportunity to exclusively serve the servants who have taken shelter of Your lotus feet. O beloved of my life (Prāṇa-vallabha), may my mind always remember Your all-auspicious qualities, my speech always describe the glories of these qualities, and my body always remain engaged in Your service.

*na nāka-prṣṭham na ca pārameṣṭhyam
na sārva-bhaumam na rasādhipatyam
na yoga-siddhīr apunar-bhavam vā
samañjasa tvā virahayya kāṅkṣe*

O source of all good fortune, I do not desire the heavenly planets, the realm of Brahmā, or rulership over the earth or lower planetary systems; nor do I desire any mystic perfection. I do not even want liberation if it means I would have to give You up.

*ajāta-pakṣā iva mātaram khagāh
stanyam yathā vatsatarāh kṣudhārtāh
priyam priyeva vyūṣitam viṣaṅṅā
mano 'ravindākṣa didṛkṣate tvām*

O lotus-eyed one, my heart is restless to have *darśana* of You, just as featherless chicks eagerly look out for their mother, as hungry calves are anxious to drink the milk of their mothers, or as a lover separated from her beloved because he is in a foreign land longs to meet him.

*mamottamaśloka-janeṣu sakhyam
saṁsāra-cakre bhramataḥ sva-karmabhiḥ
tvan-māyayātmātmaja-dāra-geheṣv
āakta-cittasya na nātha bhūyāt*

Lord, I do not want liberation. I am not concerned if I have to repeatedly wander throughout this vicious circle of birth and death as a result of my actions. But wherever I go and in whichever species I may take birth, please grant me the loving friendship of Your dear devotees. Master, I only wish that I may never have any relationship with those who are bewildered by Your illusory potency and attached to house, body, wife and sons.

Thus, despite being in the body of a demon, Citraketu (Vṛtrāsura) not only remained immersed in remembrance of Bhagavān, but also achieved direct *darśana* of Him.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has quoted these four verses in his *Prīti-sandarbha* (*Anuccheda* 72), and in conclusion writes:

*tad etac chuddha-premodgāramayatvenaiva śrīmad-vṛtra-vadho 'sau
vilakṣaṇatvāc chrī-bhāgavata-lakṣaṇeṣu purāṇāntareṣu gaṇyate,
vṛtrāsura-vadhopenam tad bhāgavatam iṣyate iti |*

The meaning here is that Vṛtrāsura's words reveal his immaculate *prema* for Bhagavān. This is why the account of the killing of Vṛtrāsura is regarded as special within *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Other Purāṇas also accept these prayers as uppermost among the features of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The *Matsya Purāṇa*, also, states that the killing of Vṛtāsura has been described in the work entitled *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

4e ~ Jaya and Vijaya voluntarily accepted an unfavourable mood toward Bhagavān

jaya-vijayayos tv aparādha-kāraṇaṁ prema-vijṛmbhitā svecchaiva | sā ca 'he prabhu-vara devādi-deva nārāyaṇa anyatrālpa-balatvāt asmāsu tu pratikūlyābhāvāt yadi tatra bhavato yuyutsā na sampadyate tadā āvām eva kenāpi prakāreṇa pratikūli-kṛtya tad yuddha-sukham anubhūyatām ity āvayoḥ svataḥ paripūrṇatāyām aṇu-mātram api nyūnatvam asahamānayoḥ kiṅkarayoḥ prārthanā-haṭhaḥ sva-bhakta-vātsalya-guṇam api laghū-kṛtya niṣpādyatām' ity ākārā kādācitka-prasaṅga-bhavā mānasā manasaiva jeyā |

Bhāvānuvāda: Furthermore, the cause of Jaya and Vijaya's offence was a desire born of their burgeoning *prema*, which they expressed as follows: "O Master, O Lord of lords, Nārāyaṇa! We cannot see anywhere anyone powerful enough to fulfil Your desire for battle. Even though we have the power to do so, we cannot oppose You, as we are devoid of an antagonistic mood toward You. Since Your desire to fight is not fulfilled, please somehow awaken in us an inimical mood, so that You may taste the satisfaction of combat. We cannot tolerate that You experience even the slightest diminution in the fulfilment of Your autonomous desires. Therefore, we, Your two order-carriers, pray that even if You have to forcibly curb Your quality of being affectionate to Your devotees (*bhakta-vātsalya*), kindly fulfil our prayer."

If one ever develops an offensive mentality toward the description of Citraketu Mahārāja or Jaya and Vijaya and concludes that Citraketu

Mahārāja or Jaya and Vijaya really committed an offence, one should overcome this by intelligent deliberation.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Third Canto, Chapter 5, describes the story of the four Kumāras headed by Śrī Sanaka Muni cursing the associates of the Lord in Vaikuṅṭha, Jaya and Vijaya. Although it appears that Jaya and Vijaya committed *aparādha* to great souls, it was in truth triggered by their desire to please Bhagavān with their service. Jaya and Vijaya, the gatekeepers of Vaikuṅṭha, were thinking that everyone gives the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha [Śrī Nārāyaṇa] happiness by serving Him, but no one is able to facilitate the all-powerful Śrī Nārāyaṇa’s tasting the mellow of combat (*yuddha-rasa*). “No warrior in the universe is equal to Śrī Nārāyaṇa. We have immense strength, but we cannot help Him taste the *rasa* of fighting, because our mood is not to oppose Him. Without a mood of enmity, this is not possible,” they thought.

Therefore, they both approached Śrī Nārāyaṇa and prayed, “O Lord, our sole desire is for You to taste the *rasa* of combat. Because You are complete in Yourself, we cannot tolerate Your experiencing any lacking [in the fulfilment of Your desires]. All devotees serve You with a favourable mood, and so no one desires to help You taste the *rasa* of fighting. Lord, we pray that You mercifully bestow upon us a mood averse to You, so that we can fulfil Your desire to taste satisfaction in combat.” To satisfy their desire, Śrī Nārāyaṇa, the wish-fulfilling desire tree of His devotees, inspired the *munis* headed by Sanaka-kumāra to come to Vaikuṅṭha. Solely due to Śrī Nārāyaṇa’s inspiration, Jaya and Vijaya blocked the sages from entering Vaikuṅṭha. As a result, the four sages cursed them to take birth in a race of demons. By enabling Śrī Nārāyaṇa to taste *yuddha-rasa*, they considered their lives successful.

If the inclination to serve in an adverse mood ever arises in any *sādhaka* as it did with Śrī Citraketu or Jaya and Vijaya, then, by dint of his intelligence, he should immediately cast such an offensive thought from

his mind. The transcendental behaviour of Bhagavān's eternal associates is inconceivable for the common people, and it is never proper for a *sādhaka* to imitate it.

4f ~ The sequence in which anarthas arising from impious activities and bhakti are vanquished

tathā duṣkṛtothhānām bhajana-kriyānantaram eva prāyikī niṣṭhāyām jātāyām pūrṇā āsaktāv evātyantikī | tathā bhakty-utthānām bhajana-kriyānantaram eka-deśa-vartinī niṣṭhāyām pūrṇā rucāv ātyantikī anubhavinā bahu-dṛśvanā samyag vivicyānumantavyam || 4 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: The eradication of *anarthas* arising from impiety (*duṣkṛta-jāta*) [and piety (*sukṛta-jāta*)] is as follows: After the stage of *bhajana-kriyā*, eradication is almost complete (*prāyikī*). At *niṣṭhā*, eradication is complete (*pūrṇā*). At *āsakti*, eradication is absolute (*ātyantikī*).

Similarly, the eradication of *anarthas* arising from *bhakti* (*bhakti-jāta*) is as follows: At *bhajana-kriyā* eradication is partial (*eka-deśa-vartinī*). At *niṣṭhā* eradication is complete (*pūrṇā*). At *ruci* eradication is absolute (*ātyantikī*). Experienced and realized devotees have ascertained and revealed this after thorough deliberation.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvānatha Cakravartī Ṭhākura previously described that the cessation of *anarthas* takes place in five successive stages and that the *sādhaka* thus gradually becomes free from the most prominent hindrance to *bhakti*, *anarthas* arising from *aparādha*. Now he is describing the sequential freedom from the other types of *anarthas*.

At the stage of *bhajana-kriyā*, the cessation of *anarthas* arising from sinful activities, such as attachment to material objects, hatred and absorption in worldly objects, is almost complete (*prāyikī*). Upon attaining the stage of *niṣṭhā*, the cessation of *anarthas* arising from sinful activities is complete

(*pūrnā*), and at the stage of *āsakti*, the cessation of such *anarthas* is absolute (*ātyantikī*), and there remains no chance of their sprouting again.

Śrīla Viśvānatha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has not separately specified the sequence in which *anarthas* arising from pious activities are nullified. Absorption in the five types of sufferings coming from ignorance is an *anartha* arising from sinful activities, while absorption in material enjoyment is an *anartha* arising from pious activities. When one develops attachment (*āsakti*) to Śrī Hari, there is no further chance of becoming absorbed in either material happiness or distress. Thus it is understood that *anarthas* arising from sinful acts and those arising from pious acts are eradicated in the same sequence.

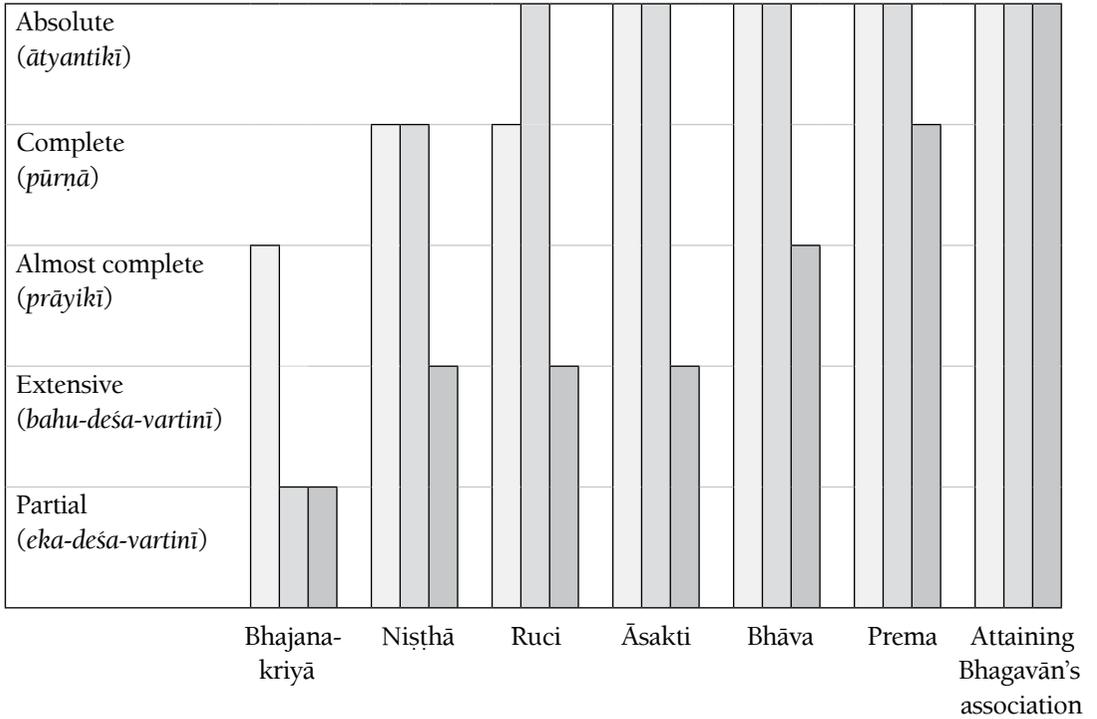
After this, the author delineates the sequence of nullification for *anarthas* arising from the practice of *bhakti* (*bhakty-uttha-anarthas*), such as desires for material gain (*lābha*), worship (*pūjā*) and recognition (*pratiṣṭhā*). Upon engaging in the practice of *bhakti* [at the stage of *bhajana-kriyā*], there is a partial cessation (*eka-deśa-vartinī-nivṛtti*) of the *anarthas* that arise from the practice of *bhakti*. This is because this type of *anartha* manifests from *bhajana-kriyā*. At the stage of *niṣṭhā*, the cessation is complete (*pūrnā*), and at the stage of *ruci* the cessation is absolute (*ātyantikī*). In other words, upon developing *ruci* for *bhajana*, the desire for gain, worship and recognition is automatically dispelled. This has been concluded by those with vast knowledge and experience, after deliberating on this topic.

The purport is that *anarthas* do not diminish before the stage of *bhajana-kriyā*. *Anarthas* gradually begin to diminish after one takes to the practice of *bhajana* and becomes steadfast. If one becomes lax in *bhajana*, one's *anarthas* will intensify, so much so that the desire to perform *bhajana* will disappear altogether.

It is therefore most essential to remain engaged in *bhajana*, which is attained after developing faith (*śraddhā*) and receiving the association of *sādhus* (*sādhu-saṅga*). Without such engagement, the cessation of *anarthas* is impossible. And until one's *anarthas* are removed, it is entirely futile even to think one can attain Bhagavān.

The sequence in which anarthas are eradicated

- Eradication of *anarthas* arising from impious and pious activities
(*duṣkṛtoṭtha-anarthas* and *sukṛtoṭtha-anarthas*)
- Eradication of *anarthas* arising from the practice of devotion
(*bhakty-uttha-anarthas*)
- Eradication of *anarthas* arising from offences
(*aparādhottha-anarthas*)



Text 5

5a ~ Śrī Nāma Prabhu conceals His power from offenders to the holy name, being displeased with them

nanu, “amhaḥ saṁharad akhilaṁ sakṛd udayād eva” iti “yan nāma sakṛc chravanāt pukkaśo ’pi vimucyate saṁsārāt” ity ādi pramaṇa-śatād ajāmilādy-upākhyāneṣv ekasyaiva nāmābhāsasyāvidyā-paryanta-sarvānārtha-nivṛtti-pūrvaka-bhagavat-prāpakatvānubhavād bhagavad-bhaktānām duritādi-nivṛttāv uktaḥ kramo na saṅgacchate | satyam | nāmna etāvaty eva śakti nātra sandehaḥ | parantu sāparādhiṣv aprasannena tena yat sva-śaktiḥ samyak na prakāśyate tad eva duṣṭatādīnām jīvātur ity avagantavyam |

Bhāvānuvāda: “When the sun-like holy name rises even once, a multitude of sins, which are like an ocean of darkness, are immediately destroyed” (*Padyāvalī* 16). “By hearing the name of Śrī Bhagavān just once, even a wicked, dog-eating outcaste becomes liberated from material existence” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.26.44). In the scriptures, there are hundreds of similar evidences. Furthermore, the history of Ajāmila clearly demonstrates that simply chanting a semblance of the holy name (*nāma-ābhāsa*) just once destroys all of one’s *anarthas*, including ignorance, and simultaneously awakens realization by which one attains Śrī Bhagavān. This appears to be incongruent with the sequence of eradication of *anarthas* previously outlined. It is indeed true that the holy name possesses such potency; of this there is absolutely no doubt. But because Nāma Prabhu is displeased with offenders, He does not reveal His full potency to them. This is to be understood as the sole reason why the *anarthas* of such persons are not removed.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: With various scriptural statements, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura harmonizes the five stages of *anārtha-nivṛtti* with the glories of the holy name. *Śrī Padyāvalī* (16) states:

*aṁhaḥ samharad akhilam sakṛd udayād eva sakala-lokasya
taraṇir iva timira-jaladhiṁ jayati jagan-maṅgalam harer nāma*

Just as the rising sun dissipates all darkness, similarly, by uttering the holy name just once, all the sins of a living entity, which are like an ocean of darkness, are destroyed. All glories to this all-auspicious *harināma*.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.16.44), King Citraketu has glorified Bhagavān Ananta as follows:

*na hi bhagavann aghaṭititam idaṁ
tvad-darśanān nṛnām akhila-pāpa-kṣayah
yan-nāma sakṛc chravaṇāt
pukkaśo 'pi vimucyate saṁsārāt*

O Bhagavān, only direct audience of You destroys all of a person's sins. This is not impossible, because merely by hearing Your name once, even a wretched, dog-eating outcaste is liberated from material existence.

Thousands of such evidences describing the glories of *harināma* are found throughout the scriptures. This is clearly understood from the life of Ajāmila. By his calling the name of his son, Nārāyaṇa – that is, by his uttering a semblance of the holy name (*nāma-ābhāsa*) – all of his sins were destroyed, his ignorance, which is the root of all sin, was also vanquished, and he attained Bhagavān's lotus feet. How, then, can the sequential cessation of *anarthas* – *eka-deśa-vartinī*, *bahu-deśa-vartinī*, *prāyikī*, *pūrṇā* and *ātyantikī* – apply to a faithful devotee who accepts initiation from a bona fide spiritual master according to the precepts of *śāstra* and engages in *harināma-kīrtana*? Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura raises this point and reconciles it.

Whatever the scriptures explain in regard to the glories of *śrī nāma* is completely true. There can be no doubt about this. Actually, the scriptures have described but a fraction of *śrī nāma*'s limitless glories. There is no reason to disbelieve their statements. One who harbours any mistrust regarding this

will be guilty of the terrible *nāma-aparādha* of thinking the glories of the holy name to be an exaggeration or of the *aparādha* of concocting a mundane interpretation. By uttering *nāma-ābhāsa*, an inoffensive person destroys all his sins and thereafter attains Vaikuṅṭha.

In his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.2.9–10), Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states: “*niraparādhānām tu bhagavat-prāptau nāsti vilambas teṣām hi bhagavan-nāma-grahaṇam vaikuṅṭhārohaṇam coti dve eva bhumike—yathā ajāmilādīnām |*”

This means that an inoffensive person will not be delayed in attaining Bhagavān, because he does not have to pass through the stages of *śraddhā*, *sādhu-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriyā* and so forth. For him, there are only two steps: chanting the holy name (*nāma-grahaṇa*) and ascending to Vaikuṅṭha (*vaikuṅṭha-ārohaṇa*). Persons such as Ajāmila exemplify this. Ajāmila had committed many sinful acts, but he was not an *aparādhī*. Because of his unremitting attachment to wife and children, there was no opportunity for him to commit offences such as blaspheming *sādhus*. As a result, there was nothing to obstruct the potency of Bhagavān’s holy name from illuminating his inoffensive heart. On the other hand, although the holy name possesses all potency (*sarva-śaktimān*), it does not manifest its potency to offenders, being displeased with them. One should not harbour even the slightest doubt about the glories of the holy name when it does not manifest its power. It is to be understood that the only reason for this is the iniquity of the *aparādhī* and his *anarthas*.

5b ~ Offenders to nāma do not meet with Yamarāja, but they cannot become purified

kintu yama-dūtānām tad-ākramaṇe na śaktiḥ | “na te yamam pāśa-bhṛtaś ca tad-bhaṭān svapne ’pi paśyanti” ity ādeḥ | “na vidyate tasya yamair hi śuddhiḥ” ity atra yamair yogāṅgair iti vyākhyeyam |

Bhāvānuvāda: Even so, the envoys of Yamarāja, the lord of death, have no power to arrest such offenders to the holy name. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.1.19), “Even in their dreams, such persons never see Yamarāja or his emissaries, who carry ropes.”

Padma Purāṇa states, “Even the practice of self-restraint (*yama*) cannot purify offenders to the holy name.” Here the word *yama* refers to the eight divisions of yogic mysticism (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*), such as adherence to rules (*yama*) and regulations (*niyama*).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The author makes another special point: Even if *nāma-aparādha* remains in a person who utters the holy name, still Yamarāja and his messengers have no ability to mete out punishment to him. As long as the *nāma-aparādhi*'s *anarthas* are not destroyed, he will not achieve the main fruit of chanting, *prema*, and he will never attain Bhagavān. He will, however, become free from the torments of hell meted out by Yamarāja. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.1.19) states:

*sakṛṇ manaḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayor
niveśitam tad-guṇa-rāgi yair iha
na te yamaṁ pāśa-bhṛtaś ca tad-bhaṭān
svapne 'pi paśyanti hi cīrṇa-niṣkṛtāḥ*

Those whose bee-like minds, greedy to taste the Lord's qualities, have even once tasted the nectar of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, have performed all types of atonement. Even in dreams, they never see Yamarāja or his servants, who carry ropes, not to speak of the hellish planets.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura now mentions *Padma Purāṇa*'s description of the ten offences to the holy name:

*nāmno balād yasya hi pāpa-buddhir
na vidyate tasya yamair hi śuddhiḥ*

Those who have a tendency to commit sins on the strength of the holy name or who actually commit them, are not purified by *yama* even after a very long time.

This statement seems to prove that *nāma-aparādhīs* do suffer punishment from Yama. How, then, can we reconcile this with the first conclusion ascertained?

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura resolves this as follows: It should be understood that the word *yama* in this verse about *nāma-aparādhā* refers to the divisions of *yoga*, beginning with *yama* (rules) and *niyama* (regulations). In other words, such *aparādhīs* are not purified even if they follow *yama* and *niyama* for a prolonged period. Offences to the holy name can be removed only when the holy name is pleased. How can the practices of *yama*, *niyama* and so forth destroy them? This is the import of this statement. The word *yama* here has not been used to indicate Yama Mahārāja.

5c ~ The mercy of the holy name destroys all types of anarthas

yathā samarthena paramādhyenāpi svāminā kṛtāparādhaḥ svajano yadi na pālyate kintu tatrodāsyate tadaiva duḥkha-dāridrya-mālīnya-śokādayaḥ krameṇa labdhāvasarā bhavanti na tv anyadīyā janāḥ ke 'pi kadāpīti jñeyam | tathā ca punaḥ sva-svāmino manobhīrocinyām anuvṛttau satyām śanais tatprasādād duḥkha-dāridryādayaḥ śanair apayānti | tathā bhagavad-bhaktasāstra-guru-prabhṛtibhir amāyayā muhuḥ sevitaḥ śanair eva tasya nāmnāḥ prasāde duritādīnām api śanair eva nāśaḥ | iti nāsti vivādaḥ | na ca mama ko 'pi nāsti nāmāparādha iti vaktavyam phalenaiva phala-kāraṇasyāparādhasya prācīnasyārvācīnasya vā anumānāt | phalam ca bahu-nāma-kīrtane 'pi prema-liṅgānudaya iti | yad uktam—“tad āsma-sāraṁ hr̥dayam batedam yad gṛhyamānair hari-nāma-dheyaiḥ | na vikriyetātha yadā vikāro netre jalam gātra-ruheṣu harṣaḥ ||” iti |

Bhāvānuvāda: A wealthy master, who is capable of bestowing punishment or favour, does not support an impertinent servant; rather he remains indifferent to him. Due to this indifference, the offender gradually experiences sorrow, poverty, wretchedness and lamentation. At the same time, a master will never maintain or punish a person with whom he has no connection. If the offending servant again behaves in a way that is favourable to the master in an effort to please him, then the master will show him benevolence, and the servant's unhappiness and poverty will gradually vanish.

In the same manner, when an offender to the holy name performs non-duplicitous, uninterrupted service to the devotees of Bhagavān, the scriptures and the spiritual master, then by the mercy of the holy name, his *anarthas* in the form of offences are gradually destroyed. This is undeniable.

A person may say, "I have not committed *nāma-aparādha*," but it must be said that it is only after seeing the result that the cause can be deduced. The result of *nāma-aparādha* is that the symptoms of *prema* do not awaken, even after so much chanting of the holy name. The cause, therefore, must be an offence, committed either recently or long ago. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.3.24) explains:

*tad aśma-sāraṁ hṛdayaṁ batedaṁ
yad gṛhyamāṇair hari-nāma-dheyaiḥ
na vikriyetātha yadā vikāro
netre jalaṁ gātra-ruheṣu harṣaḥ*

Despite profusely chanting the name of Śrī Hari, that person who does not experience ecstatic transformations such as a melting heart, tears and horripilation must have a heart that is hard like iron.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: As stated previously, *aparādha* is known as that which drives away *rādhā*, or satisfaction. The holy name becomes displeased with an *aparādhi*, and it is seen that as a consequence, the *aparādhi* does

not receive the fruit of uttering the holy name. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura illustrates this in a simple way so that we can understand it easily. A master remains indifferent to a misbehaving servant and does not maintain him, even though he is capable of doing so. As a result, the servant becomes despondent. Similarly, Nāma Prabhu becomes indifferent to an offender and does not reveal His mercy or His great potency to him. As a result, such a person is beset with various types of *anarthas*.

On seeing the offender miserable and destitute, it would be incorrect for us to assume that his wealthy master is incapable of maintaining one of his very own, his servant. He is capable of doing so but chooses not to, being displeased with him. Nonetheless, because this person is one of the master's dependents, the wealthy master will still protect him and never abandon him in exchange for an outsider. If, somehow, the culprit realizes that he has made an offence and, understanding his master's mind, proceeds to serve him in an endeavour to please him, then the master, who by nature is compassionate, will gradually relieve the servant of his misery and destitution.

Similarly, Śrī Nāma Prabhu, who is most competent to bestow grace, forever nourishes one who takes His shelter, by bestowing *prema* upon him. This refers to one who takes shelter of the path of *bhakti* and engages in the activities of *bhajana*, headed by *nāma-kīrtana*. But if a person who has taken shelter of the holy name commits *nāma-aparādha*, then the holy name will become dissatisfied with the offender and withdraw His nourishment. In other words, the holy name will not bestow upon him the fruit of *bhajana*, *prema*. One should, therefore, never think that *śrī harināma* is incompetent to deliver that result. Even though the offender has not received the result of *bhajana*, he is still Śrī Nāma Prabhu's object of protection and nourishment. Śrī Nāma Prabhu maintains only those who have taken shelter of Him, not those who choose not to; in other words, not those who do not perform *bhajana*.

When an offender understands his failing or blunder, and as a result, continuously performs service without duplicity in an endeavour to please the devotee, scripture or spiritual master he has offended, then Nāma Prabhu

will gradually become pleased with him, destroy his *nāma-aparādha* and confer upon him the fruit of *prema*. This is incontestable.

In his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (6.2.9–10), Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states: *sādhu-saṅga-vaśāt sarva-nāma-aparādha-kṣaye tu bhakti-devī samyak-prasādena nāma-phala-prāptir eva nirvivādā*.

This means that hearing *hari-kathā* in the association of *sādhus* dissipates all types of offences to *harināma*. One then receives the complete mercy of *Bhakti-devī* and consequently attains *prema*, which is the result of uttering the holy name. In this matter, there is no room for dispute.

One may ask, “I have not committed any offence, so why am I not experiencing the result of the holy name?” The answer is that the cause of an effect can be deduced by examining the effect itself. Other than *aparādha*, no impediment can hinder one’s attaining the fruit of the all-powerful names of Śrī Hari. Therefore, if a person does not experience the results of the holy name, he is to understand that he must have committed *aparādha*. This should not be doubted even slightly.

If someone does not experience the fruit of the holy name and did not intentionally commit any offence, he is to understand that he must have unintentionally committed an offence (*ajñāta-aparādha*).

A person may engage in much *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, but if he does not manifest the signs of *prema*, or symptoms of spiritual ecstasy (*sāttvika-vikāra*), it is to be understood that he has not attained the fruit of chanting. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.3.24) states:

*tad aśma-sāraṁ hṛdayaṁ batedaṁ
yad grhyamāṇair hari-nāma-dheyaiḥ
na vikriyetātha yadā vikāro
netre jalaṁ gātra-ruheṣu harṣaḥ*

A heart that does not melt despite hearing and chanting the all-auspicious name of *Bhagavān* is made of iron. When the heart melts, tears flow from the eyes and all the hairs on the body stand on end.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on this verse that if a person does not experience *bhakti* transforming his heart, even after continually chanting *harināma*, then his heart is extremely hard, like iron. In other words, despite a person’s constant chanting of the holy name, external transformations do not manifest, such as tears flowing from his eyes or horripilation, and his heart does not melt. All such signs are indicative of *nāma-aparādha*.

Mere tears and horripilation, however, may not be indicative of a melted heart either. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* states that tears, horripilation and so on can also be seen to manifest in those who are wily and adept at exhibiting these symptoms, even though they do not possess a semblance of ecstasy. On the other hand, although the heart of great, realized souls, who are naturally grave, melts when they chant *harināma*, they may not be seen to suddenly display tears and horripilation. Therefore, from this verse it is to be understood that if the heart does not actually melt [upon uttering *harināma*], it is as hard as iron, even if external transformations such as tears and horripilation are visible.

When a devotee’s heart melts with devotional sentiment (*bhakti-bhāva*) and external symptoms manifest, such as the shedding of tears and horripilation, it is called *sāttvika-vikāra* (ecstatic transformation). These are the ordinary symptoms of a transformation of heart. However, there are other, extraordinary symptoms: (1) forbearance – *kṣānti*, (2) effective use of one’s time – *avyartha-kālatva*, (3) indifference to the allurements of this world – *virakti*, (4) absence of pride – *māna-śūnyatā*, (5) a steadfast conviction that Kṛṣṇa will surely bestow His mercy – *āśā-bandha*, (6) intense longing to obtain one’s goal – *samutkaṅṭhā*, (7) an unceasing relish for chanting the holy name – *nāma-gāne sadā ruci*, (8) attachment to hearing narrations of Bhagavān’s qualities – *āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāne* and (9) attraction to the places where Bhagavān resides – *prītis tad-vasati-sthale*. These nine symptoms are the genuine signs of a melted heart.

As soon as devotees who are devoid of *aparādha* engage in *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, they realize the power of the holy name within their heart and

become immersed in relishing *śrī nāma*. This experience results in their heart completely melting, which gives rise to the above-mentioned nine symptoms.

Those who are offensive and jealous of the prosperity of others may utter the holy name a lot, but because the name is displeased with them, their heart does not melt with devotional sentiment. Even though they may exhibit external symptoms such as tears and horripilation, their heart is actually hard like iron. Therefore, this verse reproaches them. However, the heart of such people can be melted and the hardness removed by the power of receiving the association of saints, who inspire them to perpetually chant the holy name.

5d ~ Nāma-aparādha makes one consider that which is transcendental to be material

tathā hi nāmāparādha-prasaṅga eva—“ke te ’parādhā viprendra nāmno bhagavataḥ kṛtāḥ | vinighnanti nṛṇām kṛtyam prakṛtam hy ānayanti hi ||”
iti | tadīya-guṇa-nāmādīni sadyaḥ prema-pradāny api śrutāni kīrtitāni ca tat-tīrthādīkam sadyaḥ siddhi-dam api cirāt sevitaṁ tan-niveditāni gṛta-dugdha-tāmbūlādīni sadyaḥ sarvendriya-taraṅga-nivartakāni muhur āsvādyā upayuktāny eva svataḥ parama-cinmayāny apy etāni yasmāt prakṛtānīva bhavanti te ’parādhāḥ ke bhagavan-nāmna iti sotkampā-sa-vismayaḥ praśnaḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: In regard to offences to the holy name, it is stated, “O best of the *brāhmaṇas*, what sort of offences to the holy name of the Lord completely destroy a human being’s spiritual merit (*sukṛti*) and spiritual practices (*sādhana*) and give him a mundane perception of transcendental objects?”

The names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān can immediately bestow *prema*. What offences cause them to not bestow that fruit, even though someone may have performed *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* for a long time? The holy abodes associated with Bhagavān also immediately bestow perfection, but why do they sometimes not do so, despite a person’s residing in them and serving them for an extended period?

Furthermore, items such as ghee, milk and betel nut that have been offered to Bhagavān immediately check the waves of the enjoying proclivity of the material senses. Despite a person’s repeatedly accepting these with relish, what causes him to see such items, which are by nature supremely transcendental, as ordinary mundane objects? What grave offences to the holy name of Śrī Bhagavān check all these from bestowing their respective results? This question is asked with trepidation and wonder.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Here the author raises another doubt: The scriptures state that activities such as hearing and chanting about the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Bhagavān immediately bestow *prema*, that visiting all the holy places yields perfection, and that the food remnants of Bhagavān are transcendental. There is abundant evidence for such statements.

Yet even after hearing about and glorifying the names and qualities of Bhagavān for a long time, we do not receive *prema*; and even after residing in a holy place for an extended period, we do not attain perfection, or the fulfilment of our most cherished desire; and even after offering foodstuffs to Śrī Bhagavān, we have no realization of the transcendental nature of *prasāda*. What offence causes people to not receive the fruit of these activities? And if these statements are true – that Bhagavān’s names, one’s residence in holy places and honouring Bhagavān’s remnants do not give their fruits due to *aparādha* – then what need is there for *aparādhīs* to engage in the activities of *bhajana*, such as hearing and chanting? It will not be possible for them to perform the other limbs of *bhakti* also, such as taking shelter at the feet of a spiritual master (*guru-pādāśraya*).

After raising this point, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura himself reconciles it by affirming that hearing and chanting Bhagavān’s names, residing in holy places and accepting *bhagavat-prasāda* are never fruitless. They always have the ability to bestow their respective results. Why, then, do they not manifest their potency? In response, he then explains that it has already been stated that for those free from *aparādha*, there are only two steps

to attain Bhagavān: chanting the holy name and ascending to Vaikuṅṭha. But persons free from *aparādha* are rarely found in this world. It is only due to offences that this body has been created. Therefore, everyone has committed *aparādha* to some degree or other, either in a previous birth or recently. Accordingly, the nine stages mentioned, from *śraddhā* to the attainment of *prema*, follow a logical sequence. The revered author clarifies this point with an example.

In relation to the description of offences to the holy name, the following verse has been quoted:

*ke te 'parādhā viprendra / nāmno bhagavataḥ kṛtāḥ
vinighnanti nṛṇām kṛtyam / prākṛtam hy ānayanti hi*

O best of the twice-born, what offences to the holy name of Śrī Bhagavān destroy all a person's accumulated spiritual merits and practices, and cause him to consider transcendental objects to be material?

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura elucidates this verse as follows: It is seen in *śāstra* that only by performing *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* of Śrī Bhagavān's names, forms, qualities and pastimes is a person instantly blessed with *prema*. It is stated at the very beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.2), "*sadyo hr̥dy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt – Śrī Hari is immediately bound within the heart of pious souls who desire to hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*"

Without *prema*, Bhagavān can never be confined within anyone's heart. The result of simply desiring to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in which there are descriptions of Śrī Hari's qualities, names and so on, is the awakening of *prema*. In the same way, the Purāṇas describe the power of abodes like Śrī Vṛndāvana to bestow *prema*:

*aho madhupurī dhanyā / vaikuṅṭhāc ca garīyasī
dinam ekaṁ nivāsena / harau bhaktiḥ prajāyate*

Vāyu Purāṇa and Padma Purāṇa

Aho! The abode of Mathurā is supremely blessed and even more glorious than Vaikuṅṭha, for by residing there for only one day, a person attains *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord.

Similarly, the glories of foodstuffs offered to the Lord (*mahā-prasāda*) are also unprecedented. The venerable Śrī Uddhava said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*tvayopabhukta-srag-gandha- / vāso 'lankāra-carcitāḥ
ucchiṣṭa-bhojino dāsās / tava māyām jayema hi*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.6.46)

O Lord, we decorate ourselves with the garlands, sandalwood paste, cloth or ornaments worn by You. Since we are Your servants and subsist on Your remnants, we will certainly conquer Your illusory energy (*māyā*).

Despite engaging in activities that are supremely capable of bestowing *prema* – repeatedly hearing about and glorifying Bhagavān’s names, forms, qualities and pastimes, residing in the *dhāma* for a long time and honouring *mahā-prasāda* for many days – one’s *anarthas* headed by *aparādha* only increase; *prema* does not develop. As a result, one views these transcendental objects with a mundane conception.

Nāma-aparādha is such a great obstacle in one’s *bhajana* that one trembles in fear and asks with alarm, “What are those offences to the holy name?” Every *sādhaka* should thoroughly understand these offences and, with utmost attention, stop committing them and thus progress on the path of *bhajana*.

5e ~ How a taste for *bhakti* returns to one who has committed *aparādha*

nanv evaṁ sati nāmāparādhavato janasya bhagavad-vaimukhyasyaivaucityāt tad-uktaṁ guru-pādāśraya-bhajana-kriyādikam api na sambhavet | satyam | pravartamāne mahā-jvara iva odanāder arocakatvād evānupādānām iva nāmāparādhasya gāḍhatve sati tatra puṁsi śravaṇa-kīrtanādi-bhajana-kriyāyā

avakāṣa eva na syād ity atra kaḥ sandehaḥ | kintu jvarasya mṛdutve cirantanatve odanāder api kiñcid rocakatvam iva | bahu-dinato bhogenāparādhasya kṣīnavogatve mṛdutve ca bhagavad-bhaktau kiñcin mātra-ruciḥ syād iti puṁsaḥ prasajjati bhakty-adhikāraḥ | tataś ca yathā pauṣṭikāny api dugdhaudanādīni jīrṇa-jvaravantam pumāmsam na puṣyanti kiñcit puṣyanti ca kintu glāni-kārśye na nivartayitum śaknuvanti kālenausadha-pathyayoḥ sevītayoḥ śaknuvanti ca | tathaiva tādrśasya bhakty-adhikāriṇaḥ śravaṇa-kīrtanādīni kālenaiva krameṇaiva sakalam prakāśayantīti sādḥuktam “ātau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo ’tha bhajana-kriyā | tato ’nartha-nivṛtīḥ syāt tato niṣṭhā” ity ādi |

Bhāvānuvāda: One could thus appropriately conclude that offenders to the holy name are opposed to Bhagavān. In other words, it is impossible for such persons to take shelter at the lotus feet of a spiritual master and engage in the previously mentioned practices of *bhajana* (*bhajana-kriyā*). And this is a fact. When a person is running a high fever, he loses his appetite and cannot eat grains and so on. In the same way, when a person’s offences to *śrī nāma* are severe, he has no opportunity to perform *bhajana-kriyā* – the practice of *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and so on. There is no doubt about this. But when the fever subsides and its intensity decreases, he will begin to regain his appetite.

Similarly, after suffering for some time, the intensity of offence fades, and a little taste develops for *bhagavad-bhakti*. In this manner, the offender to the holy name develops the qualification to perform *bhakti*. Even after a fever subsides, nutritious foodstuffs like milk and grains can only give limited, not complete, nourishment to a convalescing patient. But by regularly taking medicine and following a wholesome diet for some time, those foodstuffs will gradually remove his lassitude and feebleness.

In the same manner, when that person who is now qualified to perform *bhakti* engages for some time in the practices of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, those practices will gradually bear fruit. Hence, it has been appropriately stated that a person begins with faith (*śraddhā*). He will then take the association of

saintly personalities (*sādhu-saṅga*) and engage in the practices of devotion (*bhajana-kriyā*). Thereafter his obstacles will begin to diminish (*anartha-nivṛtti*), and he will develop firm faith (*niṣṭhā*) and a taste (*ruci*) for *bhakti*. He will then acquire attachment (*āśakti*) to Bhagavān, from which pure spiritual emotion (*bhāva*) gradually manifests. Finally, rapturous love of God (*prema*) arises. This is indeed the sequence in which *prema* arises in the *sādhaka*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Is it not fitting that such fearsome *aparādhas* make the offenders averse to Bhagavān, thus not allowing them to perform the practices of *bhakti* such as accepting shelter at the feet of *śrī guru*, performing *bhajana* and so forth?

The author comments that it is natural to have such a question. However, just as a person with a high fever cannot eat foodstuffs, in the same way, as long as a person's offences are severe, there is no opportunity for him to take shelter of the feet of *śrī guru* and engage in the activities of *bhajana* like *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*. When a person's fever reduces, he regains his appetite. Similarly, after suffering the result of offences for a long time, the effects of the offence weaken and one develops some taste in the activities of *bhajana*. That is why one can then take shelter of the feet of the spiritual master and engage in *bhajana-kriyā*.

When a person's fever initially diminishes, nutritive foodstuffs do not nourish him substantially, only slightly. In the same way, even after the force of an offence has decreased, a person does not develop any significant relish for or realization of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's qualities, names or pastimes. His taste for them is negligible. But when he takes the appropriate medicine, and over a prolonged period follows a diet to convalesce and so forth, his fever gradually disappears and his body regains strength. Likewise, when a person takes the medicine for *aparādha* – sincere and continuous service to *śrī nāma*, *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas – his *aparādha* gradually disappears. To the degree that a person's *aparādha* is removed, his *bhajana* is nourished and he becomes astonished by *bhajana-rasa*. The divine names and qualities of Bhagavān are utterly capable

of instantly bestowing the wealth of *prema*. Nevertheless, as long as *aparādha* remains within the *sādhaka*, it is appropriate to set out the stages of *śraddhā*, *sādhu-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriyā*, *anartha-nivṛtti*, *niṣṭhā* and so on.

5f ~ The bhakta is free from offences and prārabdha-karma, even if devoid of prema or undergoing external miseries

kaiścit tu nāma-kīrtanādivatām bhaktānām prema-liṅgadarśanena pāpa-pravṛtṭyā ca na kevalam aparādhaḥ kalpyate vyavahārika-bahu-duḥkha-darśanena cāpi prārabdha-nāsābhāvaś ca | niraparādhatvena nirdhāritasyājāmilasyāpi sva-putra-nāma-karaṇa-prati-dina-bahudhā-tan-nāmāhvāna-samayeṣv api premābhāvādāsī-saṅgādi pāpa-pravṛtti-darśanāt, prārabdhābhāve 'pi yudhiṣṭhirāder vyavahārika-bahu-duḥkha-darśanāc ca |

Bhāvānuvāda: Sometimes, upon not perceiving the symptoms of *prema* in devotees who are fixed in their practice of *nāma-kīrtana* and upon witnessing their inclination to perform misdeeds, some people attribute it to offences to the holy name. Not only this, but upon witnessing the significant material miseries faced by such devotees, they also assume that the fructified result of these devotees' sinful actions (*prārabdha-pāpa*) has not been fully destroyed. It is determined throughout *śāstra* that Ajāmila was free from *aparādha*. Although Ajāmila had named his son Nārāyaṇa and uttered that name again and again each day to call him, he was devoid of *prema*. Moreover, it was perceived that he was inclined to perform sinful acts, such as keeping association with a prostitute. Although the Pāṇḍavas, headed by Yudhiṣṭhira, had no *prārabdha-karma*, they were seen to suffer many types of worldly tribulations.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: It has already been stated that when the symptoms of *prema* do not arise, despite a person's engagement in devotional practices such as *nāma-kīrtana*, it evidences the presence of *aparādha*. The author now

states, however, that this principle is not universally applicable. It is also seen that some persons, although devoid of *aparādha*, manifest no symptoms of *prema* and still maintain a tendency to sin.

It has been determined throughout *sāstra* that Ajāmila was free from *aparādha*. Had he not been, it would not have been reasonable for the Viṣṇudūtas (emissaries of Śrī Viṣṇu) to come to protect him as a result of his uttering a semblance of the holy name (*nāma-ābhāsa*) when calling his son. Nor would his attainment of Vaikuṅṭha have been plausible. Ajāmila had named his infant son Nārāyaṇa, but although he would call him by that name many times each day, *prema* was not visibly awakening in him. Furthermore, he was disposed to committing the sin of maintaining a relation with a prostitute. Nevertheless, he was not offensive, and his tendency to keep that relationship out of past habit was not a sign that he had committed *aparādha*. This was established when Śrī Viṣṇu’s envoys came to protect him simply because he had called the name of his son, Nārāyaṇa, at the moment of death.

5g ~ Śrī Nāma Prabhu may not reveal Himself, despite being pleased with the devotee

tasmāt phalann api vṛkṣaḥ prāyaśaḥ kāla eva phalati itivat niraparādheṣu prasīdad api nāma sva-prasādam kāla eva prakāśayet | pūrvābhyāsāt kriyamāṇā pāpa-rāśir api utkhāta-damṣṭroraga-damśa ivākiñcit karā eva |

Bhāvānuvāda: Thus, just as a fruit tree only gives fruit seasonally at a suitable time, similarly, the name of Bhagavān, being pleased with an inoffensive *sādhaka*, bestows His mercy at the appropriate time, not immediately. The multitude of sins resulting from the influence of devotees’ former habits are insignificant, just like the bite of a defanged snake.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: A fruit-bearing tree delivers fruit at the appropriate time only. Similarly, although Śrī Hari may be pleased with a person devoid

of *aparādha*, He only delivers the result [of his *sādhana*] to him at a suitable time. It is thus understood that the heaps of sins that the inoffensive Ajāmila committed out of habit were as harmless and insignificant as the bite of a fangless serpent.

5h ~ Bhagavān personally confers suffering upon His devotees to increase their humility and eagerness

roga-śokādi-duḥkham api na prārabdha-phalam | “yasyāham anugrṇāmi hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ | tato ’dhanam tyajanty asya svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam ||”
iti | “nirdhanatva-mahā-rogo mad-anugraha-lakṣaṇam” ity ādi vacanāt | sva-
bhakta-hita-kāriṇā tadīya-dainyotkanṭhādi-var dhana-catureṇa bhagavataiva
duḥkhasya diyamānatvāt karma-phalatvābhāvena na prārabdhatvam ity
āhuḥ || 5 ||

iti mādhurya-kādambinyām bhakteḥ sarva-graha-prasaminī nāma tṛtīyāmṛta-
vrṣṭiḥ || 3 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Whatever disease, lamentation or distress may be perceived in devotees is not due to their *prārabdha-karma* (reaction to their past activity). In the scriptures, Bhagavān Himself states:

yasyāham anugrṇāmi / hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ
tato ’dhanam tyajanty asya / svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.88.8)

I gradually take away all the wealth of the person I favour. Experiencing hardship upon hardship, My impoverished devotee is abandoned by his kith and kin.

Bhagavān has also said, “Severe disease and poverty are the symptoms of My mercy.” We find many such statements in the scriptures. Bhagavān, the benefactor of His devotee, is indeed most adept at increasing His

devotees’ humility and eagerness through suffering. Since the devotee is free from the result of his previous actions, the suffering he endures is given by Bhagavān; it is not his *prārabdha*. This is the opinion of those who know the truth.

**Thus ends the Bhāvānuvāda
of the Third Shower of Nectar,
named Sarva-graha-prasāminī
 (“Elimination of All Impediments to Bhakti”).**

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Even though some devotees have no fructified sinful reactions (*prārabdha*), some persons, upon seeing their material miseries such as disease, lamentation and poverty, as well as their sinful proclivities, mistake these to be the result of their *prārabdha*. But were the various troubles given to the five Pāṇḍavas, headed by Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, their exile to the forest and their inclination to play dice, caused by their *prārabdha*? They are Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates, so it goes without saying that they have no such *prārabdha*.

It was previously mentioned that *prārabdha* is destroyed by *sādhana-bhakti*. The *mahājanas* state that even at the stage of liberation, the *prārabdha* of *jñānīs* who have realized *brahma* does not dissipate without their having to suffer it. Such fearsome *prārabdha* is easily destroyed, however, when *bhakti* manifests in the living entity’s heart, due to his having engaged in any aspect of *bhakti*, such as *nāma-kīrtana*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states in his *Śrī Nāmāṣṭaka* (4):

*yad-brahma-sākṣāt-kṛti-niṣṭhayāpi
vināsam āyāti vinā na bhogaiḥ
apaiti nāma sphuraṇena tat te
prārabdha-karmeti virauti vedah*

O Bhagavān in the form of the holy name, the Vedas loudly declare that the devotees' fructified reaction (*prārabdha-karma*), which cannot be eliminated even by resolute meditation on impersonal *brahma*, which is like the flow of an unbroken stream of oil, is at once mitigated by Your appearance on their tongue, even without their undergoing any suffering. Realization of knowledge of impersonal *brahma* can destroy the results of accumulated past activities and of the activities one is currently performing, but one's sinful and pious fructified reactions are destroyed only by suffering them, not by knowledge of impersonal *brahma*. Simply by uttering Your holy name, however, that *prārabdha-karma* is destroyed.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally told Uddhava, “*bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā, śvapākān api sambhavāt* – resolute devotion to Me purifies even one who has been born into a family of dog-eaters” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21).

The fault of low birth is a result of one's *prārabdha-karma*. According to an axiom of logic (*nyāya*), “Removal of the cause (*kāraṇa*) brings about removal of the effect (*kārya*).” Accordingly, by acknowledging that the defect of a lower birth, which represents an effect (*kārya*), has been eliminated, it is understood that *prārabdha*, or the cause (*kāraṇa*), must have been erased already. Moreover, the Purāṇas explain that all mental and physical ailments resulting from *prārabdha* are destroyed by *nāma-saṅkīrtana*:

*ādhayo vyādhayo yasya / smaraṇān nāma-kīrtanāt
tadaiva vilayaṁ yānti / tam anantaṁ nāmamy aham*

Skanda Purāṇa

(quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.355)

I offer obeisance to Lord Anantadeva. Remembering Him and uttering His name immediately dispels all kinds of mental and physical ailments.

Thus, even though devotees are free from *prārabdha*, Bhagavān mercifully gives them worldly disease, suffering and lamentation, in order to increase their humility, eagerness, anxiety and so on. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.8.25),

it is seen that Queen Kuntī prayed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa only for adversity. It is thus easily understood that hidden within this adversity lies the treasure of *prema*.

The Supreme Lord has directly declared, “When I favour someone, I quickly take away his wealth. Then his relatives, considering him wretched, abandon him. At that time, devoid of shelter, he takes full refuge at My lotus feet.” Bhagavān has also said, “The great ailment of poverty is a symptom of My special mercy.” Hence, for the devotee’s auspiciousness, Bhagavān purposefully gives him sorrow, a humbling situation and so on. Thus, because the devotee does not have to undergo the results of his *karma*, the miseries he experiences can never be said to be the fruits of his *prārabdha*.

**Thus ends the Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti commentary
on the Third Shower of Nectar,
named Sarva-graha-praśaminī
 (“Elimination of All Impediments to Bhakti”).**

Fourth Shower of Nectar

Flow of Ambrosia



Sādhana-bhakti
Niṣṭhā

Text 1

Niṣṭhitā-bhakti presented in accordance with the sequence written in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

atha pūrvam yā aniṣṭhitā niṣṭhiteti dvi-vidhoktā bhajana-kriyā tasyāḥ prathamā ṣaḍ-vidhā lakṣitā | tato dvitīyām alakṣayitvaivānartha-nivṛtṭiḥ prakrāntā | yad uktam—“śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ | hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt-satām || naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu nityam bhāgavata-sevayā | bhagavatya uttama-śloke bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī ||” iti | tatra “śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ” ity aniṣṭhitaiva bhaktir avagamyate naiṣṭhikīty agre vakṣyamāṇatvāt | “abhadrāṇi vidhunoti” iti tayoṛ madhye evānarthānām nivṛtṭir uktā | “naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu” ity atra teṣāṃ kaścana bhāgo nāpi nivartata ity api sūcīta iti | ataeva krama-prāptatayā niṣṭhitā bhaktir idānīm vibriyate || 1 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Thus far, two types of *bhajana-kriyā* (devotional practice) have been described: *aniṣṭhitā* (devoid of steadiness) and *niṣṭhitā* (fixed). In the explanation of *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*, its six different divisions were presented, such as *utsāha-mayī*. Yet, following that, contrary to what might be expected, the symptoms of *niṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā* (steadfast devotional practice) were not examined. Rather, we turned our attention to the topic of *anartha-nivṛtṭi* (the eradication of impediments to *bhakti*). This is because it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.17–18): “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme well-wishing friend of the saints, and hearing and chanting His glories is the topmost virtue. He situates Himself in the heart of those who constantly engage in hearing about Him, thus destroying their amassed inauspiciousness. When all of their inauspiciousness has been virtually destroyed (*naṣṭa*) through constantly serving the Bhāgavata [*grantha-bhāgavata* and *bhakta-bhāgavata*], then unflinching devotion (*naiṣṭhikī-bhakti*) for Uttama-śloka Śrī Bhagavān (He who is eulogized by the sublime verses of *śāstra*) awakens within their heart.”

In the first line of these verses – *śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ, puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ* – unsteady devotion (*aniṣṭhitā-bhakti*) has been mentioned, and *naiṣṭhikī-bhakti* has been described afterward. But between these two types of *bhakti*, there is a description of *anartha-nivṛtti*: “Their vast accumulation of inauspiciousness is destroyed” (*abhadrāṇi vidhunoti*). This statement denotes the topic of *anartha-nivṛtti*. Furthermore, the use of the words *naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu* (“as the mass of inauspiciousness is nearly destroyed”) indicates that there is still a portion of inauspiciousness that has not been eradicated. Therefore, the fact that *niṣṭhitā-bhakti* is being described now, after *anartha-nivṛtti*, is based entirely on the sequence presented in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In Text 5 of the Second Shower of Nectar, the two stages of *bhajana-kriyā* – *aniṣṭhitā* and *niṣṭhitā* – were described. The six types of *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā* were then elaborately delineated from Text 6 to the end of that Shower.

However, the Third Shower of Nectar did not begin with an elaboration on the second type of *bhajana-kriyā* (*niṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*), along with its symptoms, as one might expect. Instead, the topic of *anartha-nivṛtti* was delineated.

Why has *anartha-nivṛtti* been discussed after the unsteady practice of devotion (*aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*) instead of the steady practice of devotion (*niṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*)? Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura quotes two verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that support the sequence of his presentation. In these verses, *niṣṭhā* is described only after an elucidation on *anartha-nivṛtti*.

śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ / puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hr̥dy antaḥ-stho hy abhadrāṇi / vidhunoti suhṛt satām

naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu / nityam bhāgavata-sevayā
bhagavatya uttama-śloke / bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.17–18)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the eternal well-wishing friend of the saints. Both hearing and uttering His glories are purifying. Śrī Kṛṣṇa situates Himself in the heart of those who hear His *kathā* and destroys all their inauspicious tendencies.

By continually serving *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*grantha-bhāgavata*) or by constantly rendering service to Bhagavān’s pure devotees (*bhakta-bhāgavata*), the inauspiciousness in the heart is almost fully destroyed. It is then that unflinching devotion (*naiṣṭhikī-bhakti*) to Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He who is eulogized by transcendental *ślokas*, awakens within the heart.

In the beginning of the first of the aforementioned verses, it is stated, “*śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ, puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ* – attentively hearing and chanting the glories of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa are purifying.”

It is to be understood that these words refer to the stage of *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*. This is because they are followed by the description “*hṛdy antaḥ-stho hy abhadrāṇi* – after entering their hearts, He purifies them of all inauspiciousness.” This statement in the first of these two verses describes the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti*. We thus find that the phase in which *anarthas* are eradicated is only mentioned after *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*.

In the first part of the second verse, it is stated, “*naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu, nityam bhāgavata sevayā* – as a result of continuously serving the *grantha-bhāgavata* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) or the *bhakta-bhāgavata* (the pure devotee of Bhagavān), *anarthas* are almost completely destroyed.” This statement indicates that even in the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti*, portions of some very powerful *anarthas* have not yet been exterminated.

It is for this very reason that [in Shower 3, Text 4] Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has so logically presented the five stages of freedom from these *anarthas*, namely partially free (*eka-deśa-vartinī*), predominantly free (*bahu-deśa-vartinī*), almost completely free (*prāyikī*), completely free (*pūrṇā*) and absolutely free (*ātyantikī*).

In other words, it was mentioned that even up to the stage of *rati* (*bhāva*), portions of some very powerful *anarthas* stemming from past offences (*aparādhotta-anarthas*) still remain. The same has been indicated in the aforecited statement from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the following verse, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī delineates the sequence in which *bhajana* progresses:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu- / saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt / tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ*

Herein, *bhajana-kriyā* refers solely to the stage of unsteady devotional practice (*aniṣṭhitā-bhajana*), because in this verse also, the stage of *niṣṭhā* has been mentioned only after the stage of *anārtha-nivṛtti*. It is therefore logical to describe unwavering devotional practice after the eradication of *anarthas* has been portrayed.

Next, *niṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā* will be described.

Text 2

2a ~ Niṣṭhā & symptoms of niṣṭhā

*niṣṭhā naiścalyam utpannā yasyā iti niṣṭhitā | naiścalyam bhakteḥ pratyaham
vidhitsitam apy anārtha-daśāyām laya-vikṣepāpratipatti-kaṣāya-rasāsvādānām
pañcānām antarīyānām dūrvāratvān na siddham āsīt | anārtha-nivṛtty-
anantaram teṣām tadīyānām nivṛtta-prāyatvāt naiścalyam sampadyate iti
layādy-abhāva eva niṣṭhā-lingam |*

Bhāvānuvāda: The stage of *bhakti* in which *niṣṭhā*, or *niṣcalatā* (the quality of being unwavering), has arisen is called *niṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*.

Even when someone desires to daily perform the limbs (*aṅgas*) of *bhakti*, such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, if he is still in the stage of being bound by *anarthas*, then he will be unable to make his performance of *bhakti* steady on account of the following five almost irrepressible obstacles:

laya (drowsiness), *vikṣepa* (distraction), *apratipatti* (incompetence), *kaṣāya* (bitterness) and *rasāsvāda* (taste for mundane pleasure).

The quality of *niṣṭhā* (fixed determination) can only enter one’s performance of *bhakti* after the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti*, when these five obstacles have almost gone. Hence, we should understand that the absence of these five obstacles is symptomatic of *niṣṭhā*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Here, the symptoms of the stages of *niṣṭhā* are being explained. *Niṣṭhā* means “without wavering”. When steadiness is achieved in *bhajana*, it is called *niṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*. Even when the *sādhaka* tries to bring this steadiness to his *bhajana*, as long as he remains at a stage in which he is still bound by *anarthas*, his aspirations will go in vain. He will not achieve steadiness in *bhajana*, because five kinds of obstacles remain within him.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has described that the absence of these five kinds of obstacles – *laya*, *vikṣepa*, *apratipatti*, *kaṣāya* and *rasāsvāda* – is the sign that *niṣṭhā* has awakened.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.24.59), Śrī Rudra prays to Śrī Bhagavān:

*na yasya cittam bahir-atha-vibhramam
tamo-guhāyām ca viśuddham āviśat
yad-bhakti-yogānugrhitam aṅjasā
munir vicaṣṭe nanu tatra te gatim*

O Master, the fruit of associating with saints (*sat-saṅga*) is the performance of *bhakti-yoga* to You, through which a person’s consciousness is blessed and becomes supremely pure. Consequently, one’s consciousness is no longer distracted by external sense objects, and one does not enter into the dark cave of ignorance. At that time, a person can understand You, the Absolute Truth.

This verse describes a *sādhaka* who is free from *laya*, *vikṣepa*, *kaṣāya*, *apratipatti* and *rasāsvāda*.

2b ~ The five obstacles to niṣṭhā

tatra layaḥ kīrtana-śravaṇa-smaraṇeṣu uttareṣv ādhikyena nidroḍgamah | vikṣepaḥ teṣu vyavahārika-vārtā-samparkaḥ | apratipattiḥ kadācil laya-vikṣepayor abhāve kīrtanādy-asāmarthyam | kaṣāyaḥ krodha-lobha-garvādi-saṃskārah | rasāsvādaḥ viśaya-sukhodaya-kāle kīrtanādiṣu mano 'nabhiniveśa iti |

Bhāvānuvāda:

- (1) Increasingly oppressive drowsiness while chanting, more while hearing, and even more while remembering, is called *laya*.
- (2) Reminiscing about various topics related to mundane life at the time of hearing, chanting or remembering is called *vikṣepa*.
- (3) Even in the absence of *laya* and *vikṣepa*, sometimes we may still find that we are simply unable to properly hear, chant or remember. This obstacle is known as *apratipatti*.
- (4) The various impressions of anger, greed and false ego that manifest while performing *sādhana* of the limbs of *bhakti*, such as hearing, chanting or remembering, is called *kaṣāya*.
- (5) The inability to absorb the mind in the *aṅgas* of *bhakti* such as *kīrtana* when the opportunity for material sense pleasure arises is known as *rasāsvāda*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The five kinds of obstacles [to *niṣṭhā*] are as follows: *laya*, *vikṣepa*, *apratipatti*, *kaṣāya* and *rasāsvāda*.

- (1) *Laya* – The increasing drowsiness that comes while hearing, chanting and remembering is known as *laya*. In other words, due to the obstacle of *laya*, drowsiness emerges more while hearing than while chanting, and even more while remembering than while hearing. Such sleepiness manifests from the mode of ignorance and deprives the *sādhaka* of relishing the *rasa* of *bhajana*. It prevents him from tasting

the sweetness of the limbs of *bhakti* like *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*. In fact, this obstacle arises because relish of the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Bhagavān is absent.

- (2) *Vikṣepa* – When mundane, ordinary topics commingle with hearing, chanting, remembering and so on, it is called *vikṣepa*. For example, the *sādhaka* may hold his *japa-mālā* in his hand and continue chanting his fixed number of rounds, and at the same time engage in gossiping with others about all kinds of mundane things. Then the *sādhaka*'s restless, or distracted, mind, totally immersed in mundane topics, is unable to touch the holy name. Since the *sādhaka*'s daily goal is merely the completion of his fixed number of rounds, he remains deprived of truly tasting the nectar of the holy name.

As such, although the *sādhaka* may sit in an assembly and listen to *bhagavat-kathā* from beginning to end, he will be ensnared by topics of mundane enjoyment. Due to this obstacle, the *sādhaka*'s mind cannot remember the transcendental form and pastimes of Bhagavān, and instead wanders here and there, clinging to various topics. Such wandering is the work of the mode of passion.

- (3) *Apratipatti* – Even if the first two obstacles, *laya* and *vikṣepa*, no longer remain, we see that the mind of the *sādhaka* may still be incapable of hearing and chanting. This obstacle is called *apratipatti*, “incompetence”, or “failure”. In this condition, a lack of enthusiasm appears within the *sādhaka*'s mind, creating lethargy in *bhajana*. In fact, enthusiasm (*utsāha*) has been called the life of *śraddhā*. This *apratipatti* is born from the mode of ignorance.
- (4) *Kaṣāya* – When previous impressions of anger, greed, conceit and so forth are present in one's practice of hearing, chanting and remembering, it is called *kaṣāya*. When one is still bound by *anarthas*, then, on account

of previous impressions, the following will arise within one's heart: anger, even at the slightest provocation; a desire to relish sweet, tasteful preparations; greed for wealth; and false ego and vanity in regard to one's body and possessions.

- (5) *Rasāsvāda* – The mind cannot experience material pleasure and simultaneously be absorbed in hearing, chanting and remembering. Thus, on account of the mind's absorption in material enjoyment, it cannot be absorbed in *bhajana*. This obstacle is called *rasāsvāda*. One should understand that both *kaṣāya* and *rasāsvāda* are the work of the mode of passion.

It is by these symptoms that the *sādhakas* can ascertain for themselves whether or not they have entered *niṣṭhitā-bhakti*.

2c ~ Unaffected by emotions arising from passion and ignorance

“bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī | tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye | ceta etair anāviddham sthitam sattve prasīdati ||” ity atra cakārasya samuccayārthatvād rajas-tamo-bhāvā eva labhyante | kim ca etair anāviddham ity ukte bhāva-paryantam teṣām sthitir apy asti bhakty-abādhakatayaiva || 2 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: At this point, one may ask, “Can the remaining *anarthas*, those that have not been completely eradicated, cause obstacles in *bhakti*, even after attaining the stage of *niṣṭhitā-bhakti*?” *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.19) has been quoted to address this doubt: “Upon the awakening of unflinching determination in *bhakti* (*naiṣṭhikī-bhakti*), the emotions that arise due to the material modes of passion and ignorance, as well as lust, greed and so on, no longer penetrate the heart of the devotee. Thus his heart, being situated in *śuddha-sattva* (pure transcendence), obtains complete happiness.”

In this verse, we should understand by the conjunctive use of the word *ca*, which is used in the sense of “the total aggregation of the previous terms”, that all of these worldly emotions, such as those in the modes of passion and ignorance, still exist at the stage of *niṣṭhā*. But the verse also states that “the consciousness of the devotee remains more or less undisturbed or untouched.” This statement establishes that as long as the stage of *bhāva* has not been attained, these worldly emotions essentially exist, but in a benign form and not as impediments to *bhakti*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is saying that even after the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti*, moods arising from the material modes of passion and ignorance continue to exist within the heart of the *sādhaka*. However, the way in which such moods create these five types of obstacles and disturb the *bhajana* of one at the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti* does not occur for one at the stage of *niṣṭhā*. Rather, at that stage, they remain in an innocuous form. Here, the author presents the last line of the two verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, quoted at the beginning of this Fourth Shower, and the subsequent verse:

bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī

tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ / kāma-lobhadaś ca ye

ceta etair anāviddham / sthitam sattve prasīdati

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.18–19)

Upon the awakening of unflinching determination in *bhakti* (*naiṣṭhikī-bhakti*), the moods that arise due to the material modes of passion and ignorance – lust, greed and so on – no longer contaminate the heart of the *sādhaka*. Thus his heart, being situated in *śuddha-sattva* (pure transcendence), obtains complete happiness.

The letter *ca* in the above verse is understood to mean “aggregate”, which indicates that the lust, greed and emotions in the modes of passion

and ignorance are all still present. However, at that point, they are not impediments to *bhajana* but remain within the heart of the *sādhaka* innocuously. This explains why, when one has *niṣṭhā*, no obstacle remains in one's hearing, chanting and remembering.

In his *Sārārtha-darśinī* commentary on these verses, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains the meaning of the word *anāviddham* as follows:

*tena pūrva-daśāyām kāma-lobhādyaiḥ tīkṣṇa-śarāyitairā-viddham
cetaḥ katham prasīdatu katham vā kīrtanādeḥ samyagāsvadam
labhatām nahi vyathā jarjaritasyān nādikam samyak rocate iti
bhāvaḥ |*

This means that prior to the awakening of *niṣṭhā* in *bhajana*, the heart of the *sādhaka* is pierced by the sharp arrows of lust, greed and so forth, so how can it feel joy? How will the *sādhaka* be capable of thoroughly tasting the nectar of hearing, chanting and remembering? A person being torn apart by arrows will never be entirely able to relish his meal.

Text 3

3a ~ Niṣṭhā directly in bhakti herself & niṣṭhā in that which is favourable to bhakti

*sā ca niṣṭhā sākṣād-bhakti-vartinī tad-anukūla-vastu-vartinīti dvi-vidhā | tatra
sākṣād bhaktir ananta-prakārāpi sthūlatayā tri-vidhā; kāyikī vācīkī mānasī
ceti | tatra prathamam kāyikyās tato vācikyās tata eva mānasyā bhakter niṣṭhā
sambhaved iti kecit | bhakteṣu tāratamyena sthitānām api sahaujo-balānām
madhye kvacana bhakte vilakṣaṇa-tādrśa-saṃskāra-vaśāt kasyacid eva
bhagavad-unmukhatvādhikyam syād iti nāyam krama ity anye | tad-anukūla-
vastūni amānitva-mānadatva-maitrī-dayādini |*

Bhāvānuvāda: *Niṣṭhā* is also of two types: (1) resting in *bhakti* herself, *sākṣād-bhakti-vartinī* [that is, directly related to the nine limbs of *bhakti* such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*] and (2) resting in that which is favourable to *bhakti*, *tad-anukūla-vastu-vartinī* [that is, related to favourable qualities required to directly practise the limbs of *bhakti*].

Although *sākṣād-bhakti-vartinī-niṣṭhā* is of many types, there are three main divisions: *kāyikī* (performed by the body), *vācikī* (performed by speech) and *mānasī* (performed within the mind).

Some people are of the opinion that a *sādhaka* first develops *niṣṭhā* in *bhakti* performed with the body, then in *bhakti* performed by speech and finally in *bhakti* performed within the mind. However, devotees develop a greater inclination toward Bhagavān in either *kāyikī-bhakti*, *vācikī-bhakti* or *mānasī-bhakti* according to their varying degrees of endurance [in relation to the body], brilliance [in relation to the faculty of speech] or power [in relation to the mind]. This is due to the impact of their various previous experiences (*saṁskāras*). Thus, some say that there is no fixed sequence in regard to these three divisions.

Qualities such as not desiring respect from others, yet always offering others respect, friendship and compassion are favourable for *bhakti*. *Niṣṭhā* in such qualities is called *tad-anukūla-vastu-vartinī*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Now the categories of *niṣṭhā* are being defined. *Niṣṭhā* in *bhakti* is of two types: (1) fixed determination related directly to *bhakti* herself (*sākṣād-bhakti-viṣayinī*) and (2) fixed determination related to qualities favourable to *bhakti* (*tad-anukūla-vastu-viṣayinī*).¹

1 Although the terms used in the *Bhāvānuvāda* and the *Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti* are different, their implications are the same. The word *vartinī* literally means “to rest in”, as in *niṣṭhā* resting directly in *bhakti* or *niṣṭhā* resting in qualities that are favourable to *bhakti*. And *viṣayinī* literally means “within the scope of”. –Ed.

(1) Sākṣād-bhakti-ṣayinī-niṣṭhā

(fixed determination related directly to *bhakti* herself)

This *niṣṭhā* is of three types: related to the body (*kāyikī*), related to speech (*vācikī*) and related to the mind (*mānasī*).

(i) *Kāyikī-niṣṭhā* (fixed determination related to the body)

Resolve in performing activities such as the following constitutes *kāyikī-niṣṭhā*: hearing *śrī bhagavat-kathā*, serving the *tulasī* tree and picking her leaves, making flower garlands for Bhagavān, worshipping the deity, offering obeisances to the deity, circum-ambulating the deity or a holy place and cleansing the temple of Bhagavān.

(ii) *Vācikī-niṣṭhā* (fixed determination related to speech)

Resolve in performing activities such as the following constitutes *vācikī-niṣṭhā*: *kīrtana* of the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Bhagavān, offering prayers in eulogy, revealing one's mind through prayerful entreaty, glorifying Bhagavān and reciting narrations about Him.

(iii) *Mānasī-niṣṭhā* (fixed determination related to the mind)

Resolve in contemplating and remembering the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān constitutes *mānasī-niṣṭhā*.

Unflinching faith, or steadiness, in these *āngas* of *bhakti* is to have fixed determination related directly to *bhakti* herself. In his commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written, “*niṣṭhā tatrāvīkṣepena sātatyam* – when someone's *bhajana* is uninterrupted and devoid of any distractions, it is called *niṣṭhā*.”

Some people are of the opinion that *niṣṭhā* first awakens in *bhakti* performed with one's body (*kāyikī*), then in *bhakti* performed through one's faculty of speech (*vācikī*) and finally in *bhakti* performed with one's mind

(*mānasī*), but this is not the sequence every *sādhaka* passes through. According to each *sādhaka*'s previous impressions, we find that he will have varying degrees of endurance, brilliance and power. Some *sādhakas* have more mental power [than physical endurance or brilliant faculty of speech], so it is not so astonishing that they will first attain steadiness in *bhakti* performed with their mind (*mānasī-bhakti*). That is why it can be said that there is no fixed sequence in the attainment of these three forms of *niṣṭhā*.

(2) Tad-anukūla-vastu-viṣayinī-niṣṭhā

(fixed determination related to qualities that are favourable to *bhakti*)

Qualities such as offering respect to others but never demanding respect in return, sympathy, compassion, forgiveness, gratefulness and so forth are favourable for *bhakti*. Offering respect to others and never demanding respect in return help nourish humility, the elixir that gives life to the *bhakti* of the *sādhaka*. Compassion for every living entity, friendship and a mood of kindness are qualities by which *bhakti* becomes free from obstacles and firmly established within the heart of the *sādhaka*. For those who cannot forgive the faults of others, praying to God for forgiveness is nothing but imitation.

Of all these qualities, the quality of gratitude (*kṛtajñatā*) is especially favourable for *bhakti*, for Bhakti-devī does not appear in an ungrateful heart. Śrī Bhagavān Himself is thoroughly imbued with the quality of gratitude. Bhagavān gives His very self as charity when the devotee makes a simple offering of *tulasī* and water. When the evil sorceress Pūtanā simply imitated the mood of a mother, Bhagavān made her life successful by instating her in the exalted position of His own nursemaid in Goloka. Gratefulness is truly the testimony of an elevated personality's greatness, and ungratefulness is the testimony of a lowly person's worthlessness. To whatever extent a person has become truly elevated, gratitude will be found residing in his heart. Bhakti-devī will never appear in a small-hearted person devoid of gratitude.

3b ~ Not desiring respect for oneself & offering all respect to others, etc. does not necessarily indicate niṣṭhā

teṣām niṣṭhā ca kutracana śama-prakṛtau bhakte bhakter aniṣṭhatatve dṛśyate kutracana tasminn uddhate bhakte niṣṭhitatve 'pi na dṛśyate yady api tad api bhakti-niṣṭhaiva sva-sattvāsattvābhyām tan-niṣṭhā-sattvāsattve sudhiyam avagamayati na tu bāla-pratītir eva vāstavīkartum śakyeti |

Bhāvānuvāda: Sometimes we see that a self-controlled devotee lacks *niṣṭhā* in *bhakti* but has *niṣṭhā* in such qualities as not desiring respect and always offering it. Inversely, we may also observe that a devotee with an arrogant nature has *niṣṭhā* in *bhakti* but not in such qualities.

It appears to be a valid inference to many, not only to those with immature intelligence but even to learned persons, that the presence of these favourable qualities signifies *niṣṭhā* in *bhakti*, and that their absence signifies a lack of *niṣṭhā* in *bhakti*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: It is possible that within the heart of a self-controlled *sādhaka*, we may find that all these good qualities are present despite the absence of *niṣṭhā* in *bhakti*. In other words, such qualities may be evident in some self-controlled devotees who are still at the stage of unsteady devotion (*aniṣṭhitā-bhakti*), and conversely, we may find a *sādhaka* with an exalted nature in whom *niṣṭhā* has already arisen but who does not exhibit any of these qualities.

Therefore, there is no certainty that these auspicious qualities will awaken wherever *niṣṭhā* is manifest. The opinion that the presence of all these good qualities is an indication that *niṣṭhā* in *bhakti* has been awakened, and that the absence of them is an indication that it has not, may be adopted not only by those who are ignorant of *śāstra* but even by those who are wise and conversant with *śāstra*.

3c ~ Niṣṭhā in kīrtana and so forth is actual niṣṭhā

yad uktam – “bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī | tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye | ceta etair anāviddham sthitam sattve prasīdatī |” śravaṇa-kīrtanādiṣu yatnasya śaithilya-prābalya eva dustyajye sambhavanti niṣṭhitāniṣṭhite bhaktī pradarśayetām iti samkṣepato vivekaḥ || 3 ||

iti mādhyura-kādambinyām niṣyanda-bandhurā nāma caturthyaṃṛta-vṛṣṭiḥ || 3 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: And this is understandable, given that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.19) states that it is only when *naiṣṭhikī-bhakti* awakens within the devotee’s heart that he will no longer be hindered by passion and ignorance, or by lust, greed and the like. Thus situated in *śuddha-sattva*, he will achieve true happiness.

Intense enthusiasm to perform the limbs of *bhakti*, such as hearing and chanting, is the actual benchmark of steadiness (*niṣṭhā*) in *bhakti*, and laxity in performing the limbs of *bhakti* is the benchmark of unsteadiness (*aniṣṭhā*) in *bhakti*. This is but a summary of the deliberation on the subject of *bhakti-niṣṭhā*.

**Thus ends the Bhāvānuvāda
of the Fourth Shower of Nectar, named
Niṣyanda-bandhurā
 (“Flow of Ambrosia”).**

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: We find the apparent evidence for this misconception [regarding what indicates *niṣṭhā*] in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.18–19):

bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī

*tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ / kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye
ceta etair anāviddham / sthitam sattve prasīdatī*

When *naiṣṭhikī-bhakti* manifests within the heart, it can no longer be affected by the modes of passion and ignorance, nor by their effects, such as lust and greed. Thus, becoming situated in *śuddha-sattva*, one's heart attains true happiness.

Although the previously mentioned qualities are favourable for *niṣṭhā* in *bhakti*, they are not required to determine *niṣṭhā* in *bhakti*. The intensity or apathy of one's *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, etc. are requisite in determining whether one is practising *niṣṭhitā-bhakti* or *aniṣṭhitā-bhakti*. In other words, we should understand that intense endeavour in *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* indicates firm steadiness in *bhakti*, and its absence indicates unsteadiness.

**Thus ends the Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti
on the Fourth Shower of Nectar, named
Niṣyanda-bandhurā
("Flow of Ambrosia").**

Fifth Shower of Nectar

Realization of Transcendental Taste



Sādhana-bhakti
Ruci

Text 1

The awakening and symptoms of ruci & ruci as the factor that awakens āsakti

athābhyāsa-kṛṣṇa-vartma-dīpitām bhakti-kāñcana-mudrām sva-tejasā vahantīm dadhāne bhakta-hṛdi tasyām rucir utpadyate | śravaṇa-kīrtanādīnām anyato vailakṣaṇyena rocakatvaṁ ruciḥ | yasyām utpadyamānāyām pūrva-daśāyām iva tair muhur apy anuśilitair na śramopalabdhi-gandho 'pi | yā hi teṣu vyasanitvam acirād evotpādayati | yathā nityam śāstram adhīyānasya baṭoḥ kāle sāstrārthapraveśe sati śāstrasya rocakatvam utpādyamānam eva tam tatra śramam nopanayaty āsañjayati ca || 1 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: After the stage of *niṣṭhā*, the devotee, by carrying in his heart the golden medallion of *bhakti* – which has been burnished by the fire of steady practice and which bears its own unique splendour – experiences the awakening of *ruci* (pure spiritual taste) in *bhakti*.

At that time, the distinctive delight the *sādhaka* feels in performing one particular limb of *bhakti* over another is called *ruci*. When *ruci* is awakened, a person does not experience even the slightest trace of fatigue in his repeated performance of hearing, chanting and other limbs (*aṅgas*) of devotion, as he did at previous stages. This *ruci* quickly makes the devotee addicted to his practice of the *aṅgas* of *bhakti*. In other words, *ruci* leads to the awakening of intense attachment (*āsakti*) to such practice.

For example, a *brāhmaṇa* boy, by regularly studying the scriptures, gradually gains a proper understanding of their meaning. As a result, a relish for such study awakens in his heart. His delight is such that his study does not cause him the slightest fatigue. Rather, it serves only to intensify his attachment to scripture.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The Fourth Shower of Nectar discussed *niṣṭhā* in *bhajana*. Just as gold becomes dazzling by being heated in fire, similarly,

the golden medallion of *bhakti* is burnished by the fire of the *sādhaka*'s practice of *bhajana* with *niṣṭhā*. By keeping that medallion in his heart, the *sādhaka* attains *ruci* in *bhakti*.

A golden gem on a person's chest gives the chest a golden hue and causes it to appear magnificent. In a similar way, the heart of a devotee carrying the radiant medallion of *bhakti* becomes effulgent. Consequently, the devotee progressively develops greater fondness for chanting than for hearing, and still greater fondness for remembering than for chanting. The distinct relish one obtains from transcendental perception of the forms, qualities, pastimes, etc. of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His associates is called *ruci*.

In his commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15), Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written, “*rucir abhilāṣaḥ kintu buddhi-pūrvakam* – *ruci* is understood to mean a desire, but one that is guided by one's intelligence (*buddhi-pūrvakam*).” In other words, it refers to a longing or thirst for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If this thirst is imbued with a favourable disposition toward Him, it is the very life force of *bhakti*. Along with the awakening of such thirst for one's cherished Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a longing to serve Him with affection and warmth also arises, automatically.

It is for this reason that Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written that desire (*abhilāṣa*) is of three types: a deep yearning to do what is favourable for Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*ānukūlya-abhilāṣa*), a deep yearning to serve Him with intimacy (*sauhārdya-abhilāṣa*) and a deep yearning to attain Him (*prāpty-abhilāṣa*). When the desire to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa by serving Him with genuine affection arises, the desires to attain Him and to serve Him with intimacy also appear in the heart, automatically. At the stage of *ruci*, these desires are impelled by the intelligence, and at the stage of *āsakti*, they are spontaneous.

Ruci pertains to one's performance of *bhajana* of Śrī Hari. The *sādhaka*'s relish of the distinctive speciality of each aspect of *bhakti* in relation to Śrī Hari's forms, qualities and pastimes is called *ruci*. When *ruci* awakens, one does not experience even the slightest scent of fatigue in continuous hearing and chanting, unlike at the previous stages. This *ruci* causes a deep

attachment (*āsakti*) to hearing, chanting and so forth to manifest in the heart of the devotee. Subsequently, any time spent in activities that are unrelated to Bhagavān seems exceedingly worthless. Before the stage of *ruci*, one is not able to fully relish topics about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but at the stage of *ruci*, such topics are extremely delectable, and *mādhurya* (a delightful sweetness) is realized. In his commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15–17), Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has written, “*ruciḥ pāpa-bīja-nāśād bhaktau mādhuryānubhavaḥ* – at the stage of *ruci*, the seed of sinful activity is completely destroyed and one begins to experience the sweetness of *bhajana*.” In the same commentary, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has also explained, “*mādhuryam tu rūpa-guṇa-līlānām rocatvam* – to relish the forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa exclusively is to realize His delightful sweetness.”

When *ruci* for *hari-kathā* is awakened, a person never feels satiated by hearing and speaking about the attributes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.19), it is said:

*vayam tu na vitṛpyāma / uttama-śloka-vikrame
yac-chṛṇvatām rasa-jñānām / svādu svādu pade pade*

[The sages headed by Śrī Śaunaka Ṛṣi said:] O Sūta Gosvāmī, even though we have repeatedly heard about the valorous pastimes of Śrī Hari, who is glorified by exalted prayers, we are not satiated. To hear the pastimes of Śrī Hari spoken by *rasika* devotees is supremely relishable at every moment.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.8) states:

*dharmah svanuṣṭhitah pumsām / viṣvaksena-kathāsu yaḥ
notpādayed yadi ratim / śrama eva hi kevalam*

The occupational activities a man performs according to his own social position are nothing but useless labour if they do not initiate an attraction for hearing *hari-kathā*.

In his *Krama-sandarbha* commentary on the above verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has determined that taste in *bhajana* awakens with taste for *hari-kathā*. He has written, “*kathā-ruceḥ sarvatraivādyatvāt śreṣṭhatvāc ca* – indeed, in every way, taste for *hari-kathā* is the first and also the highest step.”

When a student first reads a particular scripture, he needs to endeavour assiduously to ascertain its essence, which he finds abstruse. Consequently, he does not find his study relishable. In time, however, when the actual meaning of the scripture dawns on him, he finds great satisfaction and delight in such study, and his effort is completely devoid of strain. Similarly, the *bhajana* of *sādhakas* entering the path of *bhakti* is somewhat slack, because they do not experience relish in practising the limbs of *bhajana*. *Bhajana* seems extremely difficult to them. But by persisting in their practice, their heart gradually becomes cleansed and they relish *bhajana-rasa*. To the degree that this takes place, they experience the awakening of taste in *bhajana*.

Text 2

Bhakti destroys ignorance & awakens a taste for bhakti

vastutaḥ siddhānte tu paittika-vaiguṇyena dūṣitāyām rasanāyām sitāyā arocatatve 'pi sitaiva tad-vaiguṇya-nirāsakam auśadham iti vivekinaḥ tasyā eva yathā muhur upasevane kālena svādvīyaṁ svādvīyam ābhātīti tasyā eva rocatatvam tathaivāvidyādi-vidūṣitasya jīvāntaḥkaraṇasya śravaṇādi-bhaktiā tad-doṣa-praśame tasyām rucir udbhavatīti || 2 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: The actual conclusion can be understood as follows: For the tongue afflicted by jaundice, the mere taste of natural rock candy is unpleasant. Nonetheless, according to the opinion of the wise, such rock candy is actually the cure for jaundice. By regularly taking rock candy, one can gradually perceive its sweetness, and a taste for it develops. In the

same way, by continuously engaging in *bhakti* characterized by *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, etc., the heart of the living entity polluted by nescience (*avidyā*) and so forth becomes cleansed of these defects, and *ruci* for *bhakti* is awakened.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Here, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura asserts that one whose tongue is afflicted by jaundice finds rock candy, which is naturally sweet, to be bitter. Ayurvedic doctors tell us that rock candy is a most effective medicine for jaundice, that one who takes it regularly will be cured, and that to the degree that one is cured, one will gradually appreciate its sweetness. Similarly, although a person whose mind is afflicted by the contamination of ignorance (*avidyā*), false identification (*asmitā*), material attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dveṣa*) and absorption in worldly objects (*abhiniveśa*) may hear and extol the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Hari, which are superlatively sweet by nature, he does not relish that sweetness.

Exalted and enlightend personalities declare this *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* of the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Hari to be the sole elixir for destroying the disease of ignorance and other such impurities. By continuous hearing and recitation, the heart is gradually cleansed of pollution, and the disease of ignorance vanishes. To the degree that this takes place, one will develop a taste in *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and so forth. This is how the *sādhaka*'s taste is awakened in these practices. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes this to Uddhava in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.14.26):

yathā yathātmā parimṛjyate 'sau
mat-puṇya-gāthā-śravaṇābhidhānaiḥ
tathā tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmaṁ
caḅsur yathaivāñjana-samprayuktam

O Uddhava, just as defective eyes are cured by the application of collyrium and begin to develop the power to see minute objects, so the mind is cleansed of mundane contamination by hearing and speaking

about My pastimes, which are supremely purifying. The *sādhaka* thus begins to perceive subtle reality. In other words, he is able to experience the sweetness of My names, forms, qualities and pastimes.

Text 3

Taste dependent on external excellence in relation to Bhagavān & taste not dependent on such external excellence

sā ca rucir dvi-vidhā; vastu-vaiśiṣṭyāpekṣiṇī tad-anapekṣiṇī ca | vastūnām bhagavan-nāma-rūpa-guṇa-lilādinām vaiśiṣṭyam kīrtanasya sausvaryādimattvam varṇita-bhagavac-caritāder guṇālaṅkāra-dhvany-ādimattvam paricaryādinām tādr̥śa-svābhīṣṭa-deśa-pātra-dravyādi-sad-bhāvavattvam yad apekṣate tad vastu-vaiśiṣṭyāpekṣiṇī | kim kim kīdr̥śam vyañjanam asti iti pṛcchatām mandakṣudvatām iva | prathamā seyam yato 'ntaḥkaraṇasya yat kiñcid doṣa-lava eva kīrtanādinām vaiśiṣṭyam apekṣate ato 'sty antaḥkaraṇa-doṣābhāsā jñeyā | dvitīyā tu yathā tan-nāma-rūpādy-upakrama eva balavatī bhavantī vaiśiṣṭye tv atipraudhatvam āpadyamāneyam nāsti mano-vaiguṇya-gandhā eva jñeyā || 3 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: *Ruci* is of two types: (1) *ruci* that is dependent on external excellence in relation to Bhagavān (*vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-apekṣiṇī*), and (2) *ruci* that is not dependent on external excellence in relation to Bhagavān (*vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-anapekṣiṇī*).

Here, *vastu* refers to the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān, and *vaiśiṣṭya* refers to their external excellence. For example, one may anticipate a pleasing and sweet melody in *kīrtana*; one may be eager to hear a description of the transcendental characteristics and pastimes of Bhagavān that is expressed in appropriate ornate language, voice, tone and so forth; or one may expect, in accordance with one's cherished standard, that the service and worship of Bhagavān is performed

appropriately and to perfection, in terms of place, time, person, purity of ingredients, etc. The *ruci* that develops in one who is dependent on these external excellences is called *vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-apekṣiṇī-ruci*.

This is likened to a person who sits down to take a meal and asks, “What kinds of dishes have been prepared? How tasteful are they?” Such inquiries would be symptomatic of a mild appetite only. *Vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-apekṣiṇī-ruci* is something like that. If one’s mind is contaminated by the slightest trace of impurity, then one’s taste in *kīrtana* and other limbs of *bhakti* will depend upon the above-mentioned external excellences. We should know that this type of *ruci* reveals that one’s mind is still enveloped in a layer of contamination.

The second type of *ruci*, however – *vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-anapekṣiṇī-ruci* (taste that is not dependent on external excellence in relation to Bhagavān) – is extremely powerful from the moment one engages in *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* of Śrī Bhagavān’s names, forms and so forth. And if excellence in relation to Śrī Bhagavān’s names, forms and so forth happens to be present – for example, when the *kīrtana* is performed with melody, metre, musical flourishes, etc. – then this *ruci* ripens even more, and one becomes filled with immense delight. It is to be understood that not even the slightest scent of any defect remains in the heart of one in whom this type of *ruci* has awakened.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: *Ruci* is of two types: *vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-apekṣiṇī* and *vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-anapekṣiṇī*.

- (1) *Vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-apekṣiṇī* – taste (*ruci*) that is dependent on the external excellence of an object (*vastu*). We should understand that here, the word *vastu* refers to Bhagavān. When there is an expectation that *kīrtana* of the names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān should be performed with wonderful melodies and proper rhythm and metre, that the narrations about Him should contain enchanting descriptions endowed with ornate language, or that the service and

worship of the deity of Śrī Bhagavān should be performed in a cherished and pure place, at an appropriate time and with charming ingredients, it indicates *vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-apekṣiṇī-ruci*. In other words, in the absence of these elements, one's relish is not awakened.

Before taking a meal, a person with little appetite will ask, "What foodstuffs have been prepared? How palatable are they?" Conversely, a person who is famished will not ask such questions. He accepts whatever has been prepared, whether it is tasty or not. In the same way, those with a strong taste for the limbs of *bhakti* do not carry the expectation that the *kīrtana* should be melodic, cadential, rhythmic and so forth. The minds of those who hold such expectations have not been purified completely. It is to be understood that a trace of contamination still exists.

- (2) *Vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-anapekṣiṇī* – taste (*ruci*) that is not dependent on the external excellence of an object (*vastu*). A person with this type of *ruci* does not expect any of the above-mentioned excellences. From the outset, his hearing and chanting of the names, forms, qualities, etc. of Śrī Bhagavān is resolute, intense and brimming with enthusiasm. Such *ruci* is composed of unflinching faith in the names, forms, qualities, pastimes and worship of Śrī Bhagavān. It does not hinge upon melodic, rhythmic or musical elements in the performance of *kīrtana*, but if the features of external excellence are present, that *ruci* develops further into an extremely mature state. For example, an exceedingly hungry person eats food without caring whether it is tasty or not. He happily consumes plain rice, even without an accompanying dish of mixed vegetables. At the same time, if various first-class dishes are available, he experiences an even more astonishing relish of them. Thus, *ruci* that does not rely on any external excellence is referred to as *vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-anapekṣiṇī-ruci*. If, however, such excellence is present, this *ruci* matures greatly and becomes completely delectable. When this type of *ruci* is awakened, not even the slightest scent of the impurity of dependence on external attributes lingers in the heart.

Text 4

The despondency and bliss of a person in whom ruci has awoken

tataś cāho sakhe! kṛṣṇa-nāmāmṛtāni vihāya kim iti duṣparigraha-yoga-kṣema-vārtā-viṣayeṣu nimajjayasi tvām vā kim bravīmi dhiṅ mām yad aham api pāmarah śrī-guru-caraṇa-prasāda-labdham apy etad vastu sva-granthe-nibaddham mahā-ratnam ivānupalabhya parito bhramann etāv antaṁ kālam anyavyā-pārapārāvāra-madhye mithyā-sukha-leśa-sphuṭita-kapardaka-mātram anviṣyāyūṁṣi vṛthaiṅvānyam | bhakteḥ kam apy anaṅgī kurvan śakter abhāvam evādyotayam | hanta sa evāham saiveyam me rasanā yā hy anṛta-kaṭu-grāmya-pralāpam amṛtam iva lihyatī bhagavan-nāma-guṇa-vārtāsu sālasaivāsīt | hanta hanta tat-kathā-śravaṇārambha eva svāpam bhajaṁs tadaiva kadācit prastutāyām grāmya-vārtāyām utkarṇatayā labdha-jāgarām sādḥūnām sad eva tat sakalam akalaṅkayam | asya ca duṣpūrasya jaṭharasya kṛte jaratho 'pi kāmś kān duṣkṛtodyamān nākaravam | tad aham na jāne kasmin vā niraye sva-kṛta-phalam upabhuñjānaḥ sthāsyāmīti nirvidyamānas tadaiva kvacid aho raho bhuvi mahopaniṣat-kalpa-vallī-phala-sāraṁ sārāṅga iva prabhoś caritāmṛtaṁ svādayann abhivādayan muhur muhur api sādḥūn avyādhūta-saṁlāpas tiṣṭhann upaviśan praviśann api bhagavad-dhāma-baddhāmala-sevā-niṣṭhas tan-manā unmanā ivābhijña-lokair ālakṣyamāṇo bhaktajana-bhajanānanda-nṛtyādhyāyam adhyetum upakramamāṇa iva ruci-nartakyā pāṇibhyām grhīteva tat-tac-chikṣyamāṇa iva kāncana-mudam ananubhūta-carīm upalabhe na jāne kuṣīlavācāryābhyām bhāva-premabhyām kālena praviśya nartayīsyamāṇaḥ kasyām vā nirvṛtinī-vṛti virājayīṣyatīti || 4 ||

iti mādḥurya-kādambinyām upalabdhāsvāda-nāma pañcamy amṛta-vṛṣṭiḥ || 5 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: “O my friend, having abandoned the nectar of the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, why are you becoming absorbed in talk of acquiring and maintaining that which is difficult to attain? What shall I say to you? Fie on me indeed! By the mercy of the lotus feet of śrī guru, a most sinful person like me attained something as great as devotion to the Supreme Lord

(*bhagavad-bhakti*). Not understanding its value, I have forgotten about it, just as one may forget about a precious jewel bound within the hem of one's cloth. In this way, I wander here and there in the hope of attaining false, insignificant happiness, just as one searches in all four directions for a chipped cowrie (a shell used as money). I have abandoned the practice of *bhagavad-bhakti* and wasted my entire life, wandering throughout the ocean of worldly sense gratification. By not accepting and engaging in any of the activities of *bhakti*, I have exposed my complete powerlessness.

“Alas, alas! My tongue also, like me, is wicked by nature. To this day it licks up bitter gossip, which is full of falsity, as if it were nectar, but it is lazy to taste the ambrosial names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān. Alas, alas! Sleepiness overwhelms me as soon as I sit to hear *hari-kathā*, but if material gossip starts, then my sleepiness vanishes and I am all ears, eager to imbibe it with complete attentiveness. In this way, time and again I have disgraced the assembly of saintly persons. Even in my old age, what bad activity have I not endeavoured to perform merely to fill my ever-dissatisfied belly? I do not know in which hell I am destined to suffer the results of these wicked acts, nor for how long.”

The swan-like devotee, gripped by this state of lamentation while living on this earth, repeatedly relishes and offers obeisance to the nectarous characteristics of Śrī Bhagavān. Such characteristics are the essence of the fruit of the wish-fulfilling vine of the great Upaniṣads, which hold the most confidential of all topics. Leaving aside all mundane talk, such a devotee first sits in an assembly of *sādhus*, then resides near those *sādhus*, and finally enters their fellowship. Sometimes he takes refuge in Bhagavān's holy abode, where he performs steadfast, immaculate service to Him. He completely gives his mind to that service and eventually attains full absorption in it. To the ignorant he appears to be scatter-brained. But the female dancer named Ruci personally begins to give him lessons on the rapturous dance of *bhajana*, as if taking him by both hands. Consequently, that devotee is seized by an unprecedented joy.

In due course, when the two teachers of dance – Bhāva and Prema – make him dance, who can know in which realm of bliss he will reside?

**Thus ends the Bhāvānuvāda
of the Fifth Shower of Nectar,
named Upalabdhāsvāda
 (“Realization of Transcendental Taste”).**

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: A *sādhaka* in whom *ruci* has awakened manifests bodily, vocal and mental *anubhāvas* (expressions of the spiritual emotions of the heart). Here, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura describes the behaviour of such a *sādhaka* so that we can easily understand it.

A person whose heart has blossomed with *ruci* is called a *jāta-ruci-sādhaka*. Such a *sādhaka* converses with his companion, the mind, as follows: “O my friend, why do you abandon the nectar of the sweet name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and instead remain absorbed in talking about how to acquire and maintain material objects, which are extremely troublesome to attain?”

To the degree that *ruci* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s names, forms, qualities and pastimes has awakened in the *sādhaka*, he develops a corresponding distaste for that which is unrelated to Kṛṣṇa, such as a disdain for material objects and topics. Upon noting the earnestness of his beloved friend [his mind] to amass material objects, the *jāta-ruci-sādhaka* feels much sadness. Indeed, the nature of *bhakti* is such that when she even slightly manifests her splendour within the *sādhaka*, the *sādhaka* regards himself as most unqualified and degraded, and he begins to condemn himself. It is solely this distress, characterized by the feeling that he has no *bhakti*, that gradually elevates him to the higher stages of *sādhana*.

A *jāta-ruci-sādhaka* condemns himself as follows: “O my friend [O mind], what more can I say to you? Fie on me! I am most wretched and detestable. By the mercy of my *gurudeva*, I attained *bhagavad-bhakti*, but I did not

honour it even slightly, just as one who easily attains a precious jewel and binds it in the hem of one's cloth becomes unmindful of it. Instead, just to fill my belly, I wandered here and there in search of insignificant wealth, and I absorbed myself in materialistic gossip. In this way, my whole life has passed in vain. Unable to perform *bhajana*, I spent all my time engrossed in mundane talk and false gossip, which are related only to sense gratification and not to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Still, I relished this with my tongue as if it were nectar, and I was indolent in regard to hearing Kṛṣṇa's names, forms, qualities and pastimes. Alas, alas! I would become overwhelmed with sleepiness as soon as I started to hear *hari-kathā*, but if at that time, some mundane gossip began, my sleepiness would instantly disappear and I would become all ears. I do not know how many times I have disgraced the assembly of saintly persons by such behaviour."

If someone begins to fall asleep while listening to *hari-kathā* in an assembly of devotees, it affects other listeners, who then also feel sleepy. Someone observing this may wonder, "Do the people in this assembly sleep even while hearing *hari-kathā*?" His criticism passes from one person to another, and as a result, the entire assembly of *sādhus* is defamed. A *sādhaka* in whom *ruci* has appeared remembers this past condition and reprimands himself.

Lamenting thus, a *jāta-ruci* devotee continues, "Although I am old, what wicked acts have I not attempted to perform, simply to fill my belly, which is never satisfied? To endure the result of these sinful acts, I do not know what hellish planet I am destined for, nor for how long."

In this way, being gripped by a state of callousness to the material world, the swan-like devotee repeatedly relishes the nectarean characteristics of Śrī Hari. These characteristics are the very essence of the fruit, born of the wish-fulfilling vine of the great Upaniṣads, and they emanate from the lotus lips of exalted, saintly personalities inhabiting this earth. The *sādhaka* now leaves aside all mundane talk and exclusively resides in the society of *sādhus*. Sometimes he enters the temple of Bhagavān and becomes steadfastly absorbed in performing immaculate, loving service to Him. In this way,

all the limbs of *bhakti*, such as hearing, chanting and worshipping, become supremely relishable for the *jāta-ruci-sādhaka*.

The ignorant think such a *sādhaka* mad. The most expert dance instructress, Ruci, takes him by the hands and, in the assembly of devotees, imparts to him teachings from the lessons on the dance of devotional bliss (*bhajanānanda*), which bestows supreme happiness. At this time, he experiences an ecstasy like never before. In due course, the two masters of dance – Bhāva and Prema – come to instruct him. Who, then, will be able to describe the extent of the bliss he experiences? Such ecstasy is inexpressible.

The sequence in which *vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-anapekṣiṇī-ruci* is awakened and comes to its fully ripened stage has thus been described. This *ruci* matures and grows, and at the appropriate time culminates in *bhāva* and *prema*. The author has elucidated this here. The state prior to *bhāva* – *āsakti* – is described next, in the Sixth Shower of Nectar.

**Thus ends the Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti on
the Fifth Shower of Nectar,
named Upalabdhāsvāda
("Realization of Transcendental Taste").**

Sixth Shower of Nectar

Enchantment of the Heart



Sādhana-bhakti
Āsakti

Text 1

1a ~ Ruci pertains to bhajana & āsakti pertains to bhajanīya

atha saiva bhajana-viṣayā ruciḥ parama-prauḍhatamā satī yadā bhajanīyam bhagavantam viṣayī-karoti tadeyam āsaktir ity ākhyāyate | yaiva bhakti-kalpa-vallyāḥ stavakī-bhāvam āsādayanti bhāva-premaṇī puṣpa-phale acirād eva bhāvinī dyotayati | rucir bhajana-viṣayā āsaktir bhajanīya-viṣayeti bhūmnaiva vyāpadeśaḥ | vastutas tūbhe apy ubhayam viṣayī-karoty eva | aprauḍhatva-prauḍhatvābhyām eva bhedaḥ |

Bhāvānuvāda: *Ruci* (transcendental taste), which was previously discussed, pertains to *bhajana*. When *ruci* becomes highly mature and makes Śrī Bhagavān Himself the object of *bhajana* (the *bhajanīya*), that *ruci* is known as *āsakti*.

This *āsakti* represents the stage in the growth of the wish-fulfilling vine of devotion in which clusters of buds appear, indicating that very soon this wish-fulfilling vine will produce the flower of *bhāva* and the fruit of *prema*. *Ruci* makes *bhajana* (developing a mood of devotional service) its object, whereas *āsakti* makes *bhajanīya* (Śrī Kṛṣṇa – the goal of *bhajana*) its object. Although these characteristics denote the primary objects of *ruci* and *āsakti* respectively, *ruci* and *āsakti* do in fact include both *bhajana* and *bhajanīya* as their objects.

Ruci and *āsakti* are distinguished by their maturity, *ruci* being immature and *āsakti* mature.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura is now describing the symptoms of the stage of *āsakti*. *Ruci*, whose object is *bhajana*, is inclined toward the limbs of *bhajana* such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*. When that *ruci* matures and makes Bhagavān her object, she is known as *āsakti*. The devotee who possesses *ruci* naturally relishes performing the limbs of *bhajana*, such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, whereas the devotee who possesses *āsakti* experiences an awakening of direct attachment to his worshipful deity.

A cluster of buds is visible on a vine just before it blossoms with flowers and bears fruit. Such buds indicate that soon, flowers and fruits will appear on the vine. Likewise, the appearance of this *āsakti* indicates that very quickly, the *sādhaka*'s desire-creeper of devotion (*bhakti-kalpa-latā*) will yield the flower of *bhāva* and the fruit of *prema*.

Ruci pertains to *bhajana*, whereas *āsakti* pertains to *bhajanīya*, the object of *bhajana*, Śrī Bhagavān. In other words, the principal object of *ruçi* is *bhajana*, and the principal object of *āsakti* is Śrī Bhagavān. The symptoms of *ruçi* and *āsakti* have been distinguished by this alone. In reality, both *ruçi* and *āsakti* have devotional service (*bhajana*) and Bhagavān (*bhajanīya*) as their objects. The import is that although it is true that a devotee at the stage of *ruçi* has a taste for *bhajana*, it does not mean he has no attachment (*āsakti*) to Śrī Bhagavān. Still, his *ruçi* for *bhajana* predominates over his attachment to Bhagavān.

In the same way, it is not true that a devotee at the stage of *āsakti*, who has developed strong attachment to Śrī Bhagavān, does not maintain a taste (*ruçi*) for *bhajana*. It is just that at that time, the prominent element is attachment to Bhagavān. Thus, both *ruçi* and *āsakti* make both *bhajana* and *bhajanīya* their objects.

In other words, a taste for devotional practice (*bhajana-ruçi*) depends on attachment or attraction to Bhagavān (*bhagavad-āsakti*), and attachment to Bhagavān depends on a taste for devotional practice. This can be elucidated as follows: One cannot develop attachment to Bhagavān without possessing a taste for devotional practice, and one cannot develop a taste for devotional practice without having attachment to Bhagavān. Hence, *āsakti* is the fully ripened state of *ruçi*.

1b ~ At the stage of *āsakti*, the heart is like a clean mirror

āsaktir evāntaḥkaraṇa-mukuram tathā mārjayati yathā tatra sahasā pratibimbīto bhagavān avalokyamāna iva bhavati |

Bhāvānuvāda: *Āsakti* cleanses the mirror of the heart of the *sādhaka* to such an extent that when Bhagavān’s reflection suddenly manifests in his heart, the *sādhaka* feels that he is having Bhagavān’s direct audience.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: This very *āsakti* thoroughly cleanses the mirror of the devotee’s heart (*citta*) to such an extent that Bhagavān, who is reflected in it, appears to be directly visible before the practitioner. Bhagavān is extremely close to the living entities, residing in their heart, but from time immemorial, the dirt of the desire for sense gratification has sullied the mirror of the heart, and as a result, it cannot reflect the charming sweetness (*mādhurya*) of Śrī Hari. When *āsakti* awakens, that mirror is cleansed significantly. Śrī Hari is reflected there and is perceived, as if directly with the eyes.

1c ~ Effortless absorption of the mind in Bhagavān’s name, form, etc.

hanta viṣayair ākrāmyate madīyam cetas tad idam bhagavati nidadhāmi bhaktasya vidhitsuānantaram eva prāyo viṣayebhyo niṣkrāmya tad-rūpa-guṇādau yat praveśa-śilam pūrva-daśāyām āsit tad eva cittam āsaktau jātāyām vidhitsuātaḥ pūrvam eva svayam eva tathābhūtam bhavet | yathā bhagavad-rūpa-guṇādibhyo niṣkrāmya vārtāntare cetaḥ kadā praviṣtam iti prāpta-niṣthenāpi bhaktena nānusandhātum śakyate tathāiva vārtāntarato niṣkrāmya bhagavad-rūpa-guṇādiṣu kadā praviṣtam sva-ceta ity āsaktir anāsaktena na lakṣyate | āsaktimatā bhaktena tu tal lakṣyate || 1 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: “Alas, my mind has been overwhelmed by sense objects. I must focus it again on Śrī Bhagavān.” Previously, at the stages of *niṣṭhā* and *ruci*, only when the *sādhaka*’s desire was accompanied by such active resolve could he almost fully withdraw his mind from material sense objects and focus it on meditating on the forms, qualities and so forth of Śrī Bhagavān. Upon the awakening of *āsakti*, however, even before the devotee desires it, that very same mind automatically meditates on Bhagavān’s forms and qualities.

The devotee at the stage of *niṣṭhā* finds himself unable to trace how and when his mind has wandered away from Bhagavān’s form, qualities and so on and become lost in unrelated, mundane topics. And at *āsakti*, the mind imperceptibly withdraws from matters unrelated to Bhagavān and automatically absorbs itself in contemplating Bhagavān’s form, qualities, etc. This kind of attachment is unknown to a devotee in whose heart *āsakti* has not awakened. Only a devotee endowed with *āsakti* has experience of it.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The stage of *āsakti* possesses another feature that distinguishes it from the stage of *ruci*. At the stage of *ruci*, the *sādhaka* uses his intelligence to draw his mind away from sense objects and place it again at the lotus feet of Bhagavān. But at the stage of *āsakti*, the *sādhaka*’s mind becomes absorbed in Bhagavān very easily, without any endeavour. No doubt, for the *sādhaka*, this is a desirable stage.

The devotee endowed with *niṣṭhā* is not aware of when his mind digresses from Bhagavān’s names, forms, qualities and pastimes and becomes absorbed in extraneous topics unrelated to Bhagavān. Similarly, at *āsakti*, the mind imperceptibly withdraws from topics unrelated to Bhagavān and becomes completely immersed in Bhagavān Śrī Hari’s names, forms, qualities and pastimes. One in whom *āsakti* has not awakened, however, has no understanding of this. Only someone endowed with *āsakti* can note it.

One should thus comprehend that at the stage of *āsakti*, meditation on Bhagavān’s form, qualities and so forth is more intensified than at the stage of *ruci*. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes in his commentary on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15–16):

*rucir abhilāṣaḥ kintu buddhi-pūrvikyaṁ āsaktis tu svārasikī
svabhāvikīy arthaḥ*

This means, “At the stage of *ruci*, by way of his intelligence (*buddhi-pūrvaka*), the *sādhaka* pursues three desires: (1) a desire to do that which is favourable to Śrī Kṛṣṇa – *ānukūlya-abhilāṣa*, (2) a desire to serve Bhagavān with

intimacy – *sauhārḍya-abhilāṣa* and (3) a desire to attain Bhagavān – *bhagavat-prāpty-abhilāṣa*. At the stage of *āsakti*, however, these three desires are inspired naturally, or spontaneously.”

Text 2

2a ~ The behaviour of one in *āsakti* upon seeing a *sādhu*

tataś ca prātaḥ 'kutastyo 'pi bho bhoḥ kaṇṭha-lambita-śrī-śālagrāma-silā-sundara-samputo laghu-laghuccārita-śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmāmṛtāsvāda-pratikṣaṇa-lolita-rasaṇaḥ prekṣyamāṇa eva durbhagaṃ mām ullāsayasi kasmimścid arthe tat kathaya kutra kutra vā tīrthe bhraṃman keśāṃ drṣṭyā keśāṃ vā bhagavad-anubhavanām āspadī-bhavann ātmānam anyam cākṛtārthayaḥ |' ity udbhāvita-samlāpāmṛta-pāna-yāpita-katipaya-kṣaṇaḥ

Bhāvānuvāda: On seeing a saintly person in the morning, such a devotee inquires, “Dear sage, where do you hail from? Around your neck hangs a *śrī śālagrāma-silā* in a beautiful floral case. Your tongue constantly quivers as you softly utter the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and relish its nectar. I do not know why you are giving a person as unfortunate as I your *darśana*, thus filling me with delight. Which holy places did you visit on your pilgrimage? Which great souls did you have *darśana* of there? And who were the great devotees whose realizations you heard, by which you have made your life and the lives of others successful?” In this way, he spends some time drinking the nectar that such sweet discussions arouse.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura provides an unparalleled and extremely beautiful picture of the activities of a devotee who has attained the stage of *āsakti*. Upon the awakening of *āsakti*, that devotee becomes exceedingly eager to obtain his cherished object. He cannot stay in any one place and leaves his home to wander here and there. Upon

obtaining the *darśana* of a Vaiṣṇava *sādhu*, he deems his life successful, and with intense faith and affection makes various inquiries about *bhajana*.

2b ~ Speaking to the reciter of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

punar anyato gatvā 'bhoḥ kakṣa-nikṣipta-manohara-pustaka-vilakṣaṇayā śriyā vidvān evānumīyase tad vyācakṣva dasama-skandhīyam padyam ekaṁ jīvaya śruti-cātakīm tad-arthāmṛta-vrṣṭyā' iti tad-vyākhyayā romāncita-gātraḥ

Bhāvānuvāda: Thereafter, he goes to another place, and upon seeing a reciter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, speaks to him thus: “Dear sir, noticing the remarkable beauty of the book tucked under your arm, I am assuming that you are learned in the Purāṇas, such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Therefore, please be merciful to me and rejuvenate my *cātaka* bird-like ears by showering upon me a nectarean elucidation of just one of the verses from the Tenth Canto.” Upon hearing the reciter explain the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse, the hairs of his body stand on end.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Sometimes, upon seeing a narrator of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and hearing him recite and explain a verse from the Tenth Canto in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness, the devotee at the stage of *āsakti* experiences unsurpassed happiness, and the hair on his body stands on end.

Ruci in its condensed form becomes *āsakti*. Thus the devotee with *āsakti* experiences an awakening of an intensified taste for hearing the narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

2c ~ Submission of distress upon receiving darśana of a mahā-bhāgavata

punar anyato gatvā 'hantādhunaivāham kṛtārthī bhaviṣyāmi yad iyam sabhaiva sadya eva mama samasta-duṣkṛta-dhvāmsinī' iti viracita-daṇḍavad-avani-praṇipāta-

*purah̥sara-pran̥ati-vinatikaḥ tat-sabhā-mukūṭa-man̥inā mahā-bhāgavata-varyeṇa
parama-viduṣā sarasam ādriyamāṇaḥ saṅkucita-tanus tad-antika-kṛtopaveṣa
eva 'bhoḥ tribhuvana-jīva-bhavana-mahā-bhava-roga-bhiṣak-śiromane dhṛtvaiva
dhamanīm adhamasyāpi me mahā-dīnasya nirūpaya rujam samādiśasva
pathyauṣadhe kenāpi prayuktena mahā-rasāyanena mad-abhīpsitām puṣṭim api
sampādaya' iti sāsram yācamānas tat-kṛpāvaloka-madhura-vān-mayāmṛta-
niṣyanda-nanditas tac-caraṇa-paricaraṇa-nīta-pañca-ṣaḍ-vāsaraḥ*

Bhāvānuvāda: He then goes to yet another place and presents himself before an assembly of *sādhus*. “Aho!” he says. “Now my life will become successful, because these great souls will immediately destroy all my sins.” Saying this, he falls to the earth, offering those great souls his respectful, prostrated obeisances, in all humility.

The devotee then sits near the best of *mahā-bhāgavatas*, the supremely learned crest jewel of all persons in that assembly, whose heart has melted in affection for him. Having received respect from that *mahā-bhāgavata*, the devotee, feeling extreme shyness, says, “O crest jewel of physicians who destroy the great disease of material existence for all living entities within the three worlds, please examine the pulse of this degraded person, who is extremely fallen, and ascertain my disease. Please prescribe a great elixir (*mahā-rasāyana*) and diet to nourish my cherished desires.” In this way, his eyes full of tears, he begs mercy from him. Having received his merciful glance and accepted his nectarean instructions, he becomes overjoyed and spends five or six days there, serving his lotus feet.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Sometimes his mind becomes distracted and he wanders off to another place. Upon coming across an assembly of saintly persons, he immediately considers that he has made his life successful. Indeed, he regards the topmost of *sādhus* in that Vaiṣṇava assembly as the crest jewel of physicians who can destroy the great disease of material existence. His mind thus restless, he approaches him and asks many questions concerning

the medicine and diet to cure the disease of material existence, and how he can most quickly fulfil his cherished desire. Having heard that *sādhu*'s merciful instructions, he considers himself most successful and remains there for some days, engaging in service to him. The *āsakti* brimming in his heart, however, does not allow him to remain in one place. “Where do I go? What shall I do? How shall I obtain Śrī Kṛṣṇa?” His condition becomes like this.

2d ~ Searching for Bhagavān's mercy in the activities of birds and animals

sarasam aṭann api kadācid aṭavīm yadi mayi vartate kṛṣṇasya kṛpāvalokas tadāyam dūrataḥ puro 'valokyamānaḥ kṛṣṇa-sāras tri-caturāṇi padāni mad-abhimukham āyātu na cen mām pṛṣṭhī-karotv iti naisargikīr api mṛga-paśu-pakṣi-ceṣṭās tad-anugraha-nigraha-liṅgatayaiva jānan

Bhāvānuvāda: At other times, as he joyfully wanders throughout a forest, he thinks, “If Śrī Kṛṣṇa's merciful glance is upon me, then that black deer in the distance will take three or four steps toward me. And if Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy is not there, then the deer will turn its back on me and go further away.” In this way, he considers even the natural movements of birds and animals as signs of Bhagavān's mercy or neglect.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Sometimes, completely distracted, he wanders from forest to forest. Upon beholding a black deer, he thinks, “*Aho!* This deer, aptly called *kṛṣṇa-sāra*¹, has made Śrī Kṛṣṇa the essence of his life. Therefore, if he advances three or four steps toward me, then I will understand that Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy is upon me. And if he turns away and runs, then I will understand that Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy is not upon me.” In this way, he sees the symptoms of

1 *Kṛṣṇa-sāra* is a particular type of deer, but here, the devotee takes *kṛṣṇa* to mean “Śrī Kṛṣṇa”, and *sāra* to mean “essence”. –Ed.

Bhagavān’s mercy or neglect in the natural activities of birds and other animals. In other words, he longs for Bhagavān’s mercy in everything.

2e ~ Seeing some brāhmaṇa boys as the four Kumāras

grāmopāśalye ’pi khelato vipra-bālakān sanakādīn iva ’kim ahaṁ vrajendra-kumāraṁ prāpsyāmi’ iti prṣṭvā tad-dattam uttaraṁ meti mugdhākṣaram durbodhārthatayā subodhārthatayā vā parāmṛṣya

Bhāvānuvāda: Again, on the outskirts of a village, he sees some *brāhmaṇa* boys playing. Understanding them to be like Sanaka and other ṛṣis, he inquires from them, “Will I be able to obtain the son of Śrī Nanda Mahārāja?” Sometimes he considers their incomplete, inarticulate responses to be understandable, and sometimes not.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Sometimes, on the outskirts of a village, he may see very young *brāhmaṇa* boys playing. Instantaneously, a *sphūrti* (momentary vision) of the four childlike saints – the four Kumāras, headed by Śrī Sanaka Muni – awakens in his heart, and he begins to question these boys: “Will I obtain Śrī Kṛṣṇa?” If, upon hearing this question, any of the boys even indistinctly says *no*, then the devotee with *āsakti* will become overwhelmed with distress and begin to weep, “Alas, alas!” But if, upon seeing him wailing, someone says, “You will certainly attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa,” he begins to dance in ecstasy.

2f ~ Behaving like a miserly merchant

sva-grha-madhyā-madhyāsyāpi mahā-dhana-grdhnuḥ kṛpaṇa-vaṇiḥ iva ’kvāhaṁ yāmi kiṁ karomi kena vyāpāreṇa me tad-abhīṣṭa-vastu-jātaṁ hasta-gataṁ syād’ iti parimlāna-vadanaś cintayan svapan uttiṣṭhan upaviśan parijanaiḥ kāraṇaṁ pṛcchamāno ’pi kadācin mūka iva kadācid avahitthāṁ ālambamānaḥ

Bhāvānuvāda: At other times, he sits in his dwelling and thinks just like a miserly merchant who hankers for immense wealth: “Where shall I go? What shall I do? How shall I obtain my cherished treasure?”

He worries in this way, his face full of sadness. Sometimes he remains asleep, sometimes he stands up, and sometimes he remains sitting. Sometimes, if close family relatives ask why he is behaving so strangely, he becomes mute, and sometimes he conceals his real emotions.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Sometimes, becoming indifferent to everything, he sits silently within his house. At times, he is like a miserly merchant greedy for great wealth, his restless mind wondering, “When will I obtain Bhagavān? Where will I go? What do I have to do to obtain my cherished object?” Anxious, his mind depressed, he is lost in this constant meditation. He even forgets to attend to bodily functions like eating and bathing. Sometimes he remains sleeping, sometimes he suddenly stands up, and sometimes he remains sitting. At home, when his relatives ask him why he is behaving like this, he maintains silence in an attempt to conceal his emotions.

2g ~ The opinions of various persons about one in āsakti

sāmpratam abhūd ayaṁ channa-buddhir iti bandhubhiḥ svabhāvata evāyaṁ jaḍa iti prativesibhir ajñair mūrkhā iti mīmāṃsakaiḥ bhrānta iti vedāntibhiḥ bhraṣṭa iti karmibhir aho mahā-sāraṁ vastu samadhi-gatam iti bhaktair dāmbhika iti tatrāparādhibhiḥ parāmr̥ṣyamāṇo mānāpamāna-vicāra-vidhuro bhagavad-āsakti-svardhunī-pravāha-patita eva ceṣṭate bhakta iti || 2 ||

iti mādhurya-kādambinyām manohāriṇī nāma ṣaṣṭhy amṛta-vṛṣṭiḥ || 6 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Seeing him in such a condition, his friends and relatives begin to think that his intelligence has now become deranged. Ignorant neighbours say that by nature he is mentally unfit or dull. The adherents

of *mīmāṃsā* philosophy say that he is a fool. The followers of Vedānta philosophy refer to him as bewildered, and the fruitive workers declare that he is ruined. The devotees, however, understand the true state of affairs. “Ah! Just see! He has obtained the most essential thing,” they say. Offenders to the Vaiṣṇavas remark that he brims with deceit and pride. But he, the best of the devotees, is free from all concern for mundane honour and dishonour, and being immersed in the flow of divine attachment to Bhagavān (*bhagavad-āsakti*), which is like the flow of Mandākinī, he continues to manifest different kinds of transcendental behaviour, as mentioned above.

**Thus ends the Bhāvānuvāda
of the Sixth Shower of Nectar,
named Manohāriṇī
 (“Enchantment of the Heart”)**

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: His household friends and relatives begin to think that his intelligence has become deranged. When ignorant neighbours see his behaviour, they say he is lazy and by nature devoid of knowledge and intelligence. Some surmise that he is mentally ill. The followers of *mīmāṃsā* philosophy, who are expert in argument, regard him a fool. The Māyāvādī followers of Vedānta consider him to be mistaken, and those who are steadfast on the path of *karma* (the fruitive workers) believe he is ruined. Those who are always committing offences to the devotees say he is proud and duplicitous.

The erroneous beliefs of these people originate from their mood of aversion to Bhagavān and their complete ignorance of the truths of devotional service to Him (*bhagavad-bhakti-tattva*). They are unaware of the glories of *bhakti* to Bhagavān and the characteristics of *bhakti*, and they are unacquainted with the different stages of *bhakti* to Bhagavān. They are accomplished only in worldly behaviour and etiquette. Sometimes they attempt to measure, by their limited

intelligence, truths that are beyond the scope of their limited sense perception, mind and intelligence. Certainly, Māyāvādīs are offenders to the Supreme Lord. What do they know of the wonderful varieties of bliss relished by a devotee? They are themselves mistaken and confused, and they therefore look upon the devotees of Bhagavān as similarly mistaken and confused. In fact, the whole world seems to be in illusion to them.

Only a jeweller can recognize a diamond, not a potter or one who deals in cooking-oil. Similarly, only the devotees of Bhagavān who know *bhakti-tattva* (the truths of devotion to Bhagavān) can recognize one endowed with *āsakti*. They can appreciate that this greatly fortunate person has attained the most essential thing – devotion to the Supreme Lord – and that now his life has become successful. Besides the devotees of Bhagavān, no one else can recognize the supremely fortunate soul in whom *āsakti* has arisen. Indifferent to honour and dishonour, such a person remains immersed in the current of the Mandākinī River of attachment to the Supreme Lord (*bhagavad-āsakti*). Manifesting various types of behaviour, he gradually advances toward the great ocean of *prema*.

**Thus ends the Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti
on the Sixth Shower of Nectar,
named Manohāriṇī
("Enchantment of the Heart").**

Seventh Shower of Nectar

Flow of Divine Rapture



Bhāva-bhakti

Text 1

1a ~ Bhāva, the sprouting of three potencies: sat, cit and ānanda

atha saivāsaktiḥ parama-pariṇāmaṁ prāptavatī raty-apara-paryāyo bhāva ity ākhyāṁ labhate | ya eva sac-cid-ānanda iti śakti-trikasya svarūpa-bhūtasya kandalī-bhāvaṁ bhajate |

Bhāvānuvāda: Thereafter, when *āsakti* becomes completely mature, it is known as *rati*. Another name for *rati* is *bhāva*. This *bhāva* is the budding stage of the three *svārūpa-śaktis*: eternality (*sat*), cognizance (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In its fully ripened state, *āsakti* transforms into *bhāva*. *Bhāva* is also called *rati*. *Bhāva* is the budding stage of the three *svārūpa-śaktis*: *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. In other words, it is the stage in which the three energies – *sandhinī*, *saṁvit* and *hlādinī* – sprout [in the heart of the *sādhaka*]. In delineating the symptoms of *bhāva*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said:

*śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā / prema-sūryāṁśu-sāmya-bhāk
rucibhiś citta-māsṛṇya- / kṛd asau bhāva ucyate*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.3.1)

When the heart has softened as a result of *ruci* (taste), *sādhana-bhakti* becomes *bhāva-bhakti*. This *bhāva-bhakti* is a special manifestation of *śuddha-sattva* (*śuddha-sattva-viśeṣa*). It is like a ray of the sun of *prema-bhakti*.

Bhāva, or *rati*, is the sprout of *sthāyī-bhāva*, *prema* and its transformations like *sneha*, *māna* and *praṇaya*. These transformations lead all the way to *mahābhāva*, the highest stage of *prema*. With the intention of establishing this, the intrinsic characteristics (*svārūpa-lakṣaṇa*) of *bhāva* are described

with the words *śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā* (“a special manifestation of *śuddha-sattva*”). And the marginal characteristics (*atastha-lakṣaṇa*) of *bhāva* are described using the terms *prema-sūryāmṣu-sāmya-bhāk* (“like a ray of the sun of *prema*”) and *rucibhiḥ citta-māṣṛṇya-kṛt* (“it softens the heart by various tastes”).

Śrī Bhagavān possesses three potencies: *sandhinī* (existence), *saṁvit* (cognizance) and *hlādinī* (bliss). Here, the term *śuddha-sattva-viśeṣa* refers to the essential portion of the cognizance potency (*saṁvit*) endowed with the essential function of the great potency known as *hlādinī*.

In his commentary on the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* verse, beginning *śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes as follows:

When, while practising the previously mentioned *sādhana-bhakti*, the heart melts with taste (*rucci*), meaning a desire to attain Kṛṣṇa (*bhagavaty-abhilāṣa*), a desire to do what is favourable for Kṛṣṇa (*anukūlyā-abhilāṣa*) and a desire to serve the Lord with intimacy (*sauhārdya-abhilāṣa*), it is to be understood that the *sādhaka* has attained the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*.

Bhāva-bhakti's intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) is *śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā*. The term *śuddha-sattva* indicates the self-manifesting cognitive function (*saṁvit-vṛtti*) of Bhagavān's internal potency. The term *śuddha-sattva-viśeṣa* indicates the spiritual pleasure potency (*hlādinī*), which is yet another great internal potency of Bhagavān. It is to be understood that *śuddha-sattva-viśeṣa* includes even the topmost stage of *hlādinī*, *mahābhāva*.

The supreme function, which is full of a desire to do what is beneficial for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is the essence of the combination of the *saṁvit* and *hlādinī* potencies, and which is situated in the heart of Bhagavān's eternal associates, being indistinguishably unified with the condition of their heart (*tādātmya-bhāva*), is known as *śuddha-sattva-viśeṣātmā*.

To reiterate in simple terms, the eternally perfect mood of service (*nitya-siddha-bhāva*), which resides in the heart of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s eternal associates, is called *śuddha-sattva-viśeṣa*. This *bhāva-bhakti* is like the first ray of the sun of *prema*. For this reason, it has also been called the sprout of *prema*.

In Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta (5.1), Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained the above-mentioned verse in a simple, straightforward way:

Prema-bhakti is the real fruit of *sādhana-bhakti*. This *prema-bhakti* has two stages: *bhāva* and *prema*. If *prema* is compared to the sun, then one can understand *bhāva* to be the initial ray of that sun. *Bhāva*, the *svarūpa* of which is *viśuddha-sattva* (sublimely pure existence), melts the heart of the *sādhaka* through *ruci*. The continuous cultivation of activities performed in a mood favourable to Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s well-being (*kṛṣṇa-anuśilana*) was previously described as a generic characteristic of *bhakti*, but when that same *kṛṣṇa-anuśilana* attains the nature of *viśuddha-sattva* and softens the heart of the *sādhaka* with *ruci*, it is known as *bhāva*.

When *bhāva* manifests in the disposition of the heart (*mano-vṛtti*), it attains oneness with it. Although in reality, *bhāva* is self-manifesting, it appears to be something that comes into being, because it manifests itself via the heart’s disposition. Although *rati*, another name for *bhāva*, itself is the object to be tasted, it is accepted as the cause by which one tastes the object (*viṣaya*) of *rati*, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Here it is to be understood that this *rati* is the ecstasy of spiritual reality (*cit-tattva*); it is not a *tattva* belonging to this inert material phenomenon. The attraction the conditioned living entities experience for inert objects is merely a perverted transformation of spiritual *rati* and is due to their contact with dull matter. When the *sādhaka* in this world cultivates devotional service to Bhagavān, that *rati*, through the *saṁvit* portion of the internal potency, becomes the cause of his relishing topics related to Bhagavān. And through the *hlādinī* aspect of the internal potency, *rati* bestows ecstasy (*āhlāda*) upon the *sādhaka*.

1b ~ Bhāva is rarely attained (sudurlabhā) & it makes liberation seem trifling (mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt)

yam eva khalu bhakti-kalpa-vallyā utphullam prasūnam ācakṣate | yasya ca bāhyaiva prabhā sarvaiḥ sudurlabhā ābhyantarī tu mokṣam api laghu-karoti | yasya ca paramāṇur eka eva tamaḥ samastam unmūlayati | yasya parimalaiḥ prasṛmaraiḥ madhusūdanam nimantryānīya tatra prakatī-kartum prabhūyate |

Bhāvānuvāda: Furthermore, this *bhāva* is said to be like the fully blossoming flower of the wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti*.

Indeed, the radiance (characteristic) of this flower is that it is most rarely obtained (*sudurlabhā*) and makes even liberation seem trifling (*mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt*). Even an atomic particle of this *bhāva* completely destroys the darkness of ignorance at the root. The flower of *bhāva* emanates a charming fragrance that invites Śrī Madhusūdana, causing Him to manifest directly before the devotee.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura also states that *bhāva*, or *rati*, is like the blossomed flower of the wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti*. The external brilliance of this flower of *bhāva* is *sudurlabhā*, meaning that *bhāva* is most rarely attained. By one's extensive practice of *sādhana* and by the mercy of *sādhu*, *guru* and Śrī Hari, one obtains the extremely rare wealth of *bhāva*. The internal brilliance of this flower is *mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt*, meaning that *bhāva* renders insignificant even the liberation *jñānis* and *yogīs* attain after great difficulty. Therefore, the two characteristics of *bhāva-bhakti* are *mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt* (it renders liberation insignificant) and *sudurlabhā* (it is rarely attained).

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said of *mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt*:

*manāg eva prarūḍhāyām / hṛdaye bhagavad-ratau
puruṣārthas tu catvārās / tṛṇāyante samantataḥ*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.33)

When *bhāva-bhakti* awakens in the heart even slightly, the four objects of human pursuit – namely, *dharma* (duty in accordance with religious principles), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (desire for sense pleasure) and *mokṣa* (emancipation) – appear as insignificant and worthless as straw.

He has quoted the following evidence from *Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra*:

*hari-bhakti-mahā-devyāḥ / sarvā muktādi-siddhayaḥ
bhuktayaś cādbhutās tasyās / ceṭikāvad anuvratāḥ*

quoted in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.34)

All types of liberation, all mystic perfections and all varieties of material enjoyment follow like maidservants behind the great queen Bhakti-devī.

In reference to the characteristic of *sudurlabhā*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said:

*sādhanaughair anāsaṅgair / alabhyā sucirād api
hariṇā cāśv adeyeti / dvidhā sā syāt sudurlabhā*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.1.35)

A person cannot obtain devotion to Śrī Hari even after forsaking attachment to material sense objects and engaging in numerous spiritual practices over an extended period of time. Moreover, Śrī Hari does not easily bestow *bhakti* to Him. For these two reasons, *hari-bhakti* is rarely obtained.

As long as one does not develop a deep attachment to attaining *prema-bhakti*, Śrī Hari does not bestow it. Upon attaining just one atomic particle of this *bhāva-bhakti*, the total darkness of ignorance and nescience in the heart is completely dispelled.

The fragrance of this transcendental flower of *bhāva* reaches the spiritual world, where its nectarous pollen invites Bhagavān Śrī Madhusūdāna to come and taste its honey, thus making Him appear before the devotee. In other words, a bumblebee becomes so attracted to the fragrance of a blossoming

flower that it becomes intoxicated by it. It approaches the flower and with great relish drinks its honey. Similarly, Bhagavān Śrī Madhusūdana is attracted to the fragrance emanating from the flower of *bhāva* within the heart of the devotee. He personally manifests in the devotee's heart and drinks the honey of that flower, thus becoming intoxicated.

1c ~ A heart melted with *bhāva* drenches the limbs of Bhagavān

kiṁ bahunā yair eva vāsītās citta-vṛtti-tila-vitatayo dravī-bhāvam āsādyā sadya eva bhagavad-aṅgam akhilam eva snehayituṁ योग्यातām dadhate | yaḥ khalv āvirbhavann eva svādhāraṁ śvapacam api brahmāder api namasyatvam āpādayati |

Bhāvānuvāda: What more can be said? The tendencies of the devotee's heart (*citta-vṛtti*) are like a heap of sesame seeds. *Bhāva* causes these tendencies to become fragrant and melt, becoming oil, and thus capable of immediately drenching all the limbs of Śrī Bhagavān with affection. When this *bhāva* manifests, it makes its recipient worshipful for Lord Brahmā and others, even if that recipient is a *caṇḍāla* (an outcaste dog-eater).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Moreover, this *bhāva* melts the devotee's heart [likened here to a heap of sesame seeds] so fully that Śrī Bhagavān's entire body is drenched with affection. This *bhāva* is so pure that it can manifest anywhere, irrespective of birth, even within the heart of an outcaste dog-eater, making that person worshipful for even Lord Brahmā.

1d ~ A vision of Bhagavān through all one's senses

udyotamāne ca asmin śyāmalimānaṁ vraja-mahendra-nandanasyāṅgānām eva, ārunyam tadīyādhara-netrāntāder eva, dhavalimānaṁ tadīya-vadana-smitacandrikāder eva, pītimānaṁ tad-ambara-bhūṣaṇāder eva leḍhum labdhāsanna-

*samayam iva valitotkaṅṭham bhaktasya nayana-dvandvam āsrubhir ajasram
 ātmānam abhisiñcet | gītaṁ tadīyaṁ muralyā eva śiñjitaṁ tadīya-nūpurāder
 eva, sausvaryam tadīya-kaṅṭhasyaiva, nideśam tac-caraṇa-paricaraṇasyaiva,
 tat-kṛtaṁ kam api svasyāvataṁsī-kartuṁ mṛgyad iva sthāne sthāne kṣaṇe kṣaṇe
 śravaṇa-dvayaṁ niścalī-bhavad unnamet | evam eva kīdrśo vā tad-ubhaya-
 kara-kīśalaya-sparśaḥ? iti tadaiva tam anubhavad iva gātraṁ romāñcitaṁ
 bhavet | tat-saurabhyam labhyamānam iva viduṣyau nāse praphulle kṣaṇe kṣaṇe
 śvāsam grhītvā paricicīṣetām | hanta sā phelā kiṁ me svādanīyā? iti tadaiva
 tām upalabhamāneva rasanāpy ullāsam dadhānāv oṣṭhādharau lihyāt | kadāpi
 tadīya sphūrtau tam sākṣāt prāptavad iva ceto hr̥ṣyet tan-mādhuryāśvāda-
 sampattyā mādyet tadaiva tat-tirobhāve viṣidet glāyed ity evaṁ sañcāri-bhāvair
 ātmānam alaṅkurvad iva śobheta |*

Bhāvānuvāda: When this *bhāva* awakens, the *jāta-rati-bhakta* (one in whom *bhāva* has arisen) relishes the darkish complexion of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s limbs, the reddish hue of His eyes and lips, the whitish brilliance emanating from His smiling, moon-like lotus face, and the yellow lustre of His cloth and ornaments. In this way, he experiences Śrī Kṛṣṇa as being near to him. The devotee’s voice becomes choked and he drenches his body in a continuous flow of tears.

Sometimes that devotee hankers to make as the ornaments of his ears the sweet sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s flute, the tinkling of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s ankle bells, the melodious speech emanating from Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s sweet voice and Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s direct order to serve His lotus feet. Searching them out, the devotee circumambulates different places, and time and again he stops, pricks his ears and stands motionless to try to perceive the sound.

Sometimes he wonders, “What will the touch of the lotus hands of Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa be like?” In his ecstasy, as if experiencing that touch, all the hairs on his body stand on end. He sometimes thinks he is experiencing the beautiful fragrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental body. Flaring his nostrils, he inhales time and again, in order to become familiar

with that fragrance. And sometimes he thinks, “Alas, alas! Will I ever be fortunate enough to taste the nectar of Śrī Śyāmasundara’s lips?”

His tongue then proceeds to lick his lips in immense happiness, as if they bear that nectar. Sometimes, within his heart, he obtains a momentary vision (*sphūrṭi*) of his beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Thinking that he has directly achieved Him, his heart begins to dance in happiness. At that time, he becomes delirious at the thought that he has attained the wealth of relishing Bhagavān’s sweetness. And again, when that momentary vision disappears, he becomes restless and full of lamentation.

Thus, such a devotee, in whose heart *bhāva* has awakened, decorates his soul with the various *sañcārī-bhāvas* [ecstatic emotions that rise and fall in the ocean of one’s eternal mood] and thus becomes beautifully situated.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: As if directly relishing the five sense objects related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa – His form, taste, bodily fragrance, voice and touch – the *sādhaka* in whom *bhāva* has awakened adorns himself with the ornaments of various ecstatic emotions. That devotee considers that he has attained close proximity to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is as if he were directly experiencing the sweetness of the beauty of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s dark complexion, the sweetness of the reddish hue of His lips and eyes, the whitish brilliance of the gentle smile on His moon-like lotus face, and the golden lustre of His cloth and ornaments. With great excitement, he bathes himself in the uninterrupted flow of tears pouring from his eyes.

Such a *sādhaka* desires to hear the sweet sound of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s flute, the tinkling of His ankle bells and waist-sash, the sound of His mellifluous voice, and His instructions to serve Him. The devotee thus pricks up his ears and focuses his hearing up and down, side to side. Sometimes, upon feeling the delicate, sweet touch of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus hands, the hair on his body stands on end. “Now I will attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa! Now I will attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa!” Such is his condition.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.1.9), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has stated, “*ratir ānanda-rūpaiva* – the stage at which *rati* (*bhāva*) awakens is verily the form of supreme bliss.” The *sādhaka* endowed with *rati* experiences unlimited jubilation by receiving an internal transcendental vision (*sphūrti*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes, upon attaining such a *sphūrti*, he becomes maddened, having tasted Bhagavān’s sweetness, and at other times, upon not receiving a *sphūrti* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he becomes exceedingly morose and depressed.

In this way, many *sañcārī-bhāvas* (transitory ecstatic emotions) like jubilation and despondency appear in the body of that *sādhaka*. Decorating himself with these *bhāvas*, he thus becomes beautifully adorned. One can observe the following thirty-three *sañcārī-bhāvas* in such a devotee:

(1) indifference – *nirveda*, (2) moroseness – *viṣāda*, (3) humility – *dainya*, (4) guilt – *glāni*, (5) fatigue – *śrama*, (6) intoxication – *mada*, (7) pride – *garva*, (8) doubt – *śaṅkā*, (9) apprehension – *trāsa*, (10) intense emotion – *āvega*, (11) madness – *unmāda*, (12) forgetfulness – *apasmṛti*, (13) disease – *vyādhi*, (14) bewilderment – *moha*, (15) death – *mṛtyu*, (16) laziness – *ālaya*, (17) inertia – *jāḍya*, (18) bashfulness – *vṛḍā*, (19) concealment of emotions – *avahitthā*, (20) remembrance – *smṛti*, (21) argumentativeness – *vitarka*, (22) contemplation – *cintā*, (23) attentiveness – *matī*, (24) patience – *dhṛti*, (25) jubilation – *harṣa*, (26) eagerness – *autsukya*, (27) fierceness – *augrya*, (28) anger – *amarṣa*, (29) jealousy – *asūyā*, (30) restlessness – *cāpalya*, (31) sleep – *nidrā*, (32) deep sleep – *supti* and (33) waking, or awareness – *bodha*.

It is only at the stage of *rati* that the devotee is truly called a *sādhaka*. The symptoms of a *sādhaka-bhakta* have been described in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.1.276):

utpanna-ratayah samyañ / nairvighnyam anupāgatāḥ
kṛṣṇa-sākṣāt-kṛtau योगyāḥ / sādhakāḥ parikīrtitāḥ

Those devotees in whom *kṛṣṇa-rati* has awakened but whose obstacles have not yet been completely eradicated, and who have attained the qualification to have direct audience of Kṛṣṇa, are known as *sādhakas*.

The following example from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.1.278) illustrates this: “O intelligent person, do not worry that the blazing flames of the forest fire [of material existence] continue to exist, despite your becoming drenched in tears that fell when you heard a river-like flow of narrations about Śrī Bhagavān. Extreme horripilation that resembles many fish dancing can be seen on your limbs, and thus it seems that very soon the black cloud (*kṛṣṇa-megha*), which is filled with a shower of mercy that destroys the hankering for [worldly] nectar, will arise in the sky of your heart.”

In other words, when tears flow in a continuous stream as a result of hearing narrations about Śrī Bhagavān, there is no need to worry about worldly bondage, because very soon Śrī Kṛṣṇa will bestow His mercy. At this stage of *rati*, *hari-kathā* tastes like nectar, and the desire for anything else vacates the heart.

1e ~ Remembrance of Bhagavān in wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep

buddhir apatantam evārtham avadhārayantī jāgrat-svapna-susuptiṣu tādīya-smṛti-vartmany eva pānthatvam adhyavasyet |

Bhāvānuvāda: The intelligence of the devotee who has attained *bhāva* is incessantly fixed on attaining his sole cherished goal. In each of the three states of consciousness – wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep – he remains a traveller on the path of constant remembrance of Śrī Bhagavān.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: The *jāta-rati-sādhaka* reaches a state in which remembrance of Śrī Hari proceeds in an uninterrupted manner (*dhruva-anusmṛti*). Since he receives an uninterrupted internal vision and continual realization of Vrajendra-nandana’s intrinsic beauty (*svarūpa-lāvanya*), whether he is asleep, awake or in deep sleep, he is always restless to obtain the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. His remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not break

for even a moment. Bhagavān Śrī Kapiladeva has described *dhruva-anusmṛti* as symptomatic of devotion that is beyond the three modes of material nature (*nirguṇa-bhakti*):

*mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa / mayi sarva-guhāśaye
mano-gatir avicchinnā / yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau*

lakṣaṇaṁ bhakti-yogasya / nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.29.11–12)

Just as the water of the Gaṅgā flows naturally toward the ocean, similarly, simply upon hearing about My transcendental qualities, the mind uninter- ruptedly flows like a stream of oil toward Me, the Supersoul dwelling in the heart of all living entities. This is the symptom of *nirguṇa-bhakti*.

The *jāta-rati-sādhaka*'s remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is never checked, whether he is awake, dreaming or in deep sleep. In the wakened state, the mind of ordinary persons remains absorbed in mundane forms, tastes, sounds and so on, but the mind of a *sādhaka* endowed with *rati* (*bhāva*) does not become attached to perishable, tasteless material affairs and objects. Rather, it remains continuously absorbed in thoughts of Bhagavān.

In the wakeful state, the external senses, such as the eyes, ears and nose, remain alert and active; therefore, the sense objects of this world, such as forms, fragrances and tastes, appear real, and what one wishes for remains a non-reality. But in the sleeping state, the five senses remain unconscious, so it is an opportune time for the brain to generate a wide variety of thoughts. In this state, the mind is detached from external activity, so it wanders within the subtle world, free from gross attractions. In the wakeful state, whatever images the mind takes in, due to its contact with the external senses, appear in the sleeping state in one's dreams.

Since the heart of the *sādhaka* who has developed *bhāva* is completely free from worldly concerns and worries, only the names, forms, qualities and

pastimes of Śrī Hari appear in the flow of his thoughts; worldly objects do not. Therefore, even in the dreams of a *jāta-rati-sādhaka*, Bhagavān's names, forms, qualities and pastimes appear naturally.

In the state of deep slumber, the gross senses as well as subtle designations – the mind, intelligence, heart and even the false ego – are completely asleep and thus remain inactive. Consequently, no thoughts enter the mind at that time. But remembrance of Bhagavān occurs in the soul of the *jāta-rati-sādhaka*, even in deep sleep.

If ~ A supremely pure sense of identity (“I”) and possessiveness (“mine”)

aham̐tā ca prāpsyamāne sevopayogini siddha-dehe praviśantīva sādḥaka-śarīraṁ prāyo jahātīva virājeta | mamatā ca tac-caraṇāravinda-makaranda eva madhukarī-bhavitum upakrameteti |

Bhāvānuvāda: At this stage, the devotee's conception of his self (*aham̐tā*) enters his perfected spiritual body (*siddha-deha*), which is suitable for his cherished service to Bhagavān and which he will attain at *vastu-siddhi*. That devotee continues to live in this world, having almost given up the body in which he is performing *sādhana* (*sādḥaka-deha*). His feeling of possessiveness (*mamatā*) in regard to Śrī Kṛṣṇa awakens by begging for the honey of His lotus feet.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The two states of *aham̐tā*, a sense of identity (“I”), and *mamatā*, a sense of possessiveness (“mine”), attach themselves to the body and the objects related to the body. In other words, when the living entity cultivates the false ego that his present body, which is made of five material elements [earth, water, fire, air and ether], is his real self (or “I”) and that his wife, children and other comforts for sense gratification are “mine”, the resulting condition is known as material existence. The *brahma-jñānīs*

(those endowed with knowledge of *brahma*) burn these two tendencies, due to which they feel a false sense of proprietorship, in the fire of knowledge, and thus they become liberated.

The living entity’s practice of *bhakti* awakens his pure nature as a servant of Bhagavān. In other words, it awakens his perfected, eternal identity. The *sādhaka* now performs the limbs (*aṅgas*) of *bhakti*, such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, with this self-conception. The perfected eternal identity of the devotee in whom *bhāva* has arisen automatically manifests as a momentary vision (*sphūrti*) in his heart. His perfect self-conception matures to such an extent that, although he remains in this world, he almost completely renounces [no longer identifies with] his present body as a *sādhaka*. His sense of possessiveness is absorbed in relishing the nectar-honey of the lotus feet of the Divine Couple, just as a bumblebee is absorbed in relishing pollen.

The *sādhaka* who has developed *bhāva* becomes almost completely free from a sense of identity (“I”) in relation to his material body, which is made of five elements. He also becomes almost entirely free from a sense of possessiveness for anything related to it (“mine”). To maintain a conception of “I” and “mine” in relation to this material body is the bodily conception of life. The *jāta-rati-sādhaka* becomes free from this misconception.

However, his true conception of “I” really deepens only in his perfected spiritual body, his *siddha-deha*, which is fully suitable for serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A material body cannot render transcendental service to the divine Personality of Godhead. On achieving complete perfection in *sādhana*, the *sādhaka* receives a spiritual body known as the *siddha-deha*, which is fit for rendering direct service to Bhagavān. While meditating on this *siddha-deha*, the *sādhaka* renders service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa that nurtures his desired mood. That body is also called *antaś-cintita-deha*, or the internally contemplated spiritual body. The spiritual body of those on the path of ardent, spontaneous devotion (*rāgānuga-mārga*) in *madhura-bhāva* is that of a young cowherd maiden [of Vṛndāvana]. In this process of worship, the *sādhaka* maintains the

self-conception of being a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. The *jāta-rati-bhakta* regards this perfected body as his real identity and becomes almost free from identifying with his present body. A strong sense of possessiveness (*mamatā*) for serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet awakens within him.

**1g ~ Despite attempting to conceal the jewel of bhāva,
it is identified by the learned**

sa ca bhaktaḥ prāptaṁ mahā-ratnaṁ kṛpāṇa iva janebhyo bhāvaṁ gopayann api kṣānti-vairāgyādīnāṁ āspadī-bhavan lasal-lalāṭam evāntardhanaṁ kathayatīti nyāyena tad-vijñā-sādhu-goṣṭhyāṁ vidito bhaved anyatra tu vikṣipta ity unmatta iti sajjata iti durlakṣyatām gacchet || 1 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: At this stage, the devotee behaves like a miser who has attained the great jewel of *bhāva* and is attempting to hide that *bhāva* from others. But just as a bright forehead indicates internal wealth, the characteristics that take shelter of him, such as tolerance and renunciation, allow learned saintly persons to identify a devotee who has reached the stage of *bhāva* (the *jāta-rati-bhakta*). However, since to the general populace he appears to be deranged and intoxicated, ordinary people cannot easily identify his actual spiritual position.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The devotee conceals his internal mood, but when *rati* awakens, many symptoms manifest in him that he cannot conceal, despite his endeavour. Persons who know the conclusive truth about devotional service (*bhakti-tattva*) easily identify those symptoms, but ordinary persons, who lack knowledge of *bhakti*, cannot. Rather, due to their misunderstanding, they consider such a devotee to be insane and intoxicated.

In *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.3.25–26), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described some of the symptoms of the *jāta-rati-bhaktas*:

*kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvaṁ / viraktir māna-sūnyatā
āśā-bandhaḥ samutkañṭhā / nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ*

*āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāne / prītis tad-vasati-sthale
ity ādayo ’nubhāvāḥ syur / jāta-bhāvānkure jane*

The following nine symptoms manifest in the heart of a *sādhaka* in whom *bhāva*, or the sprout of *prema-bhakti*, has arisen: (1) *kṣānti* – forbearance, (2) *avyārtha-kālatva* – not wasting any time, (3) *virakti* – detachment from worldliness, (4) *māna-sūnyatā* – freedom from pride, (5) *āśā-bandhaḥ* – firm hope of receiving Bhagavān’s grace, (6) *samutkañṭhā* – longing for one’s desired object (Śrī Bhagavān), (7) *nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ* – a perpetual taste for chanting Bhagavān’s holy name, (8) *āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāne* – attachment to narrations of the divine qualities of Bhagavān and (9) *prītis tad-vasati-sthale* – love for the pastime places of Bhagavān.

When the mind remains undisturbed in the face of all reason to become angry or agitated it is called *kṣānti* (forbearance). An expertise in avoiding entanglement in the various worldly activities of sense gratification and in using one’s time exclusively in *bhagavad-bhajana* is known as *avyārtha-kālatva* (a concern that time should not be wasted). A natural distaste for sense objects such as mundane sound and touch is known as *virakti* (renunciation). Absence of false ego, despite being endowed with excellence, is called *māna-sūnyatā* (absence of pride). The strong expectation that one will most certainly attain one’s cherished desire of service to the lotus feet of Bhagavān is called *āśā-bandha* (firm hope). The strong greed to attain one’s desired object is known as *samutkañṭhā* (great eagerness). Ardent, loving attachment to chanting *nāma-saṅkīrtana* is called *nāma-gāne sadā ruci*. A natural attachment to narrations of the sweet names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Bhagavān is called *āsaktis tad-guṇākhyāne*. A strong desire to live in the places where Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has performed His pastimes, such as Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, is called *prītis tad-vasati-sthale*.

These symptoms are seen in *sādhakas* as soon as the mere sprout of this *rati* awakens in their heart. A person may display the symptoms of shedding tears or horripilation, but if the above-mentioned nine symptoms do not manifest in him, then it is to be understood that *rati* has not yet awakened.

It is the softening of the heart that is the actual root symptom of *rati*. In certain circumstances, one may see symptoms such as tears and horripilation in *karmīs*, who desire enjoyment, and in *jñānīs*, who desire liberation, but they should not be mistaken as indications of *rati*. Rather, one should regard them as the mere semblance of *rati* (*raty-ābhāsa*).

Raty-ābhāsa is of two types: a reflection of the semblance of *rati* (*pratibimbaraty-ābhāsa*) and a shadow of the semblance of *rati* (*chāyā-raty-ābhāsa*). When symptoms such as shedding tears and horripilation are observed in persons who desire material enjoyment and liberation, such symptoms are to be regarded as *pratibimbaraty-ābhāsa*. If one observes that persons who are ignorant have developed these same symptoms due to their association with devotees, one should understand such symptoms to be *chāyā-raty-ābhāsa*.

Sometimes, we observe that those who by nature “wear their heart on their sleeve” will shed tears upon hearing narrations of Śrī Bhagavān’s pastimes. Others practise how to display false symptoms, such as tears, horripilation and shivering, in an endeavour to deceive others. Neither qualifies as *raty-ābhāsa*. On the other hand, the symptoms of tears and horripilation may not be observed in devotees whose hearts are grave, even though *rati* has awakened within them.

It is therefore to be understood that the above-mentioned nine *anubhāvas* such as forbearance (*kṣānti*) are the true symptoms of the awakening of *rati*. Experienced, realized saints can discern this awakening by noticing these symptoms in the *sādhaka*. Since ordinary, ignorant people view such devotees as totally mad or intoxicated, they are unable to perceive their true spiritual position.

Text 2

2a ~ Bhāva that arises through rāga-bhakti & bhāva that arises through vaidhī-bhakti

sa ca bhāvo rāga-bhakti-uttho vaidha-bhakti-uttha iti dvi-vidhaḥ | ādyo jāti-pramāṇābhyām ādhikyena mahima-jñānānādareṇa bhagavati sāmānyādhikyāc ca sāndraḥ | dvitīyaḥ tābhyām prathamataḥ kiñcin nyūnatvena aiśvarya-jñāna-viddha-mamatāvattvāc cāsāndraḥ | prāyo dvi-vidha evāyam bhāvo dvi-vidhānām bhaktānām dvi-vidha-cid-vāsanā-sanātheṣu hṛdayeṣu sphuraṇ dvi-vidhāsādyatvam bhajate |

Bhāvānuvāda: *Bhāva*, also, is of two types: (1) *rāga-bhakti-uttha* (awakened by following the process of ardent, spontaneous devotion) and (2) *vaidha-bhakti-uttha* (awakened by following the process of regulative devotion). The first type, *rāga-bhakti-uttha-bhāva*, is intense in both quality and magnitude, because there is no veneration of Bhagavān’s Godhood or dominion, nor knowledge of His other glories as described in the scriptures. In this way, the mood of considering oneself equal to or greater than Him makes this *bhāva* very condensed.

The second type, *vaidha-bhakti-uttha-bhāva*, is in both quality and magnitude somewhat inferior to the first. Since knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān’s divine majesty undermines one’s sense of possessiveness (*mamatā*) for Him – that is, weakens it – this second type of *bhāva* is not as condensed as the first.

These two *bhāvas* manifest respectively in the hearts of the two types of devotees who have either of these spiritual aspirations, and they relish them in two separate ways.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: *Sādhana-bhakti* (the practice of devotion) is of two types: (1) ardent, spontaneous devotion (*rāga-bhakti*) and (2) regulative devotion (*vaidhī-bhakti*).

Rāga-bhakti is filled with greed (*lobha-mayī*), whereas *vaidhī-bhakti* is impelled by the instructions of the scriptures (*śāstra-śāsana-mayī*). In this way, *bhāva* is also of two types: (1) awakened by spontaneous devotion (*rāga-bhakti*) and (2) awakened by regulative devotion (*vaidhī-bhakti*).

In terms of quality and magnitude, *bhāva* awakened by *rāga-bhakti* is far superior to the second type of *bhāva*, which is awakened by the practice of *vaidhī-bhakti*. In *vaidhī-bhakti*, the practitioner regards Bhagavān as the Supreme Controller, and thus develops a mood of awe and reverence toward Him. He is therefore unable to relish Bhagavān in an unobstructed manner. Any feelings of possessiveness (*mamatā*) such a devotee has for Śrī Hari are impeded by knowledge of His divine majesty.

In *rāga-bhakti*, however, knowledge that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Controller does not arise in the devotee. As a result, that devotee's affection for Him is devoid of feelings of awe and reverence. Their relationship is likened to the affectionate relationship between near and dear ones in this material world: “*mora putra, mora sakhā, mora prāṇa-pati* – Kṛṣṇa is my son, Kṛṣṇa is my friend, Kṛṣṇa is my dear most beloved” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 4.21). Consequently, such devotees taste His sweetness without constraint.

In this way, two types of *bhāva* awaken – either by the practice of *vaidhī-bhakti* or by the practice of *rāga-bhakti* – in devotees whose hearts are filled with the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord, thus enabling them to taste Bhagavān's sweetness according to their respective inclinations.

The import is that the type of *bhāva* that arises through the practice of regulated devotion (*vaidhī-bhakti*) is not so condensed, because it has (1) a proclivity for devotion born of a fear of transgressing scriptural injunctions and (2) a love that is mixed with knowledge of Bhagavān's divine majesty.

Since in this type of devotional service, knowledge of Śrī Bhagavān's majesty is present in the *sādhaka's* heart, his feeling of possessiveness (*mamatā*) for Him is slackened. A feeling of hesitancy stays in the heart of the *sādhaka*, and he remains ever-dependent on the rules and regulations of the scriptures. Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān is never controlled by such *vaidhī-bhakti*.

The scriptures supply hardly any evidence of devotees who obtained Śrī Kṛṣṇa by practising *vaidhī-bhakti*. The *bhāva* that is awakened by this *vaidhī-bhakti* is therefore not accepted as being concentrated.

Devotees belong to one of these two distinct categories, based on the path of devotional service they undertake. They are either followers of *rāga-bhakti* or *vaidhī-bhakti*. These two types of devotees maintain different spiritual aspirations of heart.

The heartfelt aspiration of the devotee on the path of *rāga-bhakti* is free from any scent of desire for personal happiness and consists entirely of concern for Śrī Kṛṣṇa's happiness. On the other hand, a desire for personal happiness is prevalent in the heart of the devotee on the path of *vaidhī-bhakti*. The culmination of his heart's aspiration is to become free from worldly miseries or to obtain liberation [from material identification]. Therefore, according to these different aspirations of heart, two different types of *bhāva* manifest. The respective devotees relish these two *bhāvas* differently.

2b ~ Categories of bhāva

*ghana-rasa iva rasāla-panasekṣu-drākṣādiṣu praviṣṭaḥ pṛthak pṛtham
mādhuryavattvam bhajate | te ca bhaktāḥ śānta-dāsa-sakhi-pitr-preyasī-
bhāvavantaḥ pañca-vidhāḥ syuḥ | tatra śānteṣu śāntir iti dāseṣu pṛtir iti sakhiṣu
sakhyam iti pitṛ-bhāvavatsu vātsalyam iti preyasī-bhāvavatsu priyateti nāma-
bhedam api |*

Bhāvānuvāda: Just as condensed *rasa* enters mangoes, jackfruits, grapes, sugar cane and so forth, thus giving each a unique flavour and sweetness, similarly, devotees are of five categories, according to the speciality of the *bhāva* they possess: *śānta* (passivity), *dāsyā* (servitude), *sakhyā* (friendship), *vātsalyā* (parenthood) or *preyasī* (amour).

Those in the mood of neutrality experience *śānti* (tranquility), those in the mood of affectionate servitude experience *pṛīti* (affection), those in

the mood of friendship experience *sakhya* (friendship), parents or elders experience *vātsalya* (parental affection) and the beloved damsels (*preyasīs*) experience *priyatā* (transcendental amorous love).

In this way, the distinct nomenclature for each of the *bhāvas* is given.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The *bhaktas* possess different types of aspiration to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which are generally accepted as being of five types: (1) passivity (*śānta*), (2) servitude (*dāśya*), (3) friendship (*sakhya*), (4) paternal affection (*vātsalya*) and (5) amorous love (*madhura*).

- (1) *Śānta-bhāva* (the mood of neutrality) – Devotees of this first type have *niṣṭhā* only in the intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*) of Bhagavān. In other words, they accept Him as Parabrahma (the Absolute Truth) and as Paramātmā (the Supersoul). They are thus called *śānta-bhaktas*.
- (2) *Dāśya-bhāva* (the mood of servitorship) – Devotees of the second type regard Parabrahma Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is replete with six opulences [wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation] as their Lord. Along with having fixed faith in Kṛṣṇa like those with *śānta-bhāva*, they also possess the speciality of a “master-servant” relationship with Bhagavān. They regard Kṛṣṇa as their transcendental master. Their mood toward Him is known as *dāśya-bhāva*.
- (3) *Sakhya-bhāva* (the mood of friendship) – Devotees with an aspiration for this third type of *bhāva* regard Śrī Kṛṣṇa as their friend. They are devoid of the mood of awe and reverence, in which one thinks, “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is my superior and He is worshipful.” They already possess the two qualities of *śānta-bhāva* and *dāśya-bhāva*, that is, fixed faith in Śrī Kṛṣṇa and a natural disposition to serve Him, respectively. Moreover, they also have a mood of equality with Kṛṣṇa that is filled with deep trust. Their dealings with Śrī Kṛṣṇa are just like those of friends. Their mood is thus called *sakhya-bhāva*.

- (4) *Vātsalya-bhāva* (the mood of parental affection) – Devotees of the fourth type consider Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be the object of their tender caresses and nurturance. They regard Him as their child and maintain a feeling of extreme possessiveness for Him. Considering Him to be their son, they nurture and protect Him. Seeing His restlessness, they sometimes chastise Him and sometimes even tie Him up. As well as possessing the qualities of fixed faith in Śrī Kṛṣṇa [as seen in *śānta-bhāva*], servitude [as seen in *dāsyā-bhāva*], and unrestricted love bereft of feelings of hesitancy, awe and reverence [as seen in *sakhya-bhāva*], they additionally possess the mood of being Kṛṣṇa’s maintainer and nurturer, and it is this that predominates. Their mood is thus called *vātsalya-bhāva*.
- (5) *Madhura-bhāva* (the mood of amorous love) – Devotees of the fifth type not only possess all the four qualities mentioned above, but they also serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa with all their bodily limbs. They are known as Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s beloved sweethearts, or *kāntās*. Their mood is called *madhura-bhāva*.

Thus, there are five different types of devotees based on differences in devotional sentiments. Just as there is an increasing degree of intensity in the taste and sweetness of grapes, sugar cane, jackfruit and mango, similarly, the sweetness relished and the inherent qualities present in *śānta-bhāva* are superior in *dāsyā-bhāva*. This progression continues from *dāsyā-bhāva* to *sakhya-bhāva*, from *sakhya-bhāva* to *vātsalya-bhāva*, and finally from *vātsalya-bhāva* to *kāntā-bhāva* (*madhura-bhāva*).

The following question may be raised: “If there is a gradation of relish among the *rasas* starting with *śānta*, would not everyone be inclined toward the most excellent *madhura-rati*, and would not all other *rasas* thus be deemed worthless? We see that everyone has an inclination for the topmost object.” In answer to this, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says:

yathottaram asau svāda- / viṣeṣollāsa-māyā api
ratir vāsanayā svādvī / bhāsate kāpi kasyacit

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (2.5.38)

Although the nectarean taste of *rasa* is relished more in *dāsyā-rati* than in *śānta-rati*, more in *sakhya-rati* than in *dāsyā-rati*, more in *vātsalya-rati* than in *sakhya-rati*, and more in *madhura-rati* than in *vātsalya-rati*, still the devotee develops a relish for one *rati* only, according to his previous aspirations, or impressions.

According to his past impressions, a person may be attracted to one of the six tastes, such as sweet, sour or bitter, and not have any taste for the others. Similarly, a devotee may develop relish for one of the moods of devotional service, such as *dāsyā-bhāva*, due to his past desires and his receiving, in this life, the special mercy of a great personality who has the same *bhāva* as he has.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī writes in his commentary on the above-mentioned verse that the relish the devotee experiences in the mood of passivity (*śānta*) increases progressively in the moods of servitude (*dāsyā*), friendship (*sakhya*) and so on, yet he develops an affinity for one particular mood, according to his taste.

A doubt may arise here: Who will discern the superiority or inferiority of the different types of *rati*? Those who have no aspiration at all or those who are aspiring for just one *rasa* are unable to ascertain which is superior and which is inferior, because they have not relished the other *rasas*. Those who are full of multitudinous aspirations relish many *rasas*, and thus they, also, have no ability to discern this. But that person who is totally immersed in just one *rasa* is capable of doing so. The reason for this is as follows: Although a person may not have tasted other *rasas*, he will nevertheless understand the features of another *rasa*, by comparing its distinguishing characteristics with his own. By this he can conclude which factors nourish or impede that *rasa*.

For example, Śrī Uddhava is a devotee endowed with *dāsyā-rasa* mixed with *sakhyā-rasa*. Because his feelings of servitude are prominent, he is known as a *dāsyā-bhakta*. Absorbed in his own *rasa*, he witnessed the abundant, extraordinary spiritual emotions of the beautiful damsels of Vraja in *madhura-rati*. He thus surmised that their attachment is the topmost and therefore prayed to take birth in Vṛndāvana as a blade of grass or a shrub, so that he may obtain a particle of their foot-dust. This has been described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.47).

Thus, the different types of *rati*, or attachment, have been given different names. In the devotees with a neutral mood there is *śānta-rati*, in the servants of Kṛṣṇa there is *prīti-rati* [*dāsyā-rati*], in the friends of Kṛṣṇa there is *sakhyā-rati*, in the parents of Kṛṣṇa there is *vātsalya-rati*, and in the lovers of Kṛṣṇa there is *priyatā-rati* [*madhura-rati*].

2c ~ Transformation of bhāva into sthāyi-bhāva and rasa

punaś cāyaṃ sva-śaktair āvirbhāvitair vibhāvānubhāva-vyabhicāribhir ātmeva rājeva vā prakṛtibhir udbhūtaiśvaryaḥ sthāyīti nāmnā vaiśiṣṭyaṃ gacchan tair militaḥ śānta iti dāsyam iti sakhyam iti vātsalyam iti ujjala iti labdha-vibhedo raso bhavati |

Bhāvānuvāda: Furthermore, these five *bhāvas*, by dint of their respective powers, acquire *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika-bhāva* and *vyabhicārī-bhāva* as their subjects, along with the opulences coming from them. These five *bhāvas* then become kings known as *sthāyi-bhāvas* (permanent emotions). In association with their respective subjects such as *vibhāva*, these *sthāyi-bhāvas* transform into the following five *rasas* with their distinctive specialities: (1) *śānta-rasa*, (2) *dāsyā-rasa*, (3) *sakhyā-rasa*, (4) *vātsalya-rasa* and (5) *ujjala-rasa*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Here, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Thākura is describing how transcendental attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*śrī kṛṣṇa-rati*) transforms into *rasa*. The previously mentioned five types of *rati* – namely, *śānta-rati*, *pṛīti-rati*, *sakhya-rati*, *vātsalya-rati*, and *priyatā-rati* – act like independent monarchs. Through their own respective potencies, they mix with their subjects – *vibhāvas* [which stimulate *rati*, one’s inherent relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and thus cause it to be tasted], *anubhāvas* [visible symptoms that illustrate the spiritual emotions situated within the heart], *sāttvika-bhāvas* [eight symptoms of spiritual ecstasy arising exclusively from *viśuddha-sattva*] and *sañcārī-bhāvas*, or *vyabhicārī-bhāvas* [internal transitory emotions, which arise like waves from the ocean of the *sthāyi-bhāva*, enhance it and then submerge once again into the *sthāyi-bhāva*] – and transform into the following five *rasas*, respectively: (1) *śānta-rasa*, (2) *dāsyā-rasa*, (3) *sakhya-rasa*, (4) *vātsalya-rasa* and (5) *ujjala-rasa*.

*aviruddhān viruddhānś ca / bhāvān yo vaśatām nayan
su-rājeva virājeta / sa sthāyī bhāva ucyate*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (2.5.1)

That *bhāva* which is resplendent like the best of kings, keeping under its control compatible emotions (*aviruddha*) such as laughter, and incompatible emotions (*viruddha*) such as anger and so on, is known as *sthāyi-bhāva*.

sthāyi-bhāvo ’tra sa proktaḥ / śrī-kṛṣṇa-ṣayā ratih

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (2.5.2)

Only the attachment that has Śrī Kṛṣṇa as its sole object is termed *sthāyi-bhāva* (permanent ecstasy).

*vibhāvair anubhāvaiś ca / sāttvikair vyabhicāribhiḥ
svādyatvaṁ hr̥di bhaktānām / ānītā śravaṇādibhiḥ
eṣā kṛṣṇa-rati-sthāyi- / bhāvo bhakti-raso bhavet*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (2.1.5)

When the devotee situated at the stage of *kṛṣṇa-rati* practises the limbs of devotional service such as hearing, the *sthāyi-bhāva* in his heart mixes with (1) *vibhāvas*, (2) *anubhāvas*, (3) *sāttvika-bhāvas* and (4) *sañcārī-bhāvas*, or *vyabhicārī-bhāvas*. The resulting relish he experiences in his heart is known as *bhakti-rasa*. Thus, this *kṛṣṇa-rati*, otherwise known as *sthāyi-bhāva*, becomes *bhakti-rasa*.

In the gradual maturation of this *rati*, it acquires different names, such as *prema*, *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga* and *mahābhāva*. All of these are the *sthāyi-bhāva* of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*. When the *sthāyi-bhāva* mixes with *vibhāva* and other ingredients of *rasa*, it creates *bhakti-rasa*, which is a most astonishing, relishable state. In His teachings to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

*sādhana-bhakti haite haya ‘rati’ra udaya
rati gāḍha haile tāra ‘prema’ nāma kaya*

*prema vṛddhi-krame nāma—sneha, mān, praṇaya
rāga, anurāga, bhāva, mahābhāva haya*

*jaiche bīja, ikṣu-rasa, guḍa, khaṇḍa-sāra
śarkarā, sitā-michari, uttama-michari āra*

*ei saba kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rase sthāyi-bhāva
sthāyi-bhāve mile jadi vibhāva, anubhāva*

*sāttvika-vyabhicārī-bhāvera milane
kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa hay amṛta āsvādane*

*jaiche dadhi, sitā, ghr̥ta, marīca, karpūra
milane ‘rasālā’ haya amṛta madhura*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 19.177–182)

When one engages in *sādhana-bhakti*, ecstatic attachment (*rati*) to Śrī Kṛṣṇa awakens within him. When *rati* condenses, it is called *prema*.

When *prema* swells, its different stages take the names *sneha*, *māna*, *pranaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva* and *mahābhāva*. This gradual development of *prema* may be compared to different states of sugar. The sugar cane seed transforms into sugar cane, then sugar cane juice, then liquid molasses, then solid molasses, then sugar, then candy, then rock candy and finally lozenges. In the same way, all these states of *prema* are the permanent moods (*sthāyi-bhāvas*) of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*, which becomes as relishable as nectar when these *sthāyi-bhāvas* mix with *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* and other ingredients of *rasa*. It can be likened to mixing yoghurt, sugar-candy, ghee, black pepper and camphor to produce a drink that is sweet like nectar.

Vibhāva [in which *rati* is tasted and which causes *rati* to be tasted] is of two types: (1) *ālambana* [the support, or basis, of *rati*, one's eternal mood] and (2) *uddīpana* [a stimulus for remembrance].

Ālambana is also of two types: (1) *viṣaya-ālambana* (the object of love) and (2) *āśraya-ālambana* (the reservoir of love).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself is the *viṣaya-ālambana* of *bhakti-rasa*, because the *bhakti* that resides in the heart of the devotee is set in motion by Śrī Kṛṣṇa's being the object of that *bhakti*. And the devotee is the *āśraya-ālambana* because the devotee is the abode of *bhakti*.

Furthermore, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa shows affection to a devotee, He becomes the *āśraya-ālambana* of the devotee's *rati*, and the devotee becomes the *viṣaya-ālambana*.

The flute-song, the clouds and the peacock feather are *uddīpana-vibhāva*, meaning they stimulate *kṛṣṇa-rati*. Dancing (*nṛtya*), rolling on the ground (*viluṅthana*), singing (*gāna*) and crying out loudly (*krośana*) are *anubhāvas*, which reveal the feelings within the heart.

The *aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāvas*, such as shedding tears and horripilation, are also *anubhāvas*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has not herein mentioned the names of the various *sāttvika-bhāvas*, but the compilers of the various

rasa-sāstras have categorized these ecstasies separately and named them *sāttvika-bhāvas*. They have done so because the group of *anubhāvas* such as dancing and rolling on the ground may manifest deliberately, whereas tears, horripilation and so forth manifest involuntarily when emotions overwhelm the heart. All the *bhāvas* that manifest from *sattva* (pure consciousness) are known as *sāttvika-bhāvas*.

Although actions such as dancing arise from *sattva*, because they are impelled by the function of the intelligence, they are not regarded as *sāttvika-bhāvas*. However, becoming stunned and so forth manifest on their own, and therefore they are included in the *sāttvika-bhāvas*. Still, including actions like dancing among the *sāttvika-bhāvas* does not result in the fault of *ati-vyāpti* (an unwarrantable stretch of a definition or principle).

Thirty-three symptoms – jubilation, detachment and so forth – are called *sañcārī-* or *vyabhicārī-bhāvas*. They are known as *sañcārī-bhāvas* because they empower the momentum of the *sthāyi-bhāva*. These *sañcārī-bhāvas* manifest like waves in the nectarous ocean of *sthāyi-bhāva*. They make that ocean of *rasa* swell and finally merge back into it. The *sthāyi-bhāva*, or *kṛṣṇa-rati*, becomes *rasa* only when it mixes with the four different ingredients such as *vibhāva* and *anubhāva*.

It is not true that when *rati* awakens in someone’s heart he will be able to taste *rasa*. The ability to taste *rasa* depends upon impressions from previous lifetimes. It is said in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.1.6):

*prāktany ādhunikī cāsti / yasya sad-bhakti-vāsanā
eṣa bhakti-rasāsvādas / tasyaiva hr̥di jāyate*

Only the devotees who have desired pure devotion in many previous lives and also in this life can relish the mellow of devotion (*bhakti-rasa*) in their heart.

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has written:

*prāktanī vāsanā tu raty-āsvāde 'vaśyam apekṣitā, ataeva ekasminn eva
janmani daivān niraparādhai guru-pādāśrayaṇādibhir janais tasminn
eva janmani ratau jātāyām api tasyāḥ āsvādaḥ kintu janmāntara iti
bodhyam |*

The existence of *rati* indeed indicates the presence of a recent aspiration for *bhakti*. However, *rati* also depends upon desiring *bhakti* for lifetimes for it to transform into *rasa*. It is then that it becomes relishable. If someone who is free from offences and who engages in *bhajana* by taking complete shelter of the lotus feet of *śrī guru* attains *rati* in this very birth, it is to be understood that it is in some future lifetime that he will be able to relish *rasa*.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has described the *sādhana* leading to the development of *rasa*, the factors that assist the awakening of *rasa* and the method of developing *rasa*:

*bhakti-nirdhūta-doṣāṇām / prasannojjvala-cetasām
śrī-bhāgavata-raktānām / rasikā-saṅga-raṅgiṇām*

*jīvanī-bhūta-govinda- / pāda-bhakti-sukha-śriyām
premāntaraṅga-bhūtāni / krtyāny evānutiṣṭhatām*

*bhaktānām hṛdi rājantī / saṁskāra-yugalōjjvalā
ratir ānanda-rūpaiva / nīyamānā tu rasyatām*

*kṛṣṇādibhir vibhāvādyair / gatair anubhavādhvani
prauḍhānanda-camatkāra- / kāṣṭhām āpadyate parām*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (2.1.7–10)

Those who, by the influence of *bhakti*, have had all their inauspiciousness completely washed away; whose hearts have consequently become full of delight (eligible for *śuddha-sattva*) and radiant (fully enriched with knowledge); who are always deeply attached to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*;

who feel perpetual delight in associating with *rasika-bhaktas*; who treasure the happiness of rendering devotional service to the lotus feet of Śrī Govinda, which is as dear to them as their own life; who always remain absorbed in the confidential *sādhana* of developing *prema*, such as *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa*; and whose hearts shine with desires for *bhakti* from their previous lives and from their current life – for them, the bliss of *rati* combines with direct experience of the combination of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, etc. and becomes highly relishable, thus attaining the pinnacle of condensed bliss.

2d ~ Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the foundation of all rasas

*yo hi “raso vai saḥ” “rasam hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati” iti śruty-ābhidhīyate |
 ayam anyatrāvatāre ’vatāriṇi vā sambhavann api svayaṁ sampūrtimānaṁ
 tatra tatrālabhamāno vrajendra-nandana eva svakāṣṭhām labhate | nada-nadī-
 tadāgādiṣu sambhavann api yathā samudra eva jala-nidhitvam | yo hi bhāvasya
 prathama-parīnatāv eva utpadyamāna eva premaṇi mūrta eva rasaḥ sāksād eva
 tadvatā bhaktenānubhūyata iti || 2 ||*

*iti mādhyā-kādambinyām paramānanda-niṣyandinī nāmā saptamy amṛta-
 vrṣṭiḥ || 7 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: The Śrutis (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7.1) have also declared, “The Original Personality of Godhead (Svayaṁ Bhagavān) is the very embodiment of the nectar of all transcendental *rasas*. The living entity attains real happiness by obtaining Him.”

Water is present in streams, rivers and reservoirs. Nevertheless, the ocean is the ultimate reservoir of all water. Similarly, although other manifestations of Śrī Bhagavān [Matsya, Kūrma and so on] and sources of such manifestations possess *rasa*, it does not attain complete perfection in Them. *Rasa* attains its perfection only in the personality of Vrajendra-nandana

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the source of all sources of incarnations. That very Svayam Bhagavān, Śrī Vrajendra-nandana, manifests in the heart of the *sādhaka* at the very first stage of the transformation of *bhāva*. At the stage of *prema*, however, Śrī Vrajendra-nandana is fully realized as the direct embodiment of all *rasas* by devotees who are *rasika* (expert in relishing transcendental *rasa*).

**Thus ends the Bhāvānuvāda
of the Seventh Shower of Nectar,
named Paramānanda-niṣyandinī
("Flow of Divine Rapture").**

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: The Śrutis, while presenting the nature (*svarūpa*) of Bhagavān, have declared Him to be the very embodiment of *rasa*, through the following aphorisms: “*raso vai saḥ* – the Supreme Absolute Truth is the reservoir of *rasa*” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7.1), “*prajñānānandam brahma* – the Supreme Lord is full of knowledge and bliss,” and “*ānando brahmeti vyajānāt* – the Supreme Lord is composed of transcendental bliss” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 3.6.1).

Similarly, the Śrutis encourage those living entities who are ardently longing for that bliss, by declaring, “*rasaṁ hi evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati* – The Supreme Absolute Truth (*para-tattva*) is simply *rasa*. On achieving that *rasa*, the living entity attains bliss” (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* 2.7.1).

Although all forms of Bhagavān are by nature full of *rasa*, still, no form other than Svayam Bhagavān, Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, exhibits the complete manifestation of *rasa*. Some incarnations show a partial manifestation of a particular *rasa*, but Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the embodiment of all *rasas* (*akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*). Therefore, it is in Him that all *rasas* find their completeness in every respect.

Water is present in streams, rivers and reservoirs, but the ocean is the original repository of all water. Similarly, although *rasa* is present in all other

manifestations of Bhagavān, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is nevertheless the original shelter of the totality of all *rasas*. He is the personification of *rasa*. All the *rasika-bhaktas* realize Him as being *rasa* personified. In whatever *rasa* one worships Him, one will realize Him to be the embodiment of that *rasa*. Śrīla Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, who worships Bhagavān in the sweet mellow of amorous love, has said, “*śṛṅgāra-rasa sāra sarvasvam* – Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the be-all and end-all of the transcendental amorous mellow (*śṛṅgāra-rasa*).”

**Thus ends the Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti
on the Seventh Shower of Nectar,
named Paramānanda-niṣyandini
 (“Flow of Divine Rapture”).**

Eighth Shower of Nectar

Absolute Fulfilment of the Soul's Yearning



Prema-bhakti

Text 1

1a ~ The transformation of the flower of bhāva into the fruit of prema

atha tasyā eva bhakti-kalpa-vallyāḥ sādhanābhikhye ye pūrvam dve patrike lakṣite idānīm tato 'ticikkaṇāni tādrśa-śravaṇa-kīrtanādi-mayāni bhāvakuṣuma-samlagnāni anubhāvābhidhānāni bahūni patrāṇi sahasaivāvīrbhūya kṣaṇe kṣaṇe dyotayanti yāny eva bhāva-kusumam pariṇāmam prāpayya punas tadaiva premābhidhāna-phalatvam ānayanti | kim ca āścarya-caryeyam bhakti-kalpa-vallī yasyāḥ patra-stavaka-puspa-phalāni prāpta-parinatīny api svasvarūpam atyajanty eva nava-navāny eva sahaiva sarvāṇi vibhrājante |

Bhāvānuvāda: The first two leaves of *sādhana-bhakti* visible on the wish-fulfilling vine of devotion (*bhakti-kalpa-latā*) were described before. Now, many leaves named *anubhāvas* – far smoother and softer than the first two, yet, like them, composed of *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and so on – suddenly manifest on this vine, clinging to the flower of *bhāva*. At every moment, these leaves of *anubhāva* expand the great beauty of this vine, causing the flowers of *bhāva* to blossom to their ultimate potential and bear the fruit of *prema*. The nature of this wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti* is so astonishing that when its leaves [*sādhana-bhakti*], its clusters of buds [*āsakti*], its flowers [*bhāva*] and its fruit [*prema*] attain maturity, they do not lose their original form but continue to shine together in newer and newer ways.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In this Eighth Shower of Nectar, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura elaborately describes the symptoms of *prema* and its *anubhāvas*. When *bhāva*, or *rati*, has thoroughly melted the heart with the desire to attain Bhagavān (*bhagavat-prāpty-abhilāṣa*), the desire to do what is favourable for Bhagavān (*ānukūlya-abhilāṣa*) and the desire to have deep affection for Bhagavān (*sauhārdya-abhilāṣa*), as mentioned in the Seventh

Shower, it increases to the ultimate limit of ecstasy and blesses the devotee with a strong sense of possessiveness (*mamatā*) for his worshipful Lord. Learned persons refer to this stage of *bhāva* as *prema*. The following verse expresses this:

*samyañ-masṛṇita-svānto / mamatvātiśayāṅkitah
bhāvah sa eva sāndrātmā / budhaiḥ premā nigadyate*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.4.1)

The difference between *bhāva* and *prema* is that *bhāva* softens the heart and *prema* softens it absolutely. *Bhāva* contains the pinnacle of *ruci*, but *prema* contains an extreme feeling of possessiveness. Condensation of ecstasy (*sāndrātmakatva*) is the intrinsic quality of *prema*. A melting heart (*snigdhatā*) and a feeling of possessiveness (*mamatā*) are *prema*'s marginal characteristics. After Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī presents the above-mentioned verse, he quotes as evidence the following verse from Śrī Nārada-*pañcarātra*:

*ananya-mamatā viṣṇau / mamatā prema-saṅgatā
bhaktir ity ucyate bhīṣma- / prahlādoddhava-nāradaih*

Mahājanas such as Bhīṣma, Prahlāda, Uddhava and Nārada regard *prema* to be that by which one gives up a mood of possessiveness for one's body, household and other sense objects and instead develops possessiveness for anything that is related to Lord Viṣṇu.

A *sādhaka* is considered perfect (*siddha*) only at the stage of *prema*. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (2.1.280) states the symptoms of a perfected devotee:

*avijñātākhila-kleśāḥ / sadā kṛṣṇāśrita-kriyāḥ
siddhāḥ syuḥ santata-prema- / saukhyāsvāda-parāyaṇāḥ*

One who is completely free from all types of misery and is always immersed in activities related to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, continuously tasting the happiness of *prema*, is a perfected devotee.

At this level, the devotee has a tremendous taste for hearing and speaking *hari-kathā*. Moreover, he experiences narrations of Śrī Hari to be ever-fresh, just as a lusty man always enjoys talks about a charming woman. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.13.2) states:

*satām ayaṁ sāra-bhṛtām nisargo
yad-ārtha-vāṇī-śruti-cetasām api
prati-kṣaṇam navya-vad acyutasya yat
striyā viṭānām iva sādhu vārtā*

The nature of the crest jewels of devotees, who are capable of extracting the essence of everything, is that they have dedicated their words, their sense of hearing and their hearts to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They experience topics about Him to be ever fresh, just as a lusty man always relishes talks about women.

Previously, the Second Shower of Nectar described the first two leaves of the transcendental wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti*, at the stage known as *sādhana-bhakti*: *kleśa-ghnī* (relief from material distress) and *śubha-dā* (the bestowal of all auspiciousness). After the stage of *anārtha-nivṛtti*, at the stage of *āsakti*, the creeper begins to produce clusters of buds, and at the stage of *rati*, the flower of *bhāva* blooms. Now, at the stage of *prema*, one's *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and so forth flourish with hundreds and thousands of soft, smooth leaves – *anubhāvas* – such as tears, horripilation, laughing, weeping and dancing. They at once encircle the flower of *bhāva*, which then transforms and produces the fruit of *prema*. These leaves and flowers render the wish-fulfilling creeper of *bhakti* extremely beautiful.

The essence of all this is as follows: To the degree that a *sādhaka* on the path of *jñāna*, *yoga*, etc. nears perfection, his endeavour diminishes. This is because on those paths, the stage of practice (*sādhana*) and the stage of perfection (*siddhi*) are two entirely different things. In the case of *bhakti*, however, they are not different; they are the same. The only difference is that during the stage of *sādhana*, the devotee's bliss is diluted,

whereas at perfection, it is extremely concentrated. Therefore, on the path of *bhakti-sādhana*, as the *sādhaka* nears the stage of *prema*, his practice of *bhajana* in the form of hearing and chanting increases. At the stage of *prema*, *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and so forth become his exclusive life and soul, and his performance of these *aṅgas* of *bhakti* is gracefully adorned with various ecstatic transformations. The fruit of the vine of *bhakti*, *prema*, which is the essential function of Bhagavān's pleasure potency (*hlādinī*), is supremely tasteful and sweet. Compared to the delectable sweetness and intoxicating quality of *prema*, the four mundane goals of human life – religiosity, wealth, sense gratification and liberation – appear most insignificant.

Although this *prema* itself is the original object of relish, it nevertheless makes the *premi-bhakta* taste Śrī Kṛṣṇa's most astonishing sweetness (*mādhurī*) and thus bestows upon him everlasting fulfilment: the joy of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

*pañcam-puruṣārtha sei prema-mahā-dhana
kṛṣṇera mādhurya-rasa karāy āsvādana*

*premā haite kṛṣṇa haya nija bhakta-vaśa
premā haite pāya kṛṣṇer sevā-sukha-rasa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.144–145)

The fifth and ultimate goal of human life, *kṛṣṇa-prema*, is the most precious wealth, by which one delights in Kṛṣṇa's charming sweetness. *Prema* makes Śrī Kṛṣṇa become controlled by His devotee, and by *prema* one obtains the ambrosial happiness of service to Him.

1b ~ Prema transforms the material tendencies of the devotee's heart into spiritual ecstasy

*tataś cāsya bhakta-janasyātmātmīya-gr̥ha-vittādiṣu śata-sahasraśo bhavatyo
yās citta-vṛttayo mamatā-rajjubhis teṣu teṣu nibaddhā eva pūrvam āsan tā*

*eva citta-vṛttīḥ sarvā eva tatas tato 'vahelayaivonmocya sva-śaktyā māyikīr
api tā mahā-rasa-kūpa-spr̥śyamāna-padārtha-mātrāṇīva sākāra-cid-ānanda-
jyotirmayī-kṛtya tābhir eva mamatābhiḥ sarvābhis tatas tato vicitābhiḥ sva-
śaktyaiva tathābhūti-kṛtābhiḥ śrī-bhagavad-rūpa-nāma-guṇa-mādhuryeṣu yo
nibadhnāti so 'yaṁ prema-mahā-kiraṇa-mālīva udayiṣyamāṇa eva nikhila-
puruṣārtha-nakṣatra-maṇḍalīḥ sahasaiva vilāpayati |*

Bhāvānuvāda: Thereafter, the tendency of the devotee's heart, which was previously in hundreds and thousands of ways bound by the rope of possessiveness to his body, bodily relations, home, wealth and so on, is now, as a result of *prema*, easily released from its worldly attachments. And just as any object that is submerged in a well of great nectar becomes saturated with that nectar, these tendencies, though material, are transformed into radiant, condensed spiritual ecstasy (*cid-ānanda*) by the power of *prema*.

Thus, with that very same possessiveness, *prema* binds the inclination of the devotee's heart to the charming sweetness of the names, forms and qualities of Śrī Bhagavān. This is *prema*. *Prema* awakens like a great sun and immediately causes the various star-like goals of human life to vanish.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: At the stage of *sādhana*, the tendency of the devotee's heart (*citta-vṛtti*) is divided into hundreds and thousands of fragments and perpetually shackled with the rope of possessiveness to his body, as well as that which is related to his body, home, wealth and so on. *Prema*, however, easily releases the *sādhaka* from his inclination toward such material objects. With the touch of the *rasa* of spiritual ecstasy, *prema* transforms the material inclination of the *sādhaka*'s heart with that ecstasy, fully immersing it in the sweetness of Śrī Bhagavān's names, forms, qualities and pastimes.

It is not easy to mix mercury and sulphur powder. They only blend thoroughly if they are vigorously rubbed together again and again. Similarly, although the propensity for *bhakti*, in the form of *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, etc., enters the doors of the senses of the *sādhaka* who does not yet have *rati*,

bhakti does not [immediately] fully mix, or amalgamate, with the tendency of his heart. When a person constantly performs *bhajana* characterized by *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and so on, he grows through the stages of *anartha-nivṛtti*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci* and *āsakti*, and gradually, *bhakti* becomes one with the propensity of his heart.

As long as this deep integration does not occur, the heart remains inclined toward material attachment, envy and other material flaws. Upon attaining the platform of *rati*, the materialistic nature of the heart is destroyed and it becomes transcendental. An amalgam of mercury and sulphur is known as mercurous sulphate, and the amalgam of *bhakti* and the heart is known as *prema*. At the stage of *prema*, the disposition of the *sādhaka*'s heart resembles that of a bumblebee overwhelmed in savouring the honey of the lotus-like names, forms, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

When, like a great sun, this self-effulgent *prema* arises in the sky of the *sādhaka*'s heart, it causes the star-like constellation of the mundane goals of human life – *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* – to immediately disappear. The sole desire in the *premi-bhakta*'s heart is to render service to Bhagavān without the minutest scent of desire for sense gratification, liberation or mystic perfection.

1c ~ The fruit of *prema*: condensed pleasure (*sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā*) & the ability to attract Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇākarsinī*)

phala-bhūtasyāsyā yaḥ svādyamāno rasaḥ sa sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā rasasya parama-pauṣṭikī śaktiḥ śrī-kṛṣṇākarsinīty ucyate | yasminn āsvādayitum ārabhyamāna eva vighnān na gaṇayatīti kim vaktavyam | mahā-śūro bhāṭa iva mahā-dhana-grdhnur atyāveśa-lupta-vicāras taskara iva svātmānam api nāvekṣate |

Bhāvānuvāda: The delectable *rasa* of the fruit of *prema* is *sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā* (condensed, superlative pleasure). And the supremely nourishing potency of this *rasa* is known as *kṛṣṇākarsinī* (capable of attracting

Śrī Kṛṣṇa). A devotee beginning to delight in this *rasa* immediately becomes intoxicated by it and is no longer concerned for any obstacle. What else can be said? In this condition, he loses all sense of self, just as a valiant warrior becomes fully absorbed in battle or a thief preoccupied with his greed to secure a great treasure loses all discrimination and hesitation.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: *Prema-bhakti* has two qualities: its intrinsic nature is composed of condensed bliss – *sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā*, and it attracts even Śrī Kṛṣṇa – *śrī kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī*. In regard to the first quality, *sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.38) states:

*brahmānando bhaved eṣa / cet parārdha-guṇī-kṛtaḥ
naiti bhakti-sukhāmbhodheḥ / paramāṇu-tulām api*

The bliss of merging into the featureless aspect of the Absolute Truth, obtained after resolute meditation (*samādhi*) for over fifty years of Brahmā’s lifespan, does not compare even to a drop of the ocean of bliss of devotional service.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has commented on this verse as follows: “*parārdha-kāla samādhinā samuditam tat-sukham apīty arthaḥ* – the words *parārdha-kāla* refer to the bliss that arises from a *samādhi* that lasts for fifty years [equal to 155,520 billion earth years] of Brahmā’s lifespan (a *parārdha*).”

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmīpāda provides evidence of this statement with a quote from *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (14.36):

*tvat-sākṣāt-karaṇāhlāda- / viśuddhābdhi-sthitasya me
sukhāni goṣpadāyante / brāhmāṇy api jagad-guro*

O *guru* of the universe, directly beholding Your divine form, I now dwell within an ocean of pure ecstasy. All other pleasures, including the bliss of merging with *brahma*, appear as insignificant as the water in a calf’s hoofprint.

Regarding the ability to attract Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is stated in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.41):

*kṛtvā harim prema-bhājam / priya-varga-samanvitam
bhaktir vaśī-karotīti / śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī matā*

Because *bhakti* attracts and controls the object of *prema*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, along with His beloved associates, she is said to be *śrī kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī*.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.10.48) can be cited as evidence:

*yūyam nṛ-loke bata bhūri-bhāgā
lokam punānā munayo bhīyanti
yeṣāṃ grhān āvasatīti sāksād
gūḍham param brahma manuṣya-liṅgam*

[The spiritual master of the demigods, Śrī Nārada Muni said:] O Yudhiṣṭhira, of all the people on this earth, your good fortune is exceedingly glorious, because the Absolute Truth, Parabrahma, the all-pervading Supersoul, has taken a human-like form and secretly lives in your palace. Great saintly persons, who purify the entire creation, again and again visit you to take His *darśana*.

In his explanation of this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states [quoting the response of Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja], “How fortunate is Prahāda! He has obtained *darśana* of Bhagavān. We, however, are most unfortunate.”

Śrī Nārada then said to Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira, “You Pāṇḍavas are more fortunate than Prahāda, Prahāda’s *guru* – me, Nārada – and other devotees. You are even more fortunate than the residents of Yadu-pura (Dvārakā), the ṛṣis headed by Vaśiṣṭha, Marīci and Kaśyapa, and also more fortunate than Brahmā, Rudra and others. Although they purify the three worlds with their *darśana*, still, to purify themselves completely, they come to your home.

This is because the Supreme Absolute Truth (Parabrahma), who remains fully concealed (from even the Vedas), always resides in your home with great attachment, in the form of a human being (even without your having invited Him). But the Absolute Truth in human-like form does not personally reside in the house of Prahlāda, and so the sages do not visit that place with the hope of receiving His *darśana*.”

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has explained that *sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā* is the relishable *rasa* of this fruit of *prema*, and *kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī* is the supremely nourishing potency of that fruit.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.6), Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī has described that the two innate qualities of pure, transcendental *bhakti* are *ahaitukī* – devoid of the desire for the fruit of one’s actions – and *apratihatā* – unimpeded by any type of obstacle. Although obstacles may still arise as the *sādhaka* performs *bhajana*, he is not overwhelmed by them. Rather, their onset increases his humility, eagerness and so on, resulting in progress on the path of *bhakti*. At the stage of *prema*, the devotee becomes so intoxicated by enjoying its fruit that no calamity or obstacle can affect him even slightly. Just as a valiant warrior furiously absorbed in battle forgets himself, or a thief covetous of great wealth becomes obsessed with stealing, fearing neither vice nor his own life, so the *premi-bhakta* does not care for auspiciousness or inauspiciousness, as he is enchanted by the rapture of *prema-rasa*.

1d ~ Simultaneously burning in separation from Bhagavān & being cooled by a vision of Him

kiṁ ca rātrindivam eva pratikṣaṇam abhyavahriyamāṇaiś catur-vidhaiḥ parama-svādubhir aparimitair annair api durupaśamanīyā yadi kācit kṣudhā sambhavet tat-sadṛśyā utkaṇṭhayā sūrya iva tāpayan tat-kāla eva sphūrtair āvirbhāvitāni bhagavad-rūpa-guṇa-mādhuryāṇy apārāṇy āsvāda-viśayī-kārayan koṭi-candra iva śiśirayati |

Bhāvānuvāda: The devotee's longing to meet with Bhagavān is like an insatiable hunger that persists even after feasting day and night on endless quantities of the most delectable foodstuffs of the four varieties. This eagerness burns within him like the blazing sun, but then, at that very moment, a *sphūrti* (momentary vision) manifests, cooling him like millions of moons, and he delights in the endless beauty, qualities and sweetness of Bhagavān. At the stage of *prema*, the devotee burns in separation from Bhagavān and is simultaneously cooled by a *sphūrti* of Him. Such is the astonishing nature of *prema*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The realm of *prema* has another distinguishing feature. In this world, hunger and food cancel each other out, whereas the more the *premi-bhakta* savours the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a *sphūrti*, in a dream or directly, the more his already intense, immeasurable eagerness and greed increase. This intense thirst is an indicator of taste. Even though that anxious thirst burns him with the heat of millions of suns, his experience of the unparalleled charm of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, form and qualities through a *sphūrti* soothes him with the coolness of millions of moons.

1e ~ Distraught, even after attaining a *sphūrti* of Bhagavān

yugapad eva svādhāram adbhuto 'yam premā uditya ca yasminn iṣad eva vardhamāne bhagavat-sākṣātkāram eva pratikṣaṇam ākāṅkṣato bhaktasya utkaṅthā-śalyasya mahā-dāhakasyevāti-prābalyodayāt sphūrti-prāpta-tad-rūpa-lilā-mādhuryair api atrptasya tasya bāndhavo 'pi nirudakāndha-kūpa eva bhavanam api kaṅṭaka-vanam eva yat-kiñcanābhyavahāro 'pi prahāro mahān eva sajjana-kṛta-prasaṁsā api sarpa-damśā eva prātyahika-kṛtya-kartavyam api martavyam eva aṅga-pratyāṅgāni api mahā-bhāra eva suhrd-gaṇa-sāntvanam api viṣa-drṣṭa eva sadā jāgaro 'pi sāgaro 'nutāpasyaiva kadācit nidrāpi vidrāviṇī jīvanasyaiva sva-vigraho 'pi bhagavan-nigraho mūrta eva prāṇā api dhānāḥ punaḥ punar bhṛṣṭā eva kim bahunā prak

sadaivābhīṣtam āsīd yat tac ca raho mahopadrava eva bhagavac-cintanam evātma-nikṛntanam eva |

Bhāvānuvāda: This astonishing *prema* simultaneously magnifies the contrary experiences of burning in separation and being cooled by the sweetness of a *sphūrti*. When it makes its appearance in its reservoir [the devotee’s heart], and when it develops slightly, the devotee is scorched by the fiercely blazing arrow of his intense and relentless craving to directly meet Bhagavān. The intensity of his eagerness is such that a *sphūrti* of the sweetness of Bhagavān’s form and pastimes no longer satisfies him.

In this state of discontent, kith and kin appear to the *premī-bhakta* to be like a dark, dried-up well, his own house like a thorny jungle, and even taking a meagre amount of foodstuffs feels like a mighty assault. Praise by saintly persons feels like the bite of a poisonous snake, and mundane daily duties are like death. His every limb feels burdensome. Consolation from confidantes feels like a shower of poison. His constant wakefulness is an ocean of repentance, and whatever little sleep he gets makes him feel that he has squandered his life. Even having a body seems like bearing punishment meted out by the Lord, and his life breath feels as useless as paddy that has been repeatedly burned. Whatever he previously constantly cherished is now an utter disruption, not to speak of anything else. Even any thought of Bhagavān devastates him.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: At the stage of *rati* [*bhāva*], the *sādhaka* becomes totally immersed in the bliss of savouring his worshipable deity’s beautiful form and qualities, as perceived in a *sphūrti*. After *prema* has awakened, however, it is not possible for him to be mesmerized by savouring the *mādhurya* obtained in a *sphūrti*. At that time, a tremendous eagerness to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly arises in the heart of the *premī-bhakta*. That thing known as *prema* is exceedingly astonishing, beyond compare and known only by direct experience. Language is incapable of describing it.

Unless this *prema* has appeared in one's heart, one cannot fully understand it simply by hearing about it from another, because one's capacity to grasp its meaning depends on realization. At the stage of *prema*, upon receiving a *sphūrti* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and thus relishing His beautiful form, qualities and so on, the devotee simultaneously experiences an intense eagerness and a charming tranquillity. This experience produces an indescribably blissful anguish in the heart of the *premī-bhakta*. This has been described in Śrī *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā* 2.50–51):

*bāhire viṣa-jvālā haya, bhitare ānanda-maya,
kṛṣṇa-premer adbhuta carita*

*ei premā-āsvādana, tapta-ikṣu-carvaṇa,
mukha jvale, nā jāya tyajana*

*sei premā jāra mane, tāra vikrama sei jāne,
viṣāmṛte ekatra milana*

Externally, he seems to be burning from poison, but internally, he is experiencing sheer bliss. Such is the astonishing nature of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. Delighting in this *prema* can be compared to sucking scorching sugar cane. The mouth burns, but a person is unable to stop sucking on it. Only those with *prema* in their hearts can understand *prema*'s power, in which poison and nectar seem to combine.

*piḍābhir nava-kāla-kūṭa-kaṭutā-garvasya nirvāsano
niḥsyandena mudām sudhā-madhurimāhaṅkāra-saṅkocanaḥ
premā sundari nanda-nandana-paro jāgarti yasyāntare
jñāyante sphutam asya vakra-madhurās tenaiva vikrāntayaḥ*

Śrī Vidagdha-mādhava (2.30)

[Paurṇamāsī-devī said to Nāndīmukhī:] My dear, beautiful friend, if a person develops *prema* in his heart for the son of Śrī Nanda Mahārāja,

then that person is able to directly understand *prema*'s power. The suffering resulting from that *prema* defeats the severe effect of fresh *kālakūta* poison¹, but when the ecstasy of *prema* begins to flow, it belittles the pride that comes from delighting in the sweetness of nectar.

The heart of the devotee moves between the dualities of unprecedented bliss and unprecedented pain. Finally, due to the intensity of the devotee's eagerness to meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly, all bliss is pulverized and the agony of separation manifests in full force. Through refined poetry filled with marvellous literary embellishments, the revered author has described the mental and bodily symptoms of the *premī-bhakta* upon the manifestation of *prema*. The striking image he portrays of the *premī-bhakta*'s eagerness and distress is incomparable. He has described how, due to the *premī-bhakta*'s acute anxiety, all actions of the body, even his meditation on Bhagavān, which previously filled him with bliss, now cause him to burn within, producing intolerable agony. In the absence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the condition of the *premī-bhakta* is like that of a writhing fish out of water. In separation from Bhagavān, the entire universe appears completely void to him. *Śūnyāyitam jagat sarvaṁ govinda-virahaṇa me (Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka 7)*.

1f ~ Attracted by His devotee's *prema*, Bhagavān gives His direct darśana and manifests His sweetness (*mādhurya*)

tataś ca premaiva cumbakī-bhāvam āpadya kārṣṇāyasī-bhūtam kṛṣṇam ākṛṣyānīya kasmimścana kṣaṇe bhaktasyāsyā nayana-gocarī karoti | tatra ca saundarya-saurabhya-sausvarya-saukumārya-saurasyaudārya-kāruṇyānīti svīyāḥ svarūpa-bhūtāḥ parama-kalyāṇa-guṇāḥ bhagavatā sva-bhaktasya tasya nayanādiṣv indriyeṣu nidhīyante |

1 *Kālakūta* – the poison produced from the churning of the ocean of milk.

Bhāvānuvāda: Thereafter, the magnet of *prema* attracts the iron-like Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and at any time brings Him directly before the devotee's vision. Śrī Bhagavān then makes the supremely auspicious qualities of His *svarūpa* – His beauty (*saundarya*), His fragrance (*saurabhya*), His sweet voice (*sausvarya*), His tender touch (*saukumārya*), the savour of His lips (*saurasya*), His magnanimity (*audārya*) and His compassion (*kāruṇya*) – perceivable to the eyes and other senses of the devotee.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: One receives the direct *darśana* of Bhagavān only when one's eagerness combines with the *prema* in one's heart. It is not possible by any other means. The *darśana* that the demons, who are bereft of *prema*, received at the time of Bhagavān's manifest pastimes cannot be said to be actual *darśana*, because without having savoured Bhagavān's delightful sweetness (*mādhurī*), any *darśana* of Him amounts to no *darśana* at all. It is just like the tongue of a jaundiced person being unable to enjoy sweet foodstuffs, despite tasting them directly. Just as a magnet naturally attracts iron, similarly *prema*, the essential function of the *hlādinī-sakti*, attracts Śrī Kṛṣṇa and makes Him perceptible to the eyes of the devotee. Astonishingly, Śrī Kṛṣṇa enjoys the bliss of His devotee more than He delights in the bliss of His own *svarūpa*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes in his commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.4.64):

*mat-svarūpa-bhūtānandād api mad-bhakta-svarūpānando 'ti-sprhaṇīya
iti dvayor api cid-rūpatve 'pi bhakta-varṭtinyā bhakter anugrahākhyā
cid-vṛtti-vipāka-rūpāyāḥ sarva-cit-sāra-bhūtātvan mamānanda-
svarūpasyāpy ānandakatvād ākarṣatvāc ca |*

[Śrīman Nārāyaṇa said to Durvāsā:] O *brāhmaṇa*, even more desirable to Me than My own intrinsic bliss is the inherent bliss of My devotee – the bliss of *prema* within his heart. Although both My intrinsic bliss (*svarūpānanda*) and the bliss of *prema* (*premananda*) in the heart of My devotee are transcendental, this *premananda*, which manifests within a

devotee by the mercy of an exalted saintly personality, is the matured state of his heart's disposition (just as thick cream is the matured state of milk, which is liquid), and it is the essence of everything spiritual. It gives bliss even to Me, the embodiment of bliss, and attracts Me.

The most merciful Śrī Bhagavān becomes visible to the eyes of His eager *premī-bhakta* and witnesses the *premī-bhakta*'s immense thirst to delight in His sweetness. Bhagavān therefore allows His *premī-bhaktas* to savour His own incomparable *svarūpa*, the very treasure of *prema* – His beautiful form, fragrance, sound, touch and taste – through their eyes, nostrils, ears, sense of touch and tongue. He also causes them to savour, within their heart, His other qualities, such as His boundless magnanimity and mercy.

1g ~ The inexpressible bliss arising from darśana of Bhagavān

teṣāṃ ca parama-madhuratve nitya-navatve ca bhaktasyāsyā ca tad-āsvādayituh premṇaiva pravartamāne pratikṣaṇa-varddhiṣṇau mahotkaṅthāyām ca ko 'py ānanda-mahodadhir āvirbhavan nārhati kavi-sarasvatī-lakṣyā parimeyatām | yathā hi atinivīdatara-vitapa-dala-kula-pravalita-mahā-nyagrodha-talasya sura-dīrghikā-hima-salila-sambhṛta-ghaṭa-śata-valayita-tatasyātiśīśiratve tad-āśrayitur janasya ca tapartu-taraṇi-kiraṇa-tapta-maru-saraṇi-mahā-pānthatve ca | tathā kādambinī-ghanāsārasyāpāratva iva tad-abhiṣicyamānasya vana-mataṅgajasya cirantana-dava-davathu-dūnatvena ca tathā sudhā-kiraṇasyātimadhuratve tat-pāna-kartuṣ ca mahāroga-śatavattve svāda-lolupatve ca yas tādātmika ānandaḥ sa eva dig-darśanārtham tasyopamānī kriyate || 1 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: All these qualities are supremely sweet and ever-fresh, and for the devotee who delights in them with *prema*, a deep ever-increasing eagerness awakens. Thus an immense ocean of bliss rises within the devotee, the extent of which no poetic genius is able to describe.

The following comparisons give some idea of the ecstasy experienced by a *premī-bhakta*: (1) The elation of a traveller who, having long traversed a desert path scorched by the rays of the summer sun, comes upon the shade of an enormous banyan tree thick with foliage, on the bank of Gaṅgā. That place is drenched with ice-cold water kept in hundreds of pots under the tree. (2) The elation of wild elephants that have long suffered a blazing forest fire, when torrents of rain finally pour down from a cloud bank. (3) The elation of a person who, having been afflicted with numerous chronic illnesses and craving to experience taste, finally savours sweet ambrosia.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Just as these qualities are more charming than even the most charming, they are also ever-fresh, like a stream of water. Therefore, at every second, intense eagerness, or thirst, increases in the heart of the devotee. As his thirst increases, his relish of these qualities increases proportionately. And the more he relishes, the more his thirst increases. The result of this enormous thirst is that the *premī-bhakta* continuously rises and sinks in the ocean of Bhagavān's delectable sweetness. His eagerness and his relish are so inexpressible that no poet can capture it by any method of composition. Nevertheless, the exalted author is illuminating this point with some analogies: (1) A traveller's overwhelming joy when, after having trudged along a desert path scorched by the hot rays of the summer sun, he reaches the shade of a gigantic, leafy banyan tree under which there are hundreds of pots of ice-cold Gaṅgā water. (2) An elephant's delight when, having been caught in and scorched by a forest fire, bathes in incessant torrents of rain spilling out of dense clouds. (3) The bliss of one who has suffered thousands of grave illnesses and yearns to experience taste, upon drinking supremely sweet ambrosia. These comparisons are employed to give a small suggestion of the bliss experienced by the *premī-bhakta*.

Text 2

2a ~ Bhagavān reveals His beauty (saundarya) and fragrance (saurabhya)

*tatra prathamam labdhāpāra-camatkārasya bhaktasya locanayoḥ sa-
saundaryam prakāśyate prabhuṇā | tatas tan-mādhuryeṇa sarvendriyānām
manasā ca locana-mayī-bhāve pravartite stambha-kampa-bāspādibhiḥ kṛta-
vighnaś ca tasyānanda-kṛta-mūrcchāyām jātāyām prabodhayitum iva dvitīyam
saurabhyam tadīya-ghrāṇendriyeṣu prakāśyate | tenāpi teṣām ghrāṇa-mayī-
bhāve dvitīya-mūrcchārambhe |*

Bhāvānuvāda: First, Śrī Bhagavān manifests His beauty (*saundarya*) before the eyes of the utterly astonished devotee. The influence of Bhagavān’s sweetness as it manifests before the devotee’s sense of sight is such that all the devotee’s senses, even his mind, become like eyes. The devotee’s *darśana* is interrupted by ecstatic transformations (*sāttvika-vikāra*), such as becoming stunned, horripilation and tears, and in bliss, he loses consciousness.

At that time, in order to revive the devotee, Bhagavān reveals His second sweetness, His bodily fragrance (*saurabhya*), which permeates the devotee’s sense of smell.

Again, by the influence of Bhagavān’s extraordinarily sweet bodily aroma, all the devotee’s senses take on the function of nostrils, and he begins to lose consciousness for a second time.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The most merciful Śrī Bhagavān bestows His *darśana* upon the anxious *premī-bhakta*. It is said that Bhagavān causes the devotee’s eyes, nose, ears, sense of touch and tongue to relish His five qualities of beauty (*saundarya*), fragrance (*saurabhya*), sweet voice (*sausvarya*), soft and tender touch (*saukumārya*) and the taste of His lips (*saurasya*). Moreover,

He causes the hearts of His *premī-bhaktas* to also relish such qualities as His magnanimity (*audārya*) and compassion (*kāruṇya*). Here, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains the causes of these qualities manifesting in the senses of the *premī-bhaktas* and the sequence in which they do so.

First, Śrī Bhagavān manifests His boundless beauty to the eyes of the *premī-bhakta*, who is eager for His *darśana*.

*kṛṣṇa-rūpāmṛta-sindhu, tāhāra taraṅga-bindu,
eka-bindu jagat ḍubāya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 15.19)

Just one drop from a wave of the nectarean ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beauty can flood the entire world.

As the nectar ocean of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's beauty rises before the eyes of the intensely eager devotee, all his sensory faculties assemble in his eyes, craving to behold Śrī Kṛṣṇa's charming form. This means that the beauty of Bhagavān is so sweet and so astonishing that it is beyond the devotee's capacity to relish it with only two eyes. Therefore, all his senses now act like eyes, so that he can take in that unsurpassable beauty. Upon doing so, he faints in ecstasy.

2b ~ Bhagavān reveals His mellifluous voice (sausvarya) and the tenderness of His touch (saukumārya)

'are mad-bhakta tavāham eva sampadyamāno 'smi mā vihvalī-bhūr nikāmaṁ mām anubhava' iti tṛtīyaṁ sausvaryaṁ śravaṇendriya-grāhyam āvirbhāvyaṭe | punas tenāpi teṣāṁ śravaṇa-mayī-bhāve tṛtīya-mūrcchopakrame kṛpayā caraṇāravindena pāṇibhyāṁ urasā ca sva-sparśaṁ dattvā caturthaṁ sva-saukumāryaṁ asāv anubhāvyaṭe | tatra dāsyā-bhāvavatas tasya mūrdhni caraṇena sparśaḥ, sakhya-bhāvavataḥ pāṇyoḥ pāṇibhyāṁ vātsalya-bhāvavataḥ

*sva-kara-talenāśru-mārjjanam preyasī-bhāvavatas tu urasi sva-vakṣasā
bāhubhyām āśleṣaḥ kriyate iti bhedo bodhyaḥ |*

Bhāvānuvāda: To pacify His devotee, Bhagavān says, “My dear devotee, I am fully subservient to you; I am your property. Don’t be anxious. Let your experience of Me fulfil your desire.” In this way, Bhagavān manifests His third sweetness, the mellifluousness of His voice (His *sausvarya*), to the ears of the devotee. By hearing that sweet voice, as before, the devotee’s other senses become like ears, and the devotee faints for a third time.

Then Bhagavān, full of compassion, bestows the experience of His fourth sweetness, the tender touch (*saukumārya*) of His lotus feet, hands or chest. Bhagavān awards the touch of His feet to the head of those devotees who are in the mood of servitude. He takes the hands of the devotees who are in fraternal love in His own lotus-like hands. He wipes away with His hands the tears of His devotees imbued with parental affection. And He embraces with His two arms those devotees imbued with amorous love, touching their chests to His, which is marked with Śrīvatsa. In this way, it should be understood that Bhagavān manifests His tender touch according to the *bhāva* of the devotee. The devotee then loses consciousness for a fourth time.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In order to taste the exquisite sweetness of Bhagavān’s bodily fragrance, His charming, melodious flute, His tenderness and so on, all the senses of a devotee gather in one place. To taste the sweetness of His beautiful form, all of the devotee’s senses become like eyes. To hear the sweetness of His melodious voice, all of his senses become like ears. In this way, the senses lose their original functions. Merciful Śrī Bhagavān makes the devotee’s life successful by bestowing His complete charming sweetness upon him. Allowing the devotee to relish the type of sweetness conducive to his particular mood, Bhagavān satisfies the devotee’s intense longing.

2c ~ Bhagavān reveals the sweetness of His taste (saurasya)
and His magnanimity (audārya)

*punaś ca tenāpi tathā tathaiva caturtha-mahā-mūrcchārambhe pañcamam
svādhara-sambandhi saurasyam tadīya-rasanendriya-grāhyam preyasī-
bhāvavaty eva tat-kāla-prādurbhūta-tad-abhīṣṭākāravati bhakta-jana eva
prakāśyate nānyatra | tataś ca pūrvavad eva tathā-tathā-bhāve 'pi tadātanyās
tv ānanda-mūrcchāyās tv atinaividye jāte tataḥ prabodhayitum asamartheneva
bhagavatā ṣaṣṭham audāryam vitanyate | tac ca teṣām eva saundaryādīnām
sarveṣām eva tan-nayanādi-sarvendriyeṣv eva yugapad eva balād vitaranam |
tadaiva bhagavad-īngita-jñeneva premnāpy ativardhamānena satā tad-anurūpa-
trṣṇātirekam samvardhyāpi tatra bhakte svayam candratvam upeyuṣā yugapad
evānanda-samudra-śata-laharī-vyatīsamardda-bhara-jarjaritvam iva tasya
antaḥ nirmimāṇena svayam eva sākāra-tan-mano 'dhidaivatī bhavateva tathā
sva-śaktir vitīryate yathā yaugapadyenaiva te te svādā nirvivādā eva bhavanti |*

Bhāvānuvāda: After this, as the *premi-bhakta* begins to fall into a fourth deep swoon, Śrī Bhagavān manifests His fifth *mādhurya*, namely, the sweet taste of His lips, which the devotee savours. He reveals [the confidential aspect of] this charming sweetness to those in the mood of a female sweetheart. He does not reveal it to everyone. To others, He reveals this sweetness appropriately, according to their desire.

As before, the devotee's experience of losing consciousness in these ecstatic moods reaches such magnificent depths that Bhagavān, unable to revive the devotee by any other means, bestows His sixth *mādhurya*, His magnanimity (*audārya*). His forceful and simultaneous bestowal of the charming sweetness of all the previously mentioned qualities such as beauty upon the eyes and other senses of the *premi-bhakta* is His quality of magnanimity.

At that time, *prema*, understanding the indication of Śrī Bhagavān, increases exponentially and causes the devotee's hankering to swell accordingly. In this way, Bhagavān accepts the role of the moon, and powerfully

agitating the ocean of bliss within the devotee’s heart, He manifests hundreds upon hundreds of waves, buffeting and simultaneously overwhelming it. He then beautifully reshapes it. In this way, He personally rules the devotee’s mind as its presiding deity, expanding His energy in such a manner that the devotee, now unimpeded by tears, fainting and so on, begins to simultaneously taste, in the core of his heart, the sweetness of all of Bhagavān’s qualities, such as beauty.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: As the devotee begins to lose consciousness for a fourth time, Śrī Bhagavān manifests His fifth *mādhurya* – His *saurasya*, or the nectar of His lips – to the devotee’s sense of taste. To devotees in the mood of servitude and so on, He gives the remnants of His foodstuffs or chewed betel nut. To devotees in the mellow of amorous love, or the mood of a female sweetheart, He bestows relish of this *mādhurya* in accordance with the devotee’s inner hankering. The sheer ecstasy of this *mādhurya* causes the devotee to fall into a deep swoon. Seeing no other way to revive him, Bhagavān manifests His sixth *mādhurya*, His magnanimity (*audārya*), and thus allows the devotee’s five sense organs – eyes, nose, ears, skin and tongue – to simultaneously perceive His beauty, fragrance, sweet voice, tender touch and taste.

At that time, upon receiving an indication from Bhagavān, *prema* swells tremendously in the devotee. Consequently, the devotee experiences an upsurge of thirst, or eagerness. Just as the rising moon churns and agitates the ocean, causing various waves to rise, so Bhagavān churns and agitates the ocean of the devotee’s bliss by manifesting a special potency within the devotee. This potency allows the devotee to relish all five kinds of *mādhurya* at once.

2d ~ Bhagavān reveals His inconceivable potency (*acintya-śakti*)

*na caivam manaso 'nekāgratvena tat-tad-āsvādasyāsāndrateti vācyam |
pratyuta saundarya-sausvaryādīn prati-sarvendriyāṅām eva nayanī-bhāva-*

śravaṇī-bhāvādyā ekadaiva bobhūyamānā alaukikācintyādbhuta-camatkāram evātanvantaḥ svādasyātisāndratvam eva kurvanti | naivāsti tatra laukikānubhava-tarka-dāva-davathor avakāśo 'pi | “acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā na tāms tarkaṇa yojayet” ity ādi || 2 ||

Bhāvānuvāda: Here one may raise the following point: “The mind can focus on only one thing at a time. To simultaneously relish Bhagavān’s five kinds of sweetness requires the mind to be absorbed in five different ways. This would not allow it to properly and deeply relish even one attribute with one of the senses.” Śrī Bhagavān, however, expands His transcendental, inconceivable, unprecedented and astonishing potency, thus bestowing upon the devotee the ability to see, hear and so on through each of his senses simultaneously. By so doing, He increases the intensity and depth of the devotee’s relish of the five kinds of *mādhurya* with his five senses. There is no hindrance here; in other words, there is no scope for being scorched by the forest fire of reasoning arising from mundane experience, since all such transcendental subject matters are beyond the comprehension of mundane logic and reasoning. As stated in *śāstra* (*Mahābhārata*, “Bhīṣma-parva”):

*acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā / na tāms tarkaṇa yojayet
prakṛtibhyaḥ param yac ca / tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam*

One should never attempt to understand inconceivable subject matters through mundane logic. The characteristic of the inconceivable is that it is beyond material nature.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: It is inappropriate to maintain the following doubt: “A devotee can relish one *mādhurya* at a time, but since he has only one mind, how can he simultaneously relish all five kinds of *mādhurya* through his five senses? Simultaneously relishing the five kinds of *mādhurya* requires the

mind's absorption in five sense objects, so it is impossible for any of the senses to relish that *mādhurya* deeply.” In reality, Śrī Bhagavān, by the power of His *acintya-śakti*, enables all the senses of the devotee to concurrently attain the functions of sight, hearing and so on, like before, and also gives him the power to deeply relish His five *mādhuryas*. In other words, by the power of Śrī Bhagavān's *acintya-śakti*, the devotee experiences no impediment to relishing, simultaneously, Bhagavān's five types of *mādhurya* through his five senses. This conception lies beyond the grasp of mundane logic and reasoning.

Text 3

3a ~ Since the devotee is unable to experience the complete sweetness of Bhagavān, Bhagavān expands His compassion (kāruṇya)

*tataś ca saundaryādīnām yāvanti mādhuryāṇi teṣāṃ sāmastyenā 'nububhūṣāv
api asmin bhakta-cātaka-cañcu-puṭe jalada-bindv-āvalīva na mānti tāni
vimrśyāho tarhi mayaitāni saundaryādīny etāvanti kim artham dhṛtānīti teṣāṃ
sambhojanāyaiva saptamam*

Bhāvānuvāda: The devotee then desires to experience in full all the varieties of *mādhurya* that exist in Śrī Bhagavān, such as His beauty and fragrance. However, just as the beak of a *cātaka* bird cannot hold all the raindrops that fall from a cloud, the devotee is incapable of receiving limitless amounts of Bhagavān's sweetness. Seeing this, Śrī Bhagavān contemplates, “*Aho*, why do I possess all these sweet attributes [if My devotees cannot relish them]?” Therefore, just to help the devotee relish those attributes in full, He manifests His seventh sweetness, His quality of compassion (*kāruṇya*).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The thirst, or anxiousness, that arises from the pure love of the *premī-bhakta* is so strong that he develops an intense desire to fully relish all of Bhagavān’s *mādhuryas* simultaneously, beginning with His beauty. On the arrival of monsoon rain clouds, the *cātaka* bird, parched from the summer heat, desires to drink the entire torrential downpour. But how can he do so with his tiny beak? Similarly, when Śrī Bhagavān sees the fervent *premī-bhakta* tasting but a mere drop of His unlimited beauty and sweetness, He thinks, “If this *premī-bhakta* is unable to savour My *mādhuryas* in full, then they serve no purpose.”

Thinking in this way, Bhagavān bestows upon the *premī-bhakta* His seventh *mādhurya*, His compassion (*kāruṇya*).

3b ~ Kāruṇya – Bhagavān’s foremost potency

sarva-śakti-kadamba-paramādhyakṣyā āgamādāv api vimalotkarṣiṇy ādīnām aṣṭa-dig-daleṣu vartamānānām svarūpa-śaktinām madhya eva karṇikāyām mahārāja-cakravartinyā iva sthitāyāḥ

Bhāvānuvāda: This quality of *kāruṇya* (compassion) is foremost among all Śrī Bhagavān’s potencies. She presides over Śrī Bhagavān’s eight intrinsic potencies, such as *vimalā*, *utkarṣiṇī* and so on, mentioned in the Āgama scriptures. These potencies are present as petals on eight sides of the pericarp of a lotus, in which the *kāruṇya* potency is situated in full splendour, like a universal monarch.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: For meditation on the energy of Bhagavān, the Āgamas and other Vedic scriptures explain that Bhagavān’s eight potencies, beginning with the potency of purity (*vimalā-śakti*), are situated in the petals of an eight-petalled lotus. Located in the pericarp of that lotus is His compassion potency:

*vimalotkarṣiṇī jñānā / kriyā yogeti śaktayaḥ
prahvī satyā tatheśānā / anugrahā navamī smṛtā*

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (1.5.140)

The eight energies – *vimalā*, *utkarṣiṇī*, *jñāna*, *kriyā*, *yoga*, *prahvī*², *satyā* and *iśānā* – remain situated upon the eight petals of the lotus. Gracefully resplendent within the whorl of the lotus is the ninth potency, called the *anugraha-śakti*, or compassion potency, which rules over the other eight potencies as their presiding goddess.

3c ~ The mercy potency manifests herself to the devotee through Bhagavān’s eyes

*hy anugrahābhīdhānatvenoktāyāḥ bhagavato nayanāravinda eva ātmānam
vyañjayantyāḥ kṛpā-śakter vilasitaṁ kvacit dāsādaṁ vātsalyam iti kvacit
kāruṇyam iti priyādaṁ ceto-dravaṁ iti kvacid anu kati nāmnābhīdhīyamānam
udayate | yayaiva kṛpā-śaktiḥ sarva-vyāpiny api tadīyecchā-śaktiḥ sādhuṣu sādhu
evam rañjitā paramātmārāmān api mahā-camatkṛti-bhūmīr adhyārohayati |*

Bhāvānuvāda: Bhagavān’s potency of compassion, known as *anugraha* (His favour), manifests herself through His lotus eyes – sometimes as affection (*bhakta-vātsalya*) and sometimes as compassion (*kāruṇya*) – to devotees in the moods of servitude, friendship and parenthood. And to devotees in the mood of a beloved, she manifests as that which attracts Kṛṣṇa and melts His heart. This *kṛpā-śakti* (mercy potency), which arouses further sportive, playful pastimes, is given appropriate names elsewhere [such as *sneha*, *prīti* and *mādhurya*].

² According to Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, the *prahvī* potency is the root cause of Bhagavān’s being unlimitedly capable.

It is by means of the *kṛpā-śakti* alone that Bhagavān's all-pervasive desire potency (*icchā-śakti*) beautifully places the *sādhus* on the platform of *rāga* and elevates even those souls who are supremely self-satisfied (*ātmārāma*) to the most astonishing platform.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: This *anugraha-śakti* (the potency that bestows Bhagavān's favour) manifests from the lotus eyes of Śrī Bhagavān. In other words, Bhagavān's *kṛpā-śakti* rains down upon the devotee through His merciful glance. This mercy potency manifests in the devotees in *dāsyā-rasa*, *sakhya-rasa* and *vātsalya-rasa* as Kṛṣṇa's affection for them (*bhakta-vātsalya*), and sometimes as His compassion (*kāruṇya*); and in the devotees in *madhura-rasa*, she manifests as the potency to attract Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇākarsīṇī-śakti*), which melts His heart. Sometimes the manifestation of this *śakti* is called *sneha* (affection), sometimes *prīti* (love) and sometimes *mādhurya* (charming sweetness).

Driven by this mercy potency, Bhagavān Śrī Hari's desire potency (*icchā-śakti*) awakens an astonishment of His qualities in the crest jewels of those who are *ātmārāma* (self-satisfied). It causes them to abandon their self-satisfied nature and makes them devotees.

3d ~ Affection for His devotees is the emperor of all Bhagavān's qualities

yayaiva bhagavato bhakta-vātsalyam nāma eka eva guṇaḥ samrād iva prathama-skandhe pṛthivyoktān svarūpa-bhūtān satya-śaucādīn kalyāṇa-guṇān śāsti |

Bhāvānuvāda: This *kṛpā-śakti* causes Śrī Bhagavān's quality of affection for His devotees (*bhakta-vātsalya*) to rule as a sovereign emperor over His other intrinsic qualities, such as truthfulness and cleanliness, which are described by Pṛthvī-devī in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Śrī Pṛthvī-devī (the presiding deity of the earth) has described the intrinsic qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, such as truthfulness and cleanliness:

*satyaṃ śaucaṃ dayā kṣāntiḥ / tyāgaḥ santoṣa ārjavam
śamo damas tapaḥ sāmyaṃ / titikṣoparatih śrutam*

*jñānam viraktir aiśvaryaṃ / śauryaṃ tejo balaṃ smṛtiḥ
svātantryaṃ kauśalam kāntir / dhairyam mārḍavam eva ca*

*prāgalbhyaṃ praśrayaḥ śīlam / saha ojo balaṃ bhagaḥ
gāmbhīryaṃ sthairyam āstikyaṃ / kīrtir māno 'nahankṛtiḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.16.26–28)

[The following thirty-nine qualities are inexhaustibly present in Śrī Bhagavān:]

- (1) truthfulness – *satya*, (2) cleanliness – *śauca*, (3) compassion – *dayā*, (4) forbearance – *kṣānti*, (5) renunciation – *tyāga*, (6) self-satisfaction – *santoṣa*, (7) straightforwardness – *ārjava*, or *saralatā*, (8) steadiness of mind – *śama*, (9) control of the senses – *dama*, (10) austerity – *tapasyā*, (11) impartiality – *sāmya*, (12) tolerance – *titikṣā*, (13) equanimity, or indifference to loss or gain – *uparati*, (14) seeing through the eyes of scripture – *śruta*, or *śāstra-vicāra*, (15) knowledge – *jñāna*, (16) detachment – *virakti*, (17) divine majesty – *aiśvarya*, (18) chivalry – *śaurya*, (19) splendour – *teja*, (20) strength – *bala*, (21) memory – *smṛti*, (22) independence – *svatantratā*, (23) dexterity in all activities – *kauśala*, (24) beauty – *kānti*, or *saundarya*, (25) patience – *dhairya*, (26) kind-heartedness – *mārḍava*, (27) boldness – *pragalbhatā*, (28) politeness – *praśraya*, or *vinaya*, (29) a pleasant nature – *śīla*, or *su-svabhāva*, (30) determination – *saha*, (31) expertise of the mind and knowledge-acquiring senses – *ojaḥ*, (32) expertise of the working senses – *bala*, (33) supreme fortune – *bhaga*, (34) gravity – *gāmbhīrya*, (35) steadiness – *sthiratā*, (36) faithfulness – *āstikya*, or *śraddhā*, (37) fame – *kīrti*, (38) worthiness of worship – *māna* and (39) pridelessness – *anahankṛti*.

Śrī Hari's quality of affection for His devotees reigns like an emperor over all these qualities. In other words, this quality is the principal authority that governs them all.

3e ~ In Śrī Bhagavān, even apparent faults are wondrous qualities

“*mohas tandrā bhramo ruṣa-rasatā kāma ulbaṇaḥ | lolatā mada-mātsarye himsā kheda-parīśramau || asatyam krodha ākāṅkṣā āśāṅkā viśva-vibhramaḥ | viśamatvam parāpekṣā doṣā aṣṭādaśoditāḥ ||*” “*aṣṭādaśa-mahā-doṣai rahitā bhagavat-tanuḥ*” *iti bhagavati sarvathā niśiddhā apy ete doṣā yad-anurodhena rāma-kṛṣṇādy-avatāreṣu kvacit kvacid vidyamānā eva santo bhaktair anubhūyamānā mahā-guṇāyante || 3 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: The scriptures mention the following eighteen faults:

(1) illusion – *moha*, (2) lassitude – *tandrā*, (3) tendency to err or be bewildered – *bhrama*, (4) harshness – *ruṣa-rasatā*, (5) libidinousness, or intense lust – *prabala-kāma*, or *tīvra-kāma*, (6) greed, restlessness or fickleness – *lolatā*, (7) madness, or pride – *mada*, (8) envy – *mātsarya*, (9) violence – *himsā*, (10) depression or exhaustion – *kheda*, (11) exertion – *parīśrama*, (12) dishonesty – *asatya*, (13) anger – *krodha*, (14) hankering – *ākāṅkṣā*, (15) apprehension, or fear – *āśāṅkā*, (16) to completely bewilder others – *viśva-vibhrama*, (17) partiality, or contradiction – *viśamatva* and (18) the tendency to depend on others – *parāpekṣā*. The eternal, conscious and blissful form of Bhagavān, replete with all opulences, is free from these eighteen great faults.

Even though these faults are by no means present in Bhagavān, by the entreaty of the *kṛpā-śakti*, sometimes *avatāras* like Śrī Rāmacandra and Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra gracefully manifest them. Actually, by the influence of this *kṛpā-śakti*, these faults are transmuted into virtues and are experienced as such by the devotees.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In the previous section, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura listed the eighteen faults mentioned in the scriptures that are found in the living entities, which include demigods and demons. These faults can never exist in the transcendental form of Śrī Bhagavān, who is the embodiment of eternity, cognizance and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda*). Just as darkness cannot possibly exist within the sun, which is self-luminous, so it is impossible for even an iota of fault to exist in Śrī Bhagavān. Nevertheless, during His incarnation as Śrī Rāma, we see that He was bewildered in separation from Sītā-devī. And these eighteen faults, except for excessive lust (*tīvra-kāma*) and harshness (*rukṣa-rasatā*), can be seen in the pastimes of Svayam Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth. In his book *Siddhāntaratna*, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa cites examples from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that seem to indicate faults in Bhagavān:

nanu “tato vatsān adrṣṭvaitiya puline ’pi ca vatsapān | ubhāv api vane kṛṣṇo vicikāya samantata” ity atra mohah | “kvacit pallavatalpeṣu niyuddha-śrama-karśitaḥ | vṛkṣa-mūlāśrayaḥ śete gopotsaṅgopabarhaṇaḥ” ity atra, tandrā-kheda-parīśramah | “tāv aṅghri-yugmam” ity ādau “mugdha-prabhītavad upeyatur anti mātroh” iti bhramah | “mada-vighūrṇita-locana iṣan māna-daḥ svasuhrdām vanamālī” ity ādau madaḥ | “lokeśa-māninām mauḍhyād dharisye śrī-madam tamah” ity adau mātsaryam | himsā ca pūtanādivadhaḥ | “nāham bhakṣitavān amba sarve mithyābhiśamsinaḥ” ity atra jarāsandha-cchalādau cāsatyam | krodho ’pi tatra tatra prasiddha eva | “tām stanya-kāma āsādy mathnantīm jananiṁ hariḥ | grhītvā dadhi-manthānam nyasedhat prītim āvahan” ity atra ākāṅkṣā | “kvāpy adrṣṭvāntar-vipine vatsān pālāmś ca viśva-vit | sarvaṁ vidhikṛtam kṛṣṇaḥ sahasāvajagāma ha” ity atra āśaṅka | “so ’kāmayata bahu syām prajāyeya” ity ādau jagad āveśa-rūpa viśva-vibhramah | “samo ’ham sarva-bhūteṣu na me dveṣyo ’sti na priyaḥ | ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā mayi te teṣu cāpy aham” ity ādau vaiśamyam |

“*aham bhakta-parādhīno*” ity ādau parāpekṣā cāvagamya te | rūkṣa-
rasatā prema-sambandhād ṛte rāgaḥ | ulbaṇo duḥkha-hetu kāmāḥ | tāv
etau māstām | tataś ca ‘mohādīnām ṣoḍaśānām pramāṇa-siddhatvān
nirdoṣa-tanutvam’ katham iti cen na, bhaktānanda-vaicitra-poṣaka-
līlā-vilāsa-bhakta-samrakṣaṇa-bhakta-vātsalyādi-siddhaye prākṛta-
gandhāsprṣṭāḥ svarūpa-dharmā evaite udayante tān vinā līlādy-
asiddheḥ | tad-asiddhau ca pūrṇatvānupapattih | itareṣu sarveṣu guṇeṣu
rūcy-abhāvāt tad-bhakty-anupapattih |

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.13.16): “*tato vatsān adṛṣṭvaitya, puline ’pi ca
vatsapān / ubhāv api vane kṛṣṇo, vicikāya samantataḥ* – After this, upon not
seeing the calves and the cowherd boys on the bank of the Yamunā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa
began searching for them throughout all the forests.” Here we see illusion
(moha).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.15.16): “*kvacit pallava-talpeṣu, niyuddha-
śrama-karṣitaḥ / vṛkṣa-mūlāśrayaḥ śete, gopotsaṅgopabarhaṇaḥ*” – Once, Śrī
Kṛṣṇa, tired from wrestling with the cowherd boys, laid down in the shade
of a tree on a bed made of soft leaves. He rested His head on the lap of a
cowherd boy and fell asleep.” Here, lassitude (*tandrā*), exhaustion (*kheda*),
and exertion (*parīśrama*) are perceived.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.8.22): “*tāv aṅghri-yugmam...mugdha-prabhūtavat
upeyatur anti mātroh* – Śrī Baladeva and Śrī Kṛṣṇa returned to Their mothers,
crawling, as if bewildered and afraid.” Here, we see bewilderment (*bhrama*).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.8.29): “*vatsān muñcan kvacid asamaye krośa-
sañjāta-hāsaḥ* – [The motherly *gopīs* approached Mother Yaśodā and said:]
‘Your son releases the calves untimely [before the cows have been milked], and
when we become upset, He simply chuckles.’ Here, we see restlessness (*lolatā*).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.35.24): “*mada-vighūrṇita-locana īṣat, māna-
daḥ sva-suhrdām vanamālī* – Vanamālī [Śrī Kṛṣṇa who wears a garland of
forest flowers] shows honour to His cowherd friends with eyes restless with
pride.” Here, we see pride (*ahankāra*).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.25.16): When Indra sent forth torrential rain in an attempt to destroy Vraja, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, “*lokeśa-māninām maudhyād, dhanisye śrī-madam tamaḥ* – I shall crush Indra’s inflated false ego, which causes him to stupidly think himself to be the lord of the three worlds.” In these words, we see apparent envy (*mātsarya*) in Bhagavān.

When He killed Pūtanā, we even see violence (*himsā*) in Bhagavān.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.8.35): “*nāham bhakṣitavān amba, sarve mithyābhiśamsinah* – After eating dirt, Kṛṣṇa said to His mother, ‘Maiyā, I did not eat dirt. They’re all telling lies!’” In this pastime, and also when He slew Jarāsandha and others, we witness dishonest speech (*asatya-bhāṣana*) in Bhagavān. In such pastimes, He is also famous for His anger (*krodha*).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.9.4): “*tām stanya-kāma āśādya, mathnantīm janānīm hariḥ / grhītvā dadhi-manthānam, nyāsedhat prītim āvahan* – Desirous of drinking her breast milk, Śrī Kṛṣṇa went to His mother, who was churning yoghurt, and to make her blissful, caught hold of the churning rod to stop her from churning.” Here we see hankering (*ākāṅkṣā*).

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.13.17): “*kvāpy adṛṣṭvāntar-vipine, vatsān pālāms ca viśva-vit / sarvaṁ vidhi-kṛtaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ, sahasāvajagāma ha* – Not finding the calves and *sakhās* anywhere in the forest, the all-knowing Śrī Kṛṣṇa understood that this was the work of Lord Brahmā.” Here we see apprehension (*āśāṅkā*) in Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Taittirīya Upaniṣad (2.2.1): “*so ’kāmayata bahu syām prajāyeya* – Śrī Hari desired, ‘I shall become many.’” With these words of Śruti, Śrī Hari, by His absorption in the activities of the universe, demonstrates His nature to bewilder others (*viśva-vibhrama*).

In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (9.29), Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “*samo ’ham sarva-bhūteṣu, na me dveṣyo ’sti na priyaḥ / ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā, mayi te teṣu cāpy aham* – I am impartial to all living beings and am neither the friend nor enemy of anyone. But as those who serve Me with devotion are attached to Me, I, too, am bound by affection for them.” In such statements, we see the seeming fault of partiality (*viṣmatva*).

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.4.63), the Lord says to Durvāsā, “*aham bhakta-parādhīno, hy asvatantra iva dvija* – O twice-born one, I am controlled by My devotees and have no independence in their presence.” This statement shows dependency on others (*parāpekṣā*).

Harshness (*rukṣa-rasatā*) is prioritizing attachment to something over a loving relationship, and intense lust (*prabala-kāma*) is that lasciviousness which leads to distress. Although these two faults do not exist in Bhagavān, sixteen faults, as evidenced in *śāstra*, are visible within Him. How, therefore, can it be said that Bhagavān’s form is devoid of those faults? The response to this objection is that these apparent serious faults in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, such as illusion, exist solely to nourish the transcendental ecstasy of astonishment in the devotees. They manifest from Bhagavān’s inherent nature, which is devoid of any scent of the material energy, in order to exhibit playful pastimes (*līlā-vilāsa*), nourish the devotees (*bhakta-pālana*) and show His special affection for them (*bhakta-vātsalya*). Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes cannot manifest fully without them.

If Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s charming pastimes are not successfully accomplished, His nature as the Absolute and as the original Supreme Personality of Godhead is impaired. Although faults such as illusion are grave defects in the living entities, they exist in Bhagavān as splendid attributes. When the devotee experiences these astonishing qualities, his heart melts completely.

Text 4

**4a ~ By the mercy of Bhagavān, the devotee relishes
His mādhurya**

*tataś ca sarvāṅy eva tad-vitīrṇāni saundaryādīny āsvādayitum labdhaujasi bhakte
āsvādyāsvādya ca tām tām camatkṛti-parama-kāṣṭhām adhiruhyādhiruhya
cāśruta-caram bhagavato bhakta-vātsalyam idam iveti manasā muhur muhur
evānubhūya dravī-bhāvam āseduṣi |*

Bhāvānuvāda: Thereafter, becoming capable of relishing the magnitude of Bhagavān’s *mādhurya* – His beauty, fragrance and so on – that lustrous devotee reaches the zenith of astonishment. Continually realizing the unprecedented affection of Bhagavān for His devotees, the devotee’s heart melts.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Realization of these astonishing qualities completely melts the heart of the devotee.

4b ~ Bhagavān glorifies His devotee

tasminn are mad-bhakta-varya bahūni janmāni mad-arthaṁ dārāgāra-dhanādikaṁ parityajya mat-paricaryānurodhena śīta-vāta-kṣudhā-trṣṇā-vyathā-mayādīn bahūn eva kleśān soḍhavate janāvamānādīn apy aḡaṇitavate bhikṣu-caryāṁ ḡrhitavate bhavate kim api dātum aśaknuvan ṛṇi kevalam abhūvam | sārva-bhaumatva-pārameṣṭhya-yoga-siddhy-ādikaṁ ca na bhavad-anurūpam iti tat tat kathaṁ vitarīṣyāmi | na hi na hi paśubhyo rocamānaṁ ḡhāṣa-tuṣa-buṣādikaṁ kasmaicin manuṣyāya dīyate | tad aham ajito ’pi bhavatādhunā jita eva varte narte bhavat-sauśīlya-vallīṁ samyag avalambanam iti

Bhāvānuvāda: At this time, Śrī Bhagavān says to the devotee, “O best of My devotees, for so many lifetimes you have abandoned your wife, home, wealth and so forth for Me. Only to serve Me have you endured a multitude of miseries such as cold, wind, hunger, thirst, pain and disease. You totally disregarded the insults of others and maintained your life by begging. Unable to repay you, I have become indebted to you. For you, lordship over the entire earth, sovereignty of the heavenly planets, even the position of Lord Brahmā and the various mystic perfections, are completely unsuitable. How could I grant them to you? Grass, straw and bran, which animals find enjoyable, are not fit for humans. Thus, even though I am unconquerable, today you have conquered Me. In this condition, I depend solely on your good will.”

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Previously, it was mentioned how the *premī-bhakta*'s heart completely melts upon experiencing the sweet qualities of Śrī Bhagavān, such as His special affection for His devotees. Bhagavān fully comes under the control of the devotee who has worshipped Him while enduring endless sorrows, difficulties, contempt and dishonour. Although He gives His very self to His devotee in reciprocation for the devotee's offering of a palmful of water and a *tulasī* leaf, He still considers Himself indebted to the devotee. He reflects, "I could not give My devotee anything, so I shall be in his debt forever." Through exceedingly tender and compassionate words like these, Bhagavān expresses Himself to His devotee.

Here a question may arise. If He so desired, Bhagavān, who possesses all opulence, could easily confer upon the devotee sovereignty over the entire earth, the position of Brahmā, mystic perfections and so on. Why, therefore, does He need to remain indebted to His devotee? The answer is that His devotee is free from any material desire, and his heart is absolutely pure. The devotee renders devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa solely for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure; Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot give anything to the devotee in reciprocation – either material or spiritual – other than service to Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa contemplates, "By granting My devotee service to Me, he will certainly attain Me." Except for this, Kṛṣṇa has nothing to offer the devotee who has no desire. So although Kṛṣṇa is unconquerable, such devotees conquer Him in every respect. The devotee's gentle nature remains Kṛṣṇa's only support. In other words, the joy the devotee experiences in serving Him remains His greatest comfort.

4c ~ The devotee expresses humility when glorified by Bhagavān

bhagavato vān-mādhurīm parama-snigdha-varṇām kaṇāvataṁsī-kṛtya prabho bhagavan kṛpā-pārāvāra ghora-saṁsāra-pravāha-prāpita-kleśa-cakra-nakra-vyūha-carvyamāṇam mām vilokya kāruṇyodyota-drava-ceto-navanīto 'khilalokātīto bhagavan śrī-guru-rūpa-dhārī mad-anādy-avidyā-vidāri-sva-darśanena sudarśanenaiva tan nirbhidyā tad-damṣṭrā-tatād evonmocya nija-caraṇa-

*kamala-yugala-dāsī-cikīrṣayā sva-mantra-varṇa-vīthīm mat-karṇa-vīthīm
praveśya nirvyathīkṛtya muhur muhur api sva-guṇa-nāma-śravaṇa-kīrtana-
smaraṇādibhir mām yad aśūśudhan nija-bhaktair api saṅgamitaiḥ sva-
sevām apy abūbudhat tad api durmedho 'ham adhamatamo divasam ekam
api prabhuṁ na paryacaram kadarya-caryas tad ayam jano daṇḍayitum
evārhaḥ pratyutaitāvad darśana-mādhurīm pāyitah | kim ca ṛṇī-bhavāmīti
śrī-mukha-vāṅyā prabhu-vareṇa viḍambito 'smīti manye 'ham tat kim karomi
pañca vā saptāṣṭāthavā lakṣa-koṭayo 'pi yady aparādhā bhaveyus tad api tām
samprati kṣamayitum dhārṣtyam ālambate mām | parārdhato 'py adhikāms
tān avadhārayāmi | kim ca te te 'tiprabalās cirantanā bhukta-bhoktavya-phalā
vartantām nāma |*

Bhāvānuvāda: The sweetness of Śrī Bhagavān’s words, which are filled with utmost affection, adorns the ears of the devotee, who prays, “O Prabhu! O Bhagavān! O ocean of mercy! Dragged by the current of this dreadful material existence, I am caught in a whirlpool of suffering and am being devoured by crocodiles. Seeing this, compassion arose in You and caused Your butter-like transcendental heart to melt. O Bhagavān, You then appeared before me in the form of *śrī guru*, who cut asunder the ignorance of lust and so forth. With Your *darśana*, You, like Sudarśana (the disc weapon), severed these crocodiles of suffering and saved me from their terrible teeth. With a desire to make me a maidservant at Your lotus feet, You had the syllables of Your *mantra* enter the pathway of my ears and remove all my pain. Through my repeated hearing, chanting and remembering of Your divine names and qualities, You purified me.

“O Prabhu! You taught me the art of rendering devotional service to You by granting me the association of Your devotees. Nevertheless, because I am unfortunate, foolish and the most degraded, I could not render even a day’s service to You. Still, even though this most wicked person is punishable, instead of chastising me, You are making me drink profusely the sweet elixir of Your sublime *darśana*.

“And yet You say, ‘I am indebted to you.’ O best of masters, it seems that I am being mocked by these words from Your divine mouth. Now what should I do? I have committed several – nay! – thousands and millions of offences. To pray for pardon would be nothing but taking refuge in impudence. Certainly, my offences are incalculable.

“Moreover, the powerful influence of my persistent offences is such that even now I endure their results. And let me suffer further for the offences still remaining. I will not pray to be pardoned.”

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Humility (*dainya*) lies at the root of *bhakti*. Moreover, *bhakti*'s nature is such that she is never satiated. This nature causes the *premī-bhakta* to always consider himself devoid of *bhakti*, or to consider his spiritual practice (*sādhana-bhajana*) deficient. Upon hearing the merciful words of Bhagavān, the devotee remembers Bhagavān's limitless compassion in the form of *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas, and becomes restless. He thinks, “A person as wicked as I deserves punishment, but Śrī Bhagavān has instead blessed me with His *darśana*, which is most rarely attained.” Upon experiencing such mercy of Śrī Hari, the devotee becomes wonderstruck.

Having heard Bhagavān's words of compassion and how He feels indebted to His devotee, the devotee becomes stunned and bewildered, not knowing what to do. He remembers the limitless offences he has committed since time immemorial. Considering himself a grievous *aparādhī* and worthy of punishment, he cannot summon the courage to even beg forgiveness. At this time, the devotee offers prayers that express his deep humility.

mat-tulyo nāsti pāpātmā / nāparādhī ca kaścana
parihāre 'pi lajjā me / kim brūve puruṣottama

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.154)

O Puruṣottama, there is no sinner and offender like me. Alas, I am even ashamed to request You to forgive my offences. What more shall I say?

Thus, out of great humility, the *premī-bhakta* does not beg forgiveness for the offences he imagines he has committed, but rather beseeches Bhagavān to punish him.

4d ~ The beautiful form of Śrī Bhagavān defies all worldly comparison

samprati pūrvedyur eva nīradena nīla-nīrajena nīla-maṇinā śrīmad-aṅgasya candramasā śrī-mukhasya nava-pallavena śrī-caraṇasya dyutim upamimānena mayā dagdha-sarṣapārdhena kanaka-śikhariṇam iva caṇaka-kaṇena cintāmaṇim iva pheruṇā keśariṇam iva maśakena garuttvantam iva samīkurvātā durbuddhinā spaṣṭam aparāddham evety adhunaivāvagatam | tadā tu prabhum ahaṁ staumīti svīyam avidvattvam api kavītvam etad iti janeṣv api prakhyāpitam | ataḥ parantu mad-īkṣaṇena kṣaṇena samīkṣita-śrī-mūrti-rūpeṇa vaibhavana javena tarjyamānā dhairya-rahitā gaur iva me gauḥ śrīmat-saundarya-kalpa-vallīm upamāna-radanaīr dūṣayitum na prabhaviṣyati iti

Bhāvānuvāda: “O Prabhu, just a day ago, I was so audacious as to compare Your divine body to a fresh rain cloud, a blue lotus and a sapphire; Your lotus face to the moon; and Your lotus feet to freshly sprouted leaves. I have thus declared that burned mustard seed halves are equal to the golden Mount Sumeru, that a chickpea is like a wish-fulfilling jewel (*cintāmaṇi*), that a jackal is equivalent to a lion, and that a mosquito is like Garuḍa. In this way, a fool such as I has brazenly committed an offence to You. I could understand my mistake only after receiving Your direct *darśana*. I thought at the time that I was praising You, when in fact I was simply proclaiming my own foolishness, considering my imagery to be poetic brilliance.

“When I beheld the beauty and splendour of Your divine form for a moment with my own eyes, I realized that my comparisons are like the teeth of a frenzied cow trying to defile the wish-fulfilling vine of Your beauty, but without success.”

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Moreover, having received *darśana* of Bhagavān’s beautiful form, the devotee is completely wonderstruck and regards the numerous similes he had created in his prayers while meditating upon Bhagavān’s form to be fallacious and trivial.

He even thinks that his folly has led to an offence – that of comparing Bhagavān’s transcendental form to objects of this world. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s beautiful form, which is composed of eternality, cognizance and bliss, is incomparable and cannot be described by comparisons to, say, the moon or the lotus, which are but transformations of the five material elements.

Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura has described Kṛṣṇa in *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* (97):

*tat tvan mukham katham ivāmbuja-tulya-kakṣam
vācām avāci nanu parvaṇi parvaṇīndoh
taṁ kim bruve kim aparaṁ bhuvanaika-kānta
veṇu tvad ānanam anena samaṁ nu yat syāt*

How can Your face be compared to the lotus? It is also impossible to compare Your flawless face, which is beyond description, to the moon, which gradually wanes until it is no longer visible. O sole master of the universe, to what can I compare Your beautiful face as You play upon Your flute?

Līlāśuka³ writes the next verse, as if Śrī Kṛṣṇa had then inquired, “O Līlāśuka, how then have various poets compared My face, smile and so on to the lotus and the moon? Why do you not do the same?”

*śuśrūṣase śṛṇu yadi praṇidhāna-pūrvam
pūrvair apūrva-kavibhir na katākṣitam yat
nīrājana-krama-dhurām bhavad ānanendor
nirvyājam arhati cirāya śaśi-pradīpaḥ*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta (98)

3 Līlāśuka is a name of Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura, who is like Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the way he describes Śrī Kṛṣṇa pastimes (*līlā*) as sweetly as a parrot (*śuka*). –Ed.

O Prabhu, if You wish to hear my response, please listen. Poets of old have seen Your beautiful form in their deep meditation. They have compared Your face to the moon and the lotus only because they were limited by their poetic ability. Truly, the moon is nothing but a camphor lamp suitable for circling Your lotus face in *ārati* and then being put to one side.

The *premī-bhakta* says, “O Prabhu, I will never again minimize Your unparalleled beauty by comparing it to something of this world.”

4e ~ The devotee’s darśana of Bhagavān’s dhāma and companions

*evam̐ bahu-vidham̐ śamsati tasminn̐ ati-prasannena bhagavatā punar̐ api preyasy-
ādi-bhāvavatas tasya yathā-sambhavam̐ abhīpsitam̐ tādātmika-tat-sva-vilāsa-
vilakṣitam̐ śrī-vṛndāvanam̐ kalpa-śākhinam̐ mahā-yogapīṭham̐ sva-preyasī-
vṛnda-mukhyām̐ śrī-vṛṣabhānu-nandinīm̐ tat-sakhīḥ śrī-lalitādyās tat-kiṅkarīr̐
api sva-vayasyān̐ śrī-subalādīn̐ sva-pālyamānā naicikīś ca śrī-yamunām̐ śrī-
govardhanam̐ bhāṇḍīram̐ ca nandīśvara-giriṃ tatratiya-janaka-jananī-bhrātṛ-
bandhu-dāsādīn̐ sarvān̐ eva vrajaukaso rasotkarṣeṇa darśayitvā tat-tad-ānanda-
mahā-moha-taraṅgiṇyām̐ tam̐ nimagnīkṛtya svayam̐ parikaraṇenāntardhīyate |*

Bhāvānuvāda: When the devotee thus laments, Bhagavān becomes exceedingly pleased with him. In accordance with the particular mood and cherished desire of the devotee, such as *preyasī-bhāva*, He reveals a vision of Śrī Vṛndāvana, the abode filled with His divine sporting pastimes (*vilāsa*), of wish-fulfilling trees and of the *mahā-yogapīṭha* of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, surrounded by Their intimate, eternal companions. Śrī Kṛṣṇa also grants the devotee a direct vision of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja and the foremost among His beloveds, as well as *darśana* of Her *sakhīs* such as Lalitā and Viśākhā, and their maidservants. He also confers upon him *darśana* of His *sakhās* such as Subala, the cows He maintains, the river Śrī Yamunā, Śrī Govardhana, Bhāṇḍīravana and Śrī Nandīśvara

Hill. And He grants him *darśana* of Śrī Nanda, Yaśodā, His brother, friends, relatives, servants, maidservants and all the residents of Vraja, along with the excellence of their respective *rasas*. After submerging that devotee in the most enchanting waves of the blissful *darśana* of His eternal companions, Kṛṣṇa, along with His entourage, vanishes from his vision.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: After hearing the *premī-bhakta* speak many such words of lamentation, Śrī Kṛṣṇa blesses that aspirant of *mañjarī-bhāva* by granting him *darśana* of the excellence of His *rasa*-filled pastimes with Śrī Rādhārāṇī, Her *sakhīs* like Lalitā, *mañjarīs* like Śrī Rūpa, and other confidential companions who assist in *madhura-rasa*, along with *darśana* of the matchless treasure of Śrī Vṛndāvana's splendour. Unable to bear the weight of this exceedingly profound feeling of ecstasy, the devotee falls unconscious and Śrī Hari disappears, along with Śrī Dhāma Vṛndāvana and all His companions.

4f ~ When Śrī Hari disappears, the devotee is plagued by various doubts

tataś ca kiyadbhiḥ kṣaṇair labdha-prabodhaḥ punar api prabhum didṛkṣu locana-mudrām unmocya, taṁ nāvalokayann ātmānam aśrubhir abhiṣiṅcan, kim ayaṁ svapna ālokitah, na hi na hi śayyālasya-nayana-kāluṣādy-abhāvāt, kim iyaṁ kasyacin māyā vā, na hi na hi etādṛśānandasya māyikatvāsambhavāt, kim vā cittasyaiva bhrama-mayī kāpi vṛttil, na hi na hi laya-vikṣepādy-ananubhavāt, kim vā manoratha-paripāka-prāpto 'yaṁ vastu-viśeṣah, na hi na hi īdṛśa-padārthasya sīmnno 'pi kadāpi manorathenādhirodḍhum aśakyatvāt, sphūrti-labdho 'yaṁ bhagavat-sākṣātkāro vā, na hi na hi samprati smaryamāṇābhyah pūrva-pūrvodbhūtābhyah sphūrtibhyo 'syātivailakṣaṇyāt ity evaṁ vividham eva samśayānaḥ, śayāna eva dhūli-dhoraṇi-dhūsarāyāṁ dharaṇau, yathā tathāstu punar api tad-darśanaṁ me bhūyād iti muhur āśāsāno 'pi tad-anupalabhamānaḥ khidyan luṭhan rudan gātrāṇi vraṇayan mūrccayan

prabudhyamāna uttiṣṭhann upaviśan abhidravan krośan unmatta iva kṣaṇam tūṣṇīm āsīno manīśiva kṣaṇam, lupta nitya-kriyo bhraṣṭācāra iva kṣaṇam asambaddham pralapan graha-grasta iva kṣaṇam kasmaicid āśvāsakāya nibhṛtam pṛcchate bhakta-janāya sva-bandhave svānubhūtam artham bruvāṇaḥ, kṣaṇam prakṛti-stha iva ‘sakhe bhūri-bhāga bhagavat-sākṣātkāra evāyam tavābhavad iti’ tena yuktyā pratoṣyamāṇo hṛṣyann eva ‘hanta tarhi katham eṣa punar na bhavatīti’ tadaiva viṣṭidan, hanta kasyacin mahānubhāva-cūḍāmaṇer mahā-bhāgavatasya kāpi kṛpā-vitāna-pariṇatir vā durbhāgasyāpi me bhagavat-paricaryāyā ghūṇākṣara-nyāyena vā kasmimścid divase kathañcid utpannāyā niṣkavitatāyāḥ phalam idaṁ vā, kim vā vaiguṇya-samudre ’pi kṣudre mayi bhagavad-anukampāyā nirupādhitvam eva mūrtam prakāṭi-babhūva, hanta hanta kena vā anirvacanīya-bhāgyena svayam hasta-prāpto nidhir ajani, kena vā mahāparādhena tataś cyutam iti, niścetum niścetano ’ham na prabhavāmi tad-bādhā-bādhita-dhīḥ, kva yāmi, kim vā karomi, kam upāyam atra kam uta vā pṛcchāmi, mahā-śūnyam iva nirātmakam iva niḥsaraṇam iva dāva-pluṣṭam iva mām nigilad iva tri-bhuvanam avaloke | lokebhyo niḥsṛtya tad ebhyaḥ kṣaṇam vivikte praṇidadhāmīti | tathā kurvan hā prabho sundara-mukhāravinda-mādhurīka-sudhā-dhārā-dhurīṇa-bhāvita-vāsita-nikhila-vipina-śrī-vigraha-vara-parimala-vana-māla-caṭulitāli-jāla punar api kṣaṇam api tatrābhavantam dṛśyāsam; sakṛd eva ca svādita eva, svādita-tan-mādhurīko na punar evam abhyarthayiṣye iti vilapan luṭhan śvasan mūrccchann unmādyan pratidiśam eva tam paśyan hṛṣyan śliṣyan hasann atan gāyan punar apy anikṣamāṇo ’nutapan rudan alaukika-ceṣṭita evāyūmṣi nayan sva-deho ’py asti nāsti vā nānusandadhate |

Bhāvānuvāda: Soon after, the devotee awakens from his blissful swoon and opens his eyes so that he can again have *darśana* of Śrī Bhagavān, his Prabhu. Upon not seeing Him, the devotee becomes exceedingly agitated. Drenched by an incessant stream of tears, he wonders, “Was I dreaming? No, no. Had it been a dream, I would feel lethargic and heavy-eyed from sleep, but I feel nothing like that. Did someone create an illusion? No, that

too is impossible, because how can an illusory experience bestow such ecstasy? Maybe I experienced some bewildered state of consciousness. No, no, that is also impossible, because I do not feel dull or confused. Was it the fulfilment of a deep yearning? No, no, that is also impossible, because a longing can never approach even the boundary of something so indescribable. Then, was it possible that I received *darśana* of Bhagavān in a *sphūrti*? No, this also cannot be, because I fully remember my previous *sphūrtis*, and this ecstasy was completely different.”

Thus afflicted with a variety of doubts, the devotee falls to the ground, becoming covered in dust. He incessantly hopes to somehow or other receive such a *darśana* again, but when he does not obtain it, he laments and rolls about on the earth, and sometimes his entire body becomes cut and bruised. He then faints. Upon regaining consciousness, sometimes he sits upright, and sometimes he restlessly runs here and there. Sometimes like a madman he sobs loudly, and sometimes like a sage he remains content. Sometimes, like a person who has strayed from proper conduct, he forgets to perform his regular duties, and sometimes, like a haunted person, he rambles incoherently.

Sometimes the devotee reveals his experience to another devotee, a friend, or someone who consoles him and who enquires about his welfare. Whoever hears him replies, “My friend, you have had the direct *darśana* of Bhagavān. Truly, your fortune is limitless.” He attentively hears such words of counsel and becomes calm and cheerful, but is again plunged into a state of remorse. “Alas! If I am truly fortunate, why do I not receive that *darśana* again? It seems that one who is the crest jewel of *mahā-bhāgavatas* has bestowed mercy upon me, enabling me to behold that exquisite form, for I am extremely fallen; I have never served Bhagavān in any way. Or possibly, just as a termite inadvertently carves the shape of a letter of the alphabet in some wood, so perhaps the devotional service of this wretched person at some point happened to be free from duplicity, the fruit of which

was *darśana* of Bhagavān. But then, perhaps it is simply the nature of Bhagavān's mercy, which is causeless, to manifest the very form of His compassion, His *darśana*, by revealing it even to such a lowly person as I, an ocean of faults. Alas! By what indescribable fortune did I obtain such a treasure? And by what great offence has it slipped from my grasp? Why can I not again receive His *darśana*? I am but a fool, unable to comprehend this. What kind of calamity is this? My intelligence has become paralyzed. In such a condition, where shall I go? What shall I do? What is the solution? Whom shall I ask? The three worlds appear to be utterly vacant. Nothing here is mine and I am without shelter. The whole universe wants to devour me like a huge forest fire. Maybe I should isolate myself from everyone in the world and contemplate this for a while.”

Thinking like this, the devotee who had attained direct audience of Bhagavān goes to a solitary place and sits there, restlessly crying out, “O Bhagavān, whose face is beautiful like a lotus, O You who are a stream of the sweetest nectar, by the charming beauty and fragrance of Your divine form, this forest of Vṛndāvana, which encompasses the splendour of all forests, is becoming graceful and fragrant. The sweet scent of the garland of forest flowers on Your neck, O Vanamālī, agitates the bumblebees as they hover around it. Alas! When will I again attain Your *darśana*, if but for a fraction of a second? Once only did I have the fortune to relish the nectar of Your sweetness. Will this unfortunate person be able to obtain that sweetness once more?”

While lamenting in this way, the devotee rolls on the ground. Breathing heavily, he falls unconscious and becomes totally maddened. Upon beholding Bhagavān everywhere, he is again filled with divine rapture, and he embraces Him and laughs. Sometimes he dances, and sometimes he sings. And again, upon not seeing Bhagavān, he laments and begins to weep. Continuously absorbed in such extraordinary activities, the devotee thus passes the duration of his life, unaware of his body's existence.

Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti: Observing the distress and eagerness of the *bhakta*, Śrī Bhagavān grants him *darśana* of Himself and His companions. When the devotee falls unconscious in ecstasy upon receiving that *darśana*, Bhagavān disappears, as mentioned previously. In this section, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura now expands on the *premī-bhakta*'s various astonishing states of ecstasy. He also expands on the *premī-bhakta*'s behaviour arising from his *darśana* of Bhagavān and then his losing sight of Bhagavān when He vanishes. Bhagavān bestows His *darśana* and then disappears only to reveal this kind of rapture in the *premī-bhakta*'s heart, which is full of eagerness and anxiety. This type of madness, replete with intense craving, is the supreme objective of human life.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we see how [in his previous birth] Śrī Nārada, the son of a maidservant, achieved *bhagavat-prema* at a tender age by the mercy of sages. Deep in the jungle, Śrī Bhagavān granted His *darśana* to the eager Nārada and then vanished. Greatly perturbed, Nārada became extremely restless to again behold Bhagavān and prayed to be able to do so. Bhagavān then spoke to him in a form Nārada could not see:

*sakrd yad darśitaṁ rūpam / etat kāmāya te 'nagha
mat-kāmaḥ śanakaiḥ sādhu / sarvān muñcati hṛc-chayān*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.6.22)

O sinless one, I have revealed Myself to you only once, and this is just to increase your attachment to Me. When the devotee develops a strong greed and eagerness to see Me, all types of desires for sense objects leave his heart.

At the time of *rāsa-līlā*, when Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the midst of the beautiful *gopīs* of Vraja, they became afflicted with deep sorrow in separation from Him, and weeping, they prayed for His *darśana*. After Bhagavān again revealed Himself, the *gopīs*, on the pretext of posing a riddle, accused Him of abandoning them at night, deep in the forest. To pacify them, Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

*nāham tu sakhyo bhajato 'pi jantūn
bhajāmy amīṣām anuvṛtti-vṛttaye
yathādhano labdha-dhane vinaṣṭe
tac-cintayānyan nibhṛto na veda*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.32.20)

My beloved *sakhīs*, just as a penniless man, after losing wealth gained by providence, becomes so engrossed in thoughts of that wealth that he forgets all else, similarly, to facilitate My worshipper's continuous meditation on Me, I do not [immediately] reciprocate, or give him My *darśana*.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura paints an unparalleled picture of the devotee's spiritual sentiments, portraying the devotee's anxiousness upon receiving direct audience of Bhagavān. This depiction conveys the unlimited attractiveness of the festival of Bhagavān's transcendental beauty, and similarly conveys the intense thirst and divine madness of the devotee's love.

Finally, the *premī-bhakta* thinks, "Surely Bhagavān will personally bring me into the realm of His pastimes and grant me loving service to Him (*prema-sevā*)." Thinking thus, his life becomes completely successful.

The purport is that even after Bhagavān disappears, the devotee continues to directly experience His form, beauty and so on. He cannot tolerate being separated from that experience for even a moment.

4g ~ The devotee's entrance into the eternal pastimes (nitya-līlā)

*tataś ca samaye pañcatām gacchataṁ sva-dehaṁ na jānan mayābhyarthitaḥ
sa eva karuṇā-varuṇālayas tathaiva pratyakṣī-bhūya sāksāt sevāyām mām
nīyūñjanaḥ sva-bhavanam nayatīti jānan kṛta-kṛtyo bhakto bhavatīti || 4 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: In due course, the devotee abandons his body, which dissolves into the five elements, without any awareness of doing so. His only experience is this: “The object of my perpetual entreaty, the ocean of compassion, Śrī Bhagavān, has directly manifested Himself before me, just like before, and to engage me in eternal service to Him, He is now escorting me to His own abode.” The devotee is thus crowned with complete success.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In due course, the devotee abandons his material body without realizing he has done so. All he knows is that the unlimitedly merciful Bhagavān has engaged him in direct service to Him and has brought him to His own abode. He thus achieves the ultimate goal.

Text 5

5a ~ The sādḥaka’s body cannot contain prema

“*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo ’tha bhajana-kriyā | tato ’nartha-nivṛttiś ca tato niṣṭhā ruciś tataḥ || athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati |*”
ity arthaḥ sādhu vivṛtaḥ | ato ’pi yathottara-svādu-vaiśiṣṭya-bhājita sneha-māna-praṇaya-rāgānurāga-mahābhāvākhyāni bhakti-kalpa-vallyā ūrdhvordhva-pallava-gāmīni phalāni santi | na teṣām āsvāda-sampad-auṣṇa-śaitya-saṁmarda-sahaḥ sādḥakasya deho bhaved iti na teṣām tatra prākṛtya-sambhava iti na tāny atra vivṛtāni |

Bhāvānuvāda: First, *śraddhā* develops, followed by *sādhu-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriyā*, *anartha-nivṛtti*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti*, *bhāva* and finally *prema*. This is the accurate sequence of the advent of *prema*, as delineated in the scriptures.

After this, among the leaves on the uppermost branches of the wish-fulfilling vine of *bhakti* are the fruits of *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga* and *mahābhāva*. Each successive stage is progressively superior

to the previous one in terms of the distinctive taste it bestows. The body of the *sādhaka* is unable to tolerate excessive heat [separation], coolness [meeting] or the colliding of the two, which comes from savouring these treasures [*sneha*, *māna*, etc]. It is therefore not possible for them to appear in the *sādhaka*'s body, and so they have not been described in detail here.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: A person whose heart is shrouded by ignorance and by numerous material desires may attain *śraddhā* by some good fortune – the grace of a pure devotee – and begin to engage in *bhajana*. After taking shelter at the feet of *śrī guru*, he accepts *harināma* and *dīkṣā* initiation. As he practises the activities of *bhakti* such as *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana*, and as the eradication of unwanted desires and habits (*anartha-nivṛtti*) takes place, he progresses through the stages of *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti* and *bhāva*, finally becoming situated in the realm of *prema*. For a *sādhaka* who is free from offence, there is no need for him to progress through these stages to attain *prema*. He attains *prema* immediately upon engaging in the practices of *bhajana* headed by *nāma-sankīrtana*. But because such an inoffensive person is rare in this world, these stages have been explained for the welfare of all, as they are most relevant.

Beyond *prema* are the stages of *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva* and *mahābhāva*, each sweeter than the previous. At these stages, the soothing coolness felt in meeting Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the burning felt in separation from Him, and the friction and overflowing of the various emotions of the heart are too intense for the *sādhaka*'s body to endure. After attaining *prema* and shedding the current body, the devotee obtains the body of an eternal associate of Bhagavān and enters His holy abode. Then, in that body, these stages [of *sneha*, *māna* and so forth] develop in him, according to his *bhāva* (relationship with Kṛṣṇa): *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* or *madhura*. The topmost manifestation of *prema*, *mahābhāva*, manifests only in those who have taken shelter of the amorous mood of Vraja. It cannot possibly manifest in others.

In this book, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has only elucidated *śraddhā* to *prema*. For the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, who have taken shelter of

the lotus feet of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, the ultimate goal of *bhajana* is *rādhā-dāsyam* (exclusive servitude to Śrī Rādhā), or in other words, *mañjarī-bhāva* (the mood of Śrī Rādhā's maidservant). Śrīman Mahāprabhu's dear personal associates, Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana and the other Gosvāmīs, are the *ācāryas* of *mañjarī-bhāva*. Therefore, we are presenting a brief introduction to these stages of *prema*, quoting from Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*:

(1) *Sneha*

*āruhya paramam kāṣṭhām / premā cid-dīpa-dīpanaḥ
hṛdayam drāvayann eṣa / sneha ity ābhidhīyate
atrodite bhavej jātu / na tṛptir darśanādiṣu*

Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.79)

When *kṛṣṇa-rati* (one's eternal relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa) attains excellence and the heart melts upon perceiving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is called *sneha*. Upon the arousal of *sneha*, one's greed for *darśana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is never satiated.

(2) *Māna*

*snehas tūtkṛṣṭatāvāptyā / mādhuryam mānayan navam
yo dhārayaty adākṣīnyam / sa māna iti kīrtyate*

Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi (14.96)

When *sneha* expands to even greater excellence, one begins to experience Śrī Kṛṣṇa's ever-fresh sweetness like never before and assumes a deviousness to conceal one's feelings. This is called *māna*.

In this stage, one's possessiveness (*mamatā*) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa increases even more. There is no place here for that contemptible crookedness which is rooted in selfishness. Rather, the crookedness displayed here is a unique speciality of *prema* that particularly pleases Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(3) *Prāṇaya*

māno dadhāno viśrambhaṁ / prāṇayaḥ procyate budhaiḥ

Ujjvala-nīlamanī (14.108)

This means that when *māna* reaches even greater excellence through the feeling of *mamatā*, one attains a state in which it appears that one's own life airs, mind, intelligence, body, clothing and ornaments are non-different from the life airs, mind, intelligence, body, clothing and ornaments of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This stage is called *prāṇaya*.

The word *viśrambha* in the above verse indicates complete trust or absence of formality.

(4) *Rāga*

*duḥkham apy adhikaṁ citte / sukhātvenaiva vyajyate
yatas tu prāṇayotkarṣāt / sa rāga iti kīrtyate*

Ujjvala-nīlamanī (14.126)

The topmost level of *prāṇaya* is called *rāga*. At this stage, when there is a possibility of attaining Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one experiences tremendous distress as happiness. And when one does not attain Him, one experiences great happiness as extreme distress.

(5) *Anurāga*

*sadānubhūtam api yaḥ / kuryān nava-navaṁ priyam
rāgo bhavan nava-navaḥ / so 'nurāga itīryate*

Ujjvala-nīlamanī (14.146)

That *rāga* which becomes newer and newer at every moment and causes one to continuously perceive one's beloved in an ever-fresh manner is called *anurāga*.

(6) Mahābhāva

*anurāgaḥ sva-saṁvedya- / daśām prāpya prakāśitaḥ
yāvad-āśraya-vṛttiś ced / bhāva ity abhidhīyate*

Ujjvala-nīlamanī (14.154)

This means that when *yāvad-āśraya-vṛtti-anurāga* attains the state of *sva-saṁvedya*, it is called *mahābhāva*. *Rāga* is the shelter of *anurāga*, and when *anurāga* reaches its topmost limit, it is called *yāvad-āśraya-vṛtti*. The state of *sva-saṁvedya* is known only to those *vraja-devīs* in whom *anurāga* has reached *yāvad-āśraya-vṛtti*. The stage of *mahābhāva* is not present in any other devotee. It is unobtainable even for Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā and the other queens. In this stage, *sāttvika-bhāvas* manifest up to *uddīpta* (brightly burning) and *suddīpta* (blazing). This *mahābhāva* manifests in varieties of astonishing ways.

Moreover, there are many different types of *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, etc. – the stages of *prema* as it blossoms. They can never manifest in the material body of a *sādhaka*, no matter how far he has progressed on the path of *sādhana*. Only the stages of *bhakti* up to *rati* (*bhāva*) can manifest in his body. Beyond *rati*, he sheds his body and enters the pastime place of Bhagavān. By the power of associating with Bhagavān’s eternal companions, *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, etc. then manifest in his heart. Śrīla Cakravartī Ṭhākura explains that the reason these stages cannot possibly manifest in the body of the *sādhaka* is because it simply does not have the capacity to endure the ecstatic transformations that take place, such as the flaring up and receding of the excruciatingly intolerable fire of separation. For this reason, we are not explaining these topics extensively here. Those who especially desire to know more about this subject can study Chapter 14 – “Sthāyi-bhāva” – in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*.

5b ~ Scriptural evidence for ruci, āsakti and so forth

kiṁ ceha rucy-āsakti-bhāva-premasu lakṣayitvā sākṣād anubhava-gocaratām prāpīteṣu tatra santy api bhūrṇi pramāṇāni nopanyastāni | pramāṇāpeksayā hy anubhava-vartma-pāruṣyāpādakatvāt | kiṁ ca tāny apekṣyāṇi cet “tasmims tadā labdha-rucer mahā-mateḥ” iti rucāu; “guṇeṣu saktam bandhāya ratam vā puṁsi muktaye” ity āsaktāu; “priya-śravasy aṅga mamābhavad ratih” iti ratau; “premātibhara-nirbhinna-pulakāṅgo ’tinirvṛtaḥ” iti premaṇi; “tā ye pibanty avitrṣo nṛpa gāḍha-karṇais tān na sprśanty aśana-tṛḍ-bhaya-śoka-mohāḥ” iti rucy-anubhāve; “gāyan vilajjo vicared asaṅgaḥ” ity āsaky-anubhāve; “yathā bhrāmyaty ayo brahman svayam ākarṣa-sannidhau, tathā me bhrāmyate cetaś cakra-pāner yadr̥cchayā” iti raty-anubhāve; “evam vrata” ity atra “hasanty atho roditi rauti gāyati” iti premṇo ’nubhāve; “āhūta iva me śighram darśanam yāti cetasi” iti tatra sphūrtau “paśyanti te me rucirāṇy amba santah” iti sākṣād-darśane; “tair darśanīyāvayavair udāra-vilāsa-hāseḥṣita-vāma-sūktaiḥ” iti labdha-darśanasya svabhāve; “vāso yathā parikṛtam madirā-madāndha” iti ceṣṭāyām pramāṇāṇy anusandhāya vicārayitavyāni |

Bhāvānuvāda: Furthermore, although there is an abundance of scriptural evidence pertaining to the characteristics and the visible symptoms of *ruci*, *āsakti*, *bhāva* and *prema*, such evidence has not been cited herein, for if one depends on such scriptural proofs for these stages, one meets with some roughness on the path of realization. Nonetheless, one seeking citations from scripture can deliberate on these verses:

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam provides the following evidence for *ruci* – *tasmims tadā labdha-rucer mahā-mate*; for *āsakti* – *guṇeṣu saktam bandhāya, ratam vā puṁsi muktaye*; for *bhāva* – *priya-śravasy aṅga mamābhavad ratih*; and for *prema* – *premātibhara-nirbhinna-pulakāṅgo ’tinirvṛtaḥ*.

Evidence of the visible symptoms that illustrate the presence of *ruci* (the *anubhāvas* of *ruci*) – *tā ye pibanty avitrṣo nṛpa gāḍha-karṇais, tān na sprśanty aśana-tṛḍ-bhaya-śoka-mohāḥ*; of *āsakti* – *gāyan vilajjo vicared*

asaṅgaḥ; of rati (bhāva) – yathā bhrāmyaty ayo brahman, svayam ākarṣa-sannidhau / tathā me bhidyate cetaś, cakra-pāṇer yadṛcchayā; and of prema – evaṁ-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtyā ... hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyati.

Evidence pertaining to a *sphūr̥ti* of Bhagavān – *āhūta iva me śīghram darśanam yāti cetasi*. Evidence pertaining to direct *darśana* – *paśyanti te me rucirāṇy amba santaḥ*. Evidence regarding the condition of the devotee after he receives direct *darśana* – *tair darśanīyāvayavair udāra-vilāsa-hāsekṣita-vāma-sūktaiḥ*. Evidence regarding the activities of the devotee who has attained direct *darśana* – *vāso yathā parikṛtam madirā-madāndhaḥ*.

These confirmations from scripture can be researched and carefully deliberated upon.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: In *Mādhurya-kādambinī*, the stages of *ruci*, *āsakti*, *bhāva* and *prema* and their corresponding symptoms have been only described [that is, scriptural evidence has not been cited]. Although there is plentiful scriptural evidence of these stages, if one depends on validation of these stages, it will bring only roughness on the path of one's *rasa*-laden realizations. Ascertaining a subject matter is much more beautiful and relishable through direct realization than by depending solely on scriptural proofs.

Still, for those who wish to see scriptural evidence, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has quoted several verses from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, since it is the crest jewel of all divine scriptural evidence and is revered by everyone.

In regard to *ruci*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.27) presents the following evidence:

*tasmims tadā labdha-rucer mahā-mate
priya-śravasy askhalitā matir mama
yayāham etat sad-asat sva-māyayā
paśye mayi brahmaṇi kalpitam pare*

[Śrī Nārada Muni said to Śrī Vedavyāsa:] O intelligent one, by staying in the association of great souls who devotedly sing the pastimes of

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and by continuously hearing, with faith, their charming narrations about Him, my taste (*ruci*) for Him awoke. My intelligence became fixed on the enchanting glories of Parabrahma Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and through this intelligence, I could understand that this subtle and gross body should be engaged only in service to Him.

The fruit of hearing *bhagavat-kathā* from the lotus mouth of *mahāpuruṣas* is that the contamination of material desires dissipates and *ruci* arises. Following this, a fixed determination to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa enters the heart. We should understand this by the above verse.

In regard to *āsakti*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.15) states:

*cetaḥ khalv asya bandhāya / muktaye cātmano matam
guṇeṣu saktam bandhāya / ratam vā puṁsi muktaye*

[Śrī Kapiladeva explained to Mother Devahūti:] It is accepted that the mind is the cause of the *jīva*'s bondage and liberation. When the mind is engrossed in material objects, it is the cause of bondage, and when it is deeply attached (*āsakta*) to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is the cause of liberation.

Kṛṣṇa-rati [the stage of *bhāva*] is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.5.26) as follows:

*tatrānvaham kṛṣṇa-kathāḥ pragāyatām
anugraheṇāśṛṇavam manoharāḥ
tāḥ śraddhayā me 'nupadam viśṛṇvataḥ
priya-śravasy aṅga mamābhavad ratih*

[Śrī Nārada said to Śrī Vedavyāsa:] Every day, by the mercy of those great souls and in their saintly association, I heard charming narrations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As I continuously and faithfully listened, affection (*rati*) for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose glories are most pleasing, gradually arose within me.

In this verse, the topics of *sādhu-saṅga* and the awakening of *rati* (*bhāva*) for Bhagavān as a result of hearing from the mouth of *sādhus* have been discussed.

In regard to *prema*, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.6.17) states:

premātibhara-nirbhinna- / pulakāṅgo 'tinirvṛtaḥ
ānanda-samplave līno / nāpaśyam ubhayaṁ mune

[Śrī Nārada said to Vedavyāsa:] O great sage, at that time, completely overwhelmed by *prema*, the hair on my body stood on end and my heart became extremely peaceful and cool. I was submerged in that flood of bliss to such an extent that I lost all awareness of both myself and the object of my meditation [Bhagavān].

The *anubhāvas*, or visible symptoms, of *ruci* have been described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.29.40):

tasmin mahan-mukharitā madhubhic-caritra-
pīyūṣa-śeṣa-saritaḥ paritaḥ sravanti
tā ye pibanty avitr̥ṣo nṛpa gāḍha-karṇais
tān na spr̥śanty aśana-tr̥ḍ-bhaya-śoka-mohāḥ

[Śrī Nārada said to King Prācīnabarhi:] O King, in the association of great souls who are addicted to singing the pastimes of Bhagavān, the many rivers of Śrī Madhusūdana's nectarean pastimes flow in all four directions. Those who, with attentive, insatiable ear-cups, drink those streams of nectar cannot be touched by hunger, thirst, fear, lamentation and delusion.

When *ruci* awakens as a result of hearing the sweet topics of Śrī Bhagavān from the lotus mouth of pure devotees, one is never satisfied, despite continuous hearing. At such a stage, the *sādhaka* becomes so immersed in ecstasy that he forgets even himself. Hunger, thirst, fear, lamentation, illusion and so on cannot disturb him in the slightest. That is the characteristic of *ruci*.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.39) describes the stage of *āsakti* in a similar manner:

*śṛṇvan su-bhadrāṇi rathāṅga-pāṇer
janmāni karmāṇi ca yāni loke
gītāni nāmāni tad-arthakāni
gāyan vilajjo vicared asaṅgaḥ*

[Kavi Yogendra said to Mahārāja Nimi:] Free from attachment (*āsakti*) to any worldly person or thing, and without shyness and shame, one should wander this earth singing the all-auspicious narrations of Bhagavān's birth and activities. By doing so, one develops deep attachment (*āsakti*) to Him.

The visible symptoms that illustrate the presence of *rati* have been described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.14):

*yathā bhrāmyaty ayo brahman / svayam ākarṣa-sannidhau
tathā me bhidyate cetaś / cakra-pāṇer yadṛcchayā*

[Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja said to his school teachers:] O *brāhmaṇas*, in the same way that a magnet automatically attracts iron, Bhagavān, the wielder of the disc, has separated my mind from this material world by His own sweet will and is forcibly attracting it toward Him.

In essence, *kṛṣṇa-rati*, or *bhakti*, is the intrinsic function of Śrī Bhagavān's internal potency (*svarūpa-śakti*). She is self-illuminating and appears by her own independent desire. Through her mercy, whoever she accepts as her own is automatically pulled toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa. After that, nothing in this world can separate the devotee from Him. Rather, *bhakti* separates the devotee from material existence and leads him toward Śrī Bhagavān.

The visible symptoms that illustrate the presence of *prema* have been described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.2.40):

*evam-vrataḥ sva-priya-nāma-kīrtiyā
jātānurāgo druta-citta ucchaiḥ
hasaty atho roditi rauti gāyaty
unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyah*

[Śrī Kavi said to Mahārāja Nimi:] *Prema* for Bhagavān arises in the heart of a person who is adept in *bhajana* and who has avowedly dedicated himself to constantly performing supremely auspicious *kīrtana* of the holy names of his dear most Śrī Hari. His heart thoroughly melts and he becomes unaffected by the opinions of ordinary people. Sometimes he loudly calls out to Bhagavān, seeming to be mad. Sometimes he laughs and sometimes he wails. Sometimes, in a sweet voice, he sings of Bhagavān's charming qualities. And sometimes, upon receiving *darśana* of Bhagavān, he dances before Him.

A momentary vision of Bhagavān (*bhagavat-sphūrṭi*) is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.6.33):

*pragāyataḥ sva-vīryāni / tīrtha-pādaḥ priya-śravāḥ
āhūta iva me śiḅhram / darśanam yāti cetasi*

[Śrī Nārada Ṛṣi said to Śrī Vedavyāsa:] When I sing of the pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān, whose lotus feet are the source of all holy places and whose glorification is most dear to me, He immediately reveals Himself, as if summoned.

Because the devotee has glorified the pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān, Bhagavān enters that devotee's heart like one who has been called for.

In regard to direct *darśana* of Bhagavān, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.35) states:

*paśyanti te me rucirāṅy amba santaḥ
prasanna-vaktrāruṇa-locanāni*

*rūpāṇi divyāni vara-pradāni
sākaṁ vācaṁ sprhaṇīyām vadanti*

[Lord Kapiladeva said to His mother, Devahūti:] O Mother, My devotees are always seeing My beautiful and benevolent transcendental forms, which are endowed with eyes the colour of the rising sun and a charming lotus face. The devotees lovingly converse with these various forms, which are hankered for by great ascetics.

This verse describes the attainment of the direct *darśana* of Śrī Bhagavān. The nature of devotees who have received such *darśana* is described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.36):

*tair darśanīyāvayavair udāra-
vilāsa-hāseṣita-vāma-sūktaiḥ
hṛtātmano hṛta-prānāmś ca bhaktir
anicchato me gatim aṇvīm prayunkte*

[Śrī Kapiladeva said:] O Mother, the mind and senses of My devotees are completely absorbed in the sweetness of My divine forms, whose limbs are attractive, whose smiles are playful and wide, whose glances are charming, and who speak sweetly. Although My devotees do not desire to achieve the supreme destination, My divine abode, their *prema-bhakti* to Me enables them to do so.

Upon the devotee's receiving *darśana* of Bhagavān just once, his mind and all his senses become focused exclusively on relishing Śrī Bhagavān's beautiful form, crooked glances and sweet speech. For him, nothing within the entire material existence is worth seeing or doing any longer. Śrī Bhagavān automatically becomes his everything, and he easily achieves eternal service to Him in His abode.

The various activities of a devotee who has achieved *darśana* of Bhagavān are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.13.36):

*dehaṃ ca naśvaram avasthitam utthitam vā
siddho na paśyati yato 'dhyagamat svarūpam
daivād apetam atha daiva-vaśād upetaṃ
vāso yathā parikṛtaṃ madirā-madāndhaḥ*

Just as a drunkard may have no awareness of whether he is dressed or not, so a devotee who has received direct *darśana* of Bhagavān is not conscious of whether his body, as a result of his previous deeds, is standing or sitting, nor does he notice when, by providence, he leaves one body and takes birth in another. Indeed, he pays no heed to the activities of the perishable body.

After receiving direct *darśana* of Śrī Bhagavān, the devotee is no longer aware of his temporary body. All of his activities resemble those of a madman. He remains completely immersed in tasting the charming, beautiful form of Śrī Bhagavān.

Quoting these scriptural evidences, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has described each stage of *prema* (on the basis of his personal experience). He cites *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for all proof, because if there is any authoritative, divinely manifest scripture that exclusively propounds *prema-bhakti*, that scripture is the fifth Veda, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīman Mahāprabhu regarded *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as the immaculate crest jewel of all Purāṇas and the ultimate authoritative scripture.

5c ~ The living entity's bondage & the means by which he can become free from it

*atredaṃ tattvam—“ahankārasya dve vṛttī ahaṃtā mamatā ceti” | tayor
jñānena layo mokṣaḥ deha-gehādi-viṣayatve bandhaḥ |*

Bhāvānuvāda: Herein, the truth (*tattva*) of the *jīva*'s bondage and liberation is being explained. The false ego has two functions: *ahaṃtā*

(a sense of “I”) and *mamatā* (a sense of “mine”). When applied to the physical body, one’s house and so on, the sense of “I” and “mine” are the cause of continued bondage. But by means of knowledge of one’s relationship with Bhagavān, *ahantā* and *mamatā* toward anything of this world is destroyed. This is the stage of liberation.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: The living entity’s capacity to perform action is attested in *Vedānta-sūtra* (2.3.33): *kartā śāstrārthavattāt*. *Śāstra* states that the conscious living entity is the doer, not the material modes. The *jīva* is only impelled to act by the modes of material nature. He possesses minute independence. This is the *jīva*’s defining quality. The living entity can use this independence as he wishes, and that is why he must taste the result of his own activities – *sva-karma-phala-bhuk pumān*. It is to be understood that as long as the living entity is the doer and the enjoyer, he will certainly possess a false ego. The false ego has two tendencies: *ahantā* and *mamatā*, or the feelings of “I” and “mine”. The conditioned living entity, who is deluded about his identity and shackled by *māyā*, regards the material body that is created by *māyā* and obtained as a result of his past activities to be himself (“I”). And he maintains a sense of possessiveness for wife, sons, wealth, assets and the like, considering them to be his (“mine”). This is his state of imprisonment. Carrying the *saṃskāras* (impressions in the heart) of this material false ego, and having forgotten his real identity, the living entity, as a result of his fruitive actions since time without beginning, wanders throughout the 8,400,000 species of life.

By the instructions of *sādhu* and *śāstra*, the living entity bound by illusion practises *sādhana-bhajana*. He thereby relinquishes his material false ego, as the impressions of his spiritual ego gradually develop. This spiritual ego is inherent within the living entities, who are eternal servants of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and it is through this spiritual ego that they become free from *māyā* and blessed with the attainment of service to Śrī Hari.

The *jñānīs* burn these two tendencies of the material false ego with the fire of *jñāna*. They attain the state known as *mukti* (liberation), but in doing so they destroy the very nature of the soul, which desires spiritual bliss (*ānanda*). It is for this reason that persons desirous of their own welfare prefer going to hell to liberation. They never desire liberation. “*Naraka vāñchaye, tabu sāyujya nā laya* – a devotee prefers hell to merging into the effulgence of Bhagavān” (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 6.268).

5d ~ Prema is far beyond liberation

ahaṁ prabhor janaḥ sevako ’smi, sevyo me prabhur bhagavān sa-parikara eva rūpa-guṇa-mādhurī-mahodadhir iti pārṣada-rūpa-vigraha-bhagavad-vigrahādiviṣayatve premā sa hi bandha-mokṣābhyām vilakṣaṇa eva puruṣārtha-cūḍāmanir ity ucyate |

Bhāvānuvāda: [Pure *ahaṁtā* is the feeling,] “I belong to Bhagavān and am His servant,” and [pure *mamatā* is the feeling,] “Śrī Bhagavān, who is ever accompanied by His companions, is a great ocean of *rūpa-madhurī* (charming beauty) and *guṇa-madhurī* (sweet qualities). He is my master and the object of my service.” *Prema* manifests as *ahaṁtā* in relation to one’s own transcendental form (identity) as a companion of Bhagavān, and as *mamatā* in relation to Bhagavān’s transcendental form and personality. *Prema* is far beyond both the bondage and liberation of the *jīva* and thus declared to be the crest jewel of all human attainments.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: By performing *bhajana* of Śrī Hari, the devotees of Bhagavān gradually turn these two functions of the false ego (“I” and “mine”) toward the service of the Lord. When one’s sense of *ahaṁtā* becomes “I am a servant of Śrī Hari” and one’s sense of *mamatā* becomes “Śrī Hari is mine”, it is called *prema*. This *prema* is the fifth and highest attainment for the *jīva*.

5e ~ The sequence in which “I” and “mine” are gradually disengaged from worldliness and engaged in transcendence

tatra kramah | ahamtā-mamatayor vyavahārikyām eva vṛttāv atisāndrāyām satyām samsāra eva | aham vaiṣṇavo bhūyasaṁ prabhur me bhagavān sevyo bhavatv iti yādṛcchikyām śraddhā-kaṇikāyām satyām tad-vṛtteḥ pāramārthikatva-gandhe bhaktāv adhikārah | tataḥ sādhu-saṅge sati pāramārthikatva-gandhasya sāndratvaṁ tato bhajana-kriyāyām aniṣṭhitāyām satyām tayoh paramārthe vastuny eka-deśa-vyāpinī vṛttiḥ vyavahāre pūrṇaiva | tasyām niṣṭhitāyām paramārthe bahu-deśa-vyāpinī vyavahāre prāyiky eva | rucāv utpannāyām paramārthe prāyiky eva vṛttir vyavahāre tu eka-deśa-vyāpinī | āsaktau jātāyām paramārthe pūrṇā vyavahāre tu gandha-mātrī | bhāve tu paramārtha evātyantikī vṛttir vyavahāre tu bādhitānuvṛtti-nyāyenābhāsamayī | premṇi tayor ahamtā-mamatayor vṛttiḥ paramārthe paramātyantikī vyavahāre tu naikāpīti |

Bhāvānuvāda: Now, the sequence in which “I” and “mine” disengage from worldliness and engage in transcendence is described. As long as a material sense of “I” and “mine” remains extremely thick, one’s fate will be to remain in material existence. But if by chance a speck of *śraddhā* appears in a person in such a condition and he thinks, “I shall become a Vaiṣṇava, and Prabhu Śrī Bhagavān will be the object of my service,” then a scent (*gandha*) of spiritual disposition will manifest, and one will become qualified for *bhakti*. Thereafter, this scent of spiritual disposition will become stronger through *sādhu-saṅga*.

At the beginning of *aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā*, this sense of “I” and “mine” is engaged in spiritual reality only partially (*eka-deśa-vyāpinī*), and its absorption in materiality is complete (*pūrṇā*). With the awakening of *niṣṭhā*, one’s sense of “I” and “mine” in relation to spiritual reality is extensive (*bahu-deśa-vyāpinī*), while absorption in materiality is almost complete (*prāyiki*).

When *ruci* awakens, one's sense of "I" and "mine" in relation to spiritual reality is almost complete (*prāyikī*), whereas it is only partial (*eka-deśa-vyāpinī*) in relation to worldly matters. When *āsakti* awakens, one's sense of "I" and "mine" in relation to spiritual reality is complete (*pūrṇā*), and only the mere scent of it remains in relation to a worldly conception. At the stage of *bhāva*, one's sense of "I" and "mine" in relation to spiritual reality is absolute (*ātyantikī*), and the apparent continuation of that sense in relation to worldliness exists only as a semblance (*ābhāsa*). Finally, at the stage of *prema*, the topmost goal, one's sense of "I" and "mine" in relation to spiritual reality is supremely absolute (*parama-ātyantikī*), without the slightest trace of materiality.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: With the performance of *sādhana-bhajana*, the sense of "I" and "mine" in connection with worldly and mundane objects is gradually relinquished, and one becomes devoted wholly to transcendence.

5f ~ The sequence in which one is able to meditate upon Bhagavān

*evaṁ ca bhajana-kriyāyām bhagavad-dhyānam vārtāntara-gandhi kṣaṇikam
eva | niṣṭhāyām tad-dhyāne vārtāntarābhāsaḥ | rucau vārtāntara-rahitam
eva tad-dhyānam bahu-kāla-vyāpī | āsaktau tad-dhyānam atisāndram | bhāve
dhyāna-mātram eva bhagavataḥ sphūrṭiḥ | premaṇi sphūrter vailakṣaṇyam tad-
darśanam ceti || 5 ||*

Bhāvānuvāda: Similarly, at the stage of *bhajana-kriyā*, meditation on Bhagavān is momentary and tainted by worldly topics. At the stage of *niṣṭhā*, a semblance of worldly concerns remains in one's meditation. When *ruci* awakens, meditation is free from any worldly topics and continues for prolonged periods. When *āsakti* develops, meditation becomes extremely deep. At the stage of *bhāva*, a vision of the Lord (*bhagavat-sphūrṭi*) is

experienced as soon as one begins to meditate. At the stage of *prema*, the devotee has an even more extraordinary vision of Bhagavān than before; and finally, he receives direct *darśana* of Bhagavān.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Accordingly, one’s meditation on Bhagavān gradually matures and attains completeness when it attains the stage of *prema*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has delineated all this in this section.

Text 6

The author’s prayer for eternal auspiciousness

mādhurya-vāridheḥ kṛṣṇa-caitanyād uddhṛtaiḥ rasaiḥ |
iyam dhinotu mādhurya-mayī-kādambinī jagat || 6 ||

iti mādhurya-kādambinyām pūrṇa-manoratho nāmāṣṭamy amṛta-vṛṣṭiḥ
samāptā || 8 ||

|| *samāptaiṣā mādhurya-kādambinī* ||

Bhāvānuvāda: May this *Mādhurya-kādambinī*, which has drawn its torrents of *rasa* from the nectarean ocean of charming sweetness, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, satisfy the whole creation.

Thus ends the Bhāvānuvāda
of the Eighth Shower of Nectar, named
Pūrṇa-manoratha
 (“Absolute Fulfilment of the Soul’s Yearning”).

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti: Svayam Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the emporium of all *rasa* (*akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*). To satisfy His three unfulfilled desires – desires instigated by His relishing the *prema* of Śrīmatī

Rādhārāṇī in His Vraja pastimes – Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted the mood (*bhāva*) and complexion (*kānti*) of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the embodiment of *prema*, and descended in the form of Śacīnandana Śrī Gaurahari. Śrī Gaurasundara, the ocean of nectarean sweetness, is indeed the most astonishing combination of the ocean of *rasa* and the ocean of *prema*. The full waves of *mādhurya-rasa* forever swell within Him in their completeness.

It is only by tasting the *rasa* of the ocean of His sweet pastimes that the topics described in this *Mādhurya-kādambinī* are realized. By regularly putting into practice, with devotion, the topics in this book, the *sādhaka-bhakta* can easily traverse the various obstacles to *bhajana*, such as *aparādha* and the desire for wealth, worship and prestige, and achieve *prema*. In this way, by relishing the *mādhurya* of Bhagavān, his life is forever blessed and fulfilled. Of this there is no doubt.

In concluding this book, the most revered Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura showers his mercy and blessings upon the entire world, saying, “By the compassion of Śrī Gaurasundara, may this *Mādhurya-kādambinī*, which has arisen from the ocean of His transcendental pastimes, thoroughly cool and completely satisfy the inhabitants of this world, who are endlessly burning in the fire of the threefold miseries, with its shower of nectar.”

**Thus ends the Pīyūṣa-varṣinī-vṛtti
on the Eighth Shower of Nectar, named
Pūrṇa-manoratha
 (“Absolute Fulfilment of the Soul’s Yearning”).**

Thus ends Mādhurya-kādambinī.

Glossary – Section Index

If the Shower and Text are not listed, it is because the term is used throughout the book.

A

abhilāṣa – Longing, desire. [5.1, 6.1c, 7.1a, 8.1a]

abhiniveśa – Absorption in worldly objects; one of the five types of *kleśa*, or misery. [2.3a, 3.1a]

ācārya – A powerful spiritual preceptor who instructs by example.

adhirūḍha-bhāva – A stage of *prema* in which the devotee feels as if all the forms of happiness within billions of universes do not compare with an iota of the happiness of meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or that the suffering caused by being bitten by all the scorpions and snakes of millions of universes does not compare with even a small particle of the intense suffering felt in separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [1.2]

Adhokṣaja – The Supreme Lord who is imperceptible to the material senses and mind. [1.3b]

ahantā – A sense of identity, “I-ness”. [7.1f, 8.5c-d-e]

ahankāra – False ego. [3.3a]

aiśvarya – Divine majesty; opulence. [1.1, 2.5b, 3.3f-h]

Aiśvarya-kādambinī – A book on dualism and monism by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. [2.1]

ālabhana – The support, or basis, of *rasa*. [7.2c]

ānanda – Spiritual bliss.

anartha – A habit or trait that obstructs progress in devotion; worthless; there are of four types of *anarthas*. [3]

anartha-nivṛtti – The removal of obstacles to devotion. [3]

aṅga – Limb; part; aspect.

aniṣṭhitā – Devoid of steadiness. [2.5c, 2.6, 4.1]

aniṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā – Unsteady devotional practice. [2.5c]

anubhāva – An expression of the spiritual emotions of the heart [2.8b, 5.4, 7.1g, 8.1a, 8.5b]. One of the five ingredients of *rasa*. [7.2c]

anugraha – Mercy, favour. [8.3b-c]

anukūla – Favourable, kind. [4.3a]

ānukūlya-ābhilāṣa – A deep yearning to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a way that is beneficial for Him. [5.1, 6.1c, 7.1a, 8.1a]

Mādhurya-kādambinī

anurāga – A stage after *prema* in which *rāga* (attachment) to Kṛṣṇa feels ever fresh. [1.2, 1.6a, 7.2c, 8.5a]

anuśilana – The cultivation of a mood of devotion to Bhagavān. [7.1a]

aparādha – Offence to Śrī Kṛṣṇa or to anyone or anything dear to Him. [3.4]

aparādhi – One who commits an offence to Śrī Kṛṣṇa or to anyone or anything dear to Him. [3.5]

aparādhotta-anartha – Obstacles to devotion arising from past offences; one of the four types of impediments to devotion. [3.1a-b, 3.4c-f]

apauruṣeya – Not made by any man or demigod; specifically refers to the Vedas, which were authored by the Supreme Lord. [1.3a]

aparābaddha-papa – The unfructified result of sinful action. [2.3b]

apratipatti – Incompetence or failure; the third of five obstacles to steadiness in devotion. [4.2a-b]

Arjuna – Kṛṣṇa’s dear friend in Dvārakā to whom He imparted the instructions of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. [1.4a, 1.5b-f-h, 2.5a, 3.2d, 3.3k]

artha – Wealth, real value [1.6a, 3.1a]; economic development. [7.1b, 8.1b]

arthāpatti-pramāṇa – Relying on inference, or presumption, as evidence. [1.3a-b]

āsakti – Intense, transcendental attachment. [6, 7.1a, 8.1b]

asmitā – False identification with the body and anything related to the body; one of the five types of *kleśa*, or misery. [2.3a-b]

āśraya-ālambana – The abode of transcendental love, specifically in regard to a particular relationship with Kṛṣṇa; a component of *vibhāva*, which is one of the five constituents of *rasa*. [7.2c]

aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāvas – Eight bodily transformations arising spontaneously from transcendence. [7.2c]

ātyantikī – Absolutely free; the fifth and final stage in the eradication of obstacles to devotion [3.4b-c-f, 3.5a]. The fifth and final stage in the spiritualization of “I” and “mine”. [8.5e-f]

audārya – Magnanimity. [8.1f, 8.2c]

avidyā – Ignorance; one of the five types of *kleśa*, or misery. [2.3a-c, 2.4, 2.5b, 3.1a]

B

bahu-deśa-vartinī – Extensive; the second stage in the eradication of obstacles to devotion. [3.4b-f]

bahu-deśa-vyāpinī – Extensive; the second stage in the spiritualization of “I” and “mine”. [8.5f]

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa – The most prominent disciple of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura [Introduction, 2.1, 8.3e]

bhagavad / bhagavat – That which is related to Bhagavān.

bhagavad-āsakti – Attachment to Bhagavān. [6.1a, 6.2g]

bhagavad-bhakti – Devotion to the Supreme Lord.

bhagavad-bhakti-tattva – The ontological truth regarding devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

bhāgavata-dharma – The eternal nature of the soul, service to Bhagavān, God.

Bhagavad-gītā – “The Song of God”, a famous treatise in which the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa counsels his friend Arjuna on devotional service and surrender.

Bhagavān – The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is replete with six opulences: beauty, wealth, power, fame, knowledge and renunciation.

Bhāgavatāmṛta-kaṇā – Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s summary of *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, which was composed by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī. [3.3h-i]

bhagavat-kathā – Narrations about the Supreme Lord. [1.5k, 4.2b, 4.3a, 8.5b]

bhagavat-prasāda – Foodstuffs that have been offered to the Lord. [3.5d]

bhagavattā – Godhood. [1.1]

bhajana – Devotional absorption.

bhajana-kriyā – The practice of devotion. [2.5c, 2.6]

bhajanānanda – The bliss arising from devotional absorption. [5.4]

bhajana-ruci – Taste for devotional practice. [6.1a]

bhajanīya – The object of devotional service, Śrī Bhagavān. [6.1a]

bhakta – One who engages in devotion to God; a devotee.

bhakta-bhāgavata – A devotee of God; or the pure devotee of the Lord. [4.1]

bhakta-vātsalya – The Supreme Lord’s topmost quality of being affectionate to His devotees. [1.3d, 1.5k, 3.4e, 8.3c-d-e]

bhakti – Loving devotional service to God.

bhakti-anukūla-vartinī – (See *tad-anukūla-vartinī*.)

Bhakti-devī – The personification and abode of devotion.

bhakti-kalpa-latā – Wish-fulfilling vine of devotion. [6.1a, 8.1a]

bhakti-rasa – Transcendental humours of devotion. [1.1, 1.2, 1.5a-j-k, 1.6a, 2.2a, 2.5b, 7.2c]

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu – “The Nectarean Ocean of Devotional Mellows”, a definitive treatise on devotion composed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

bhakti-sādhana – The meditative practice of *bhakti*, prior to attaining perfection. [1.5k, 2.1, 2.5a, 3.3g, 3.4b, 8.1a]

bhakti-saṁskāras – Impressions in the heart made from the performance of *bhakti* that allow *bhakti* to be practised easily. [1.1]

Mādhurya-kādambinī

Bhakti-sandarbha – Treatise on devotion by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī.

bhakti-tattva – The conclusive truth about devotional service. [1.3a, 1.5l, 1.6a-g, 7.1g]

bhakti-uttha-anartha – Obstacles to devotion arising from imperfectly performed devotion; one of the four types of impediments to devotion. [3.1a, 3.4a-f]

bhāva – Realization of one’s eternal spiritual emotion and identity; it has nine symptoms. [3.5c, 7]. An advanced stage of *prema*. [1.6a, 3.4c, 3.5c-e, 7.2c, 8.5a]

bhāva-bhakti – Devotional service performed in one’s eternal mood. [1.1, 1.2, 7]

brahma – Transcendence; the impersonal aspect of the Absolute Truth.

Brahmā (Lord) – The first created being, empowered to create the material universe. [1.2, 1.5a, 3.3c-d-e-f-h-i-j, 7.1c, 8.1c, 8.4b]

brahmarṣis – Sages realized in the Absolute Truth (*brahma*). [3.2f]

Brahma-saṁhitā – Prayers spoken by Lord Brahmā at the beginning of creation. [3.3c-d]

brahma-sāyujya – Merging with the featureless aspect of the Supreme Lord. [1.5a-k, 3.3l]

buddhi-pūrvaka – Impelled by the intelligence. [5.1, 6.1c]

C

caitanya – Sentient beings; sentience. [3.3f-g-h-i-j]

Caitanya Mahāprabhu – The Supreme Personality of Godhead who advented

500 years ago to teach by example loving devotional service.

Caitanya-caritāmṛta – A treatise by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, presenting the ontological truth of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His pastimes, in chronological order.

cātaka bird – A bird that only drinks water that falls from clouds. [8.3a]

Causal Ocean – The ocean in which Mahāviṣṇu lies when manifesting the material creation. [3.3b-i]

chāyā-raty-ābhāsa – A shadow of the semblance of one’s eternal nature. [7.1g, 7.2a]

cit – Cognizance of transcendence; the spiritual potency.

cit-śakti – The Supreme Lord’s internal potency, which is fully spiritual. [1.3b, 3.3c-h]

citta – Consciousness, heart, mind.

cit-tattva – The ontological truth of spiritual reality. [7.1a]

D

darśana – Direct vision (especially in regard to a transcendental person or place).

dāsyā – Affectionate servitude; one of the five types of relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [7.2b-c]

dhāma – Holy place; abode of the Supreme Lord where He enacts His transcendental pastimes. [3.1a, 3.5f, 8.4e]

dharmā – Occupational duties, either permanent or temporary, designed to ensure

a person’s elevation, not degradation; religiosity.

dharma-sāstras – Scriptures on worldly and religious duties. [3.1c]

dhruva-anu-smṛti – Remembrance of Śrī Hari in an uninterrupted manner. [7.1e]

dīkṣā – Initiation into the *kṛṣṇa-mantra*. [2.2b, 2.5b, 2.6, 2.8a, 8.5a]

duṣkṛtottha / duṣkṛti-jāta – Obstacles to devotion arising from previous sinful activities; one of the four types of impediments to devotion. [3.1a, 3.4f]

dveṣa – Aversion; hatred, one of the five types of *kleśa*, or misery. [2.3a, 3.1a, 3.3f, 5.2]

E

eight bodily transformations arising from transcendence – *Aṣṭa-sāttvika-bhāvas*. [7.2c]

eka-deśa-vartini – Partial; the first stage in the eradication of obstacles to devotion. [3.4b-c-f]

eka-deśa-vyāpini – Partial; the first stage in the spiritualization of “I” and “mine”. [8.5e-f]

F

faith – *Śraddhā*. [1.1, 1.5g, 2.5a-b, 3.1a, 3.4c-f, 4.1, 8.5a]

false ego – *Ahaṅkāra*. [3.3a, 7.13e-g, 8.5c]

four Kumāras – The four sons born from the mind of Lord Brahmā. [1.5k, 6.2e]

four types of foodstuffs – Food that is licked, chewed, drunk and sucked. [8.1d]

G

Gauḍīya – Relating to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s precepts regarding devotion to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; from Bengal.

ghana-taralā – “Thick and thin” or sporadic devotional endeavours, the second stage of unsteady devotional practice. [2.5c]

Goloka – The topmost realm of the spiritual world, Śrī Vṛndāvana. [1.6a]

gopī – Cowherd girl. [1.5g, 1.6a, 2.2c, 8.3e, 8.4f]

Govardhana – A sacred hill in Vraja. [8.4e]

grantha-bhāgavata – The book Bhāgavata: *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. [4.1]

guṇa-avatāra – The Supreme Lord’s manifestations (*avatāras*) that govern the modes of material nature (*guṇas*); refers to either Lord Viṣṇu, who maintains the universe and is in charge of the mode (*guṇa*) of goodness, to Lord Brahmā, who creates the universe and is in charge of the mode of passion, and to Lord Śiva, who is in charge of universal destruction and is in charge of the mode of ignorance. [3.3c-d-e-h-i]

guru-avajñā – Neglecting the spiritual master and his instructions. [3.2a-g]

guru-padāśraya – Taking shelter of the lotus feet of an authentic spiritual master. [3.5d]

H

Hari – A name of the Supreme Lord, especially connected with remembering the mercy of God’s holy name.

Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya – A section of supplementary Vedic texts. [1.5c, 8.1c]

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa – A treatise by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī presenting the practices of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. [1.5d, 2.5b, 3.1h, 3.2a, 3.3j, 3.4a, 3.5b-h, 8.3b]

Haridāsa Ṭhākura – A great devotee at the time of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, celebrated for his steadfast chanting of the holy name. [3.2f]

hari-kathā – Sublime narrations about the Supreme Lord and the process to attain Him. [2.5a, 3.5c, 5.1, 5.4, 7.1d, 8.1a, 8.5b]

harināma – The holy name of Hari, or Kṛṣṇa. (Also referred to as *śrī nāma*.)

Hiraṇyagarbha Brahmā – That Brahmā who is in the category of the Supreme Lord. [3.3j]

Hiraṇyakaśipu – A tyrannical demon who terrorized the earth and the heavens; he was previously a doorkeeper of Vaikuṅṭha who, along with another doorkeeper, took the form of a demon to satisfy the Lord's desire for combat. [3.3i]

hlādinī – Transcendental bliss; one of Kṛṣṇa's three internal energies. [1.3b, 1.5k, 1.6a, 8.1a]

I

icchā-śakti – Desire potency. [8.3c]

Īśvara – The Supreme Controller, or Lord. [3.3a-c-e-g-j]

īśvara-sāyujya – Merging with the form of the Supreme Lord. [3.3g]

J

Jaḍa Bharata – A great devotee who chose to become inert (*jaḍa*) so as not to be ensnared in material attachment, a mistake he made in a previous life when he fell from a high level of *bhakti* due to attachment to a deer. [3.2f]

Jagāi – Previously a drunkard and rogue, Jagāi was delivered by the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. [3.2f]

japa-mālā – Strand of 108 *tulasī* prayer, or meditation, beads. [4.2b]

jāta-rati – The awakening of one's eternal mood. [3.4c, 7.1d-e-f-g]

jāta-ruci-sādhaka – One in whom transcendental taste (*ruci*) has awakened. [5.4]

Jaya and Vijaya – The gatekeepers of Vaikuṅṭha. [3.4e]

jīva – Living entity.

Jīva Gosvāmī – The *tattva-ācārya* (one who establishes the precise line of thought of a philosophical school) of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

jñāna – Knowledge; the cultivation of impersonal knowledge of the Absolute Truth.

jñānī – One who depends on analysis of the Vedic scriptures to determine their conclusion.

K

kaimutika-nyāya – A type of logic used when the import of a previous statement

either establishes or precludes the meaning of a subsequent statement. [3.2d]

Kali-yuga – The age of quarrel and hypocrisy; the most degraded of the four ages. [1.1, 1.2, 2.2c]

kalpa – Day of Lord Brahmā. [1.2]o

kāntā-bhāva – Amorous affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [7.2b] (Also *madhura-bhāva*.)

karma-kāṇḍa – Prominent scriptures prescribing the path of fruitive material enjoyment. [3.2f, 3.3l]

karmī – Fruitive worker. [1.5a-b, 1.6a, 2.2b]

kaśāya – Contaminated consciousness; the fourth of the five obstacles to steadiness in devotion. [4.2a-b]

kāyikī-niṣṭhā – Fixed devotional practices related to the body. [4.3a]

kīrtana – Singing the names of God.

kleśa-ghnī – The mitigation of suffering, which begins upon starting the practice of *bhakti*; one of the two characteristics of *sādhana-bhakti*. [2.2b-c, 3a-b, 4]

kṛpā – Mercy. [1.3d-e, 1.4a-c, 8.3c-d-e]

Kṛṣṇa – “The all-attractive one”, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead.

kṛṣṇa-bhakti – Devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

kṛṣṇākaraṣiṇī – Capable of attracting Kṛṣṇa; one of the two characteristics of *prema-bhakti*. [8.1c, 8.3b]

kṛṣṇa-rati – Transcendental attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in one of five types of relationship with Him. [7.1d, 7.2c]

L

Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta – A book by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī on Kṛṣṇa, His manifestations and His devotees. [1.1, 3.3d-j]

laya – Sleepiness, mental inactivity or spiritual indifference; the first of the five obstacles to steadiness in devotion. [4.2a-b]

līlā – Transcendental pastimes.

līlā-kathā – Narrations of the Supreme Lord’s pastimes. [2.2c, 2.5a]

līlā-mādhurya – The charming sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes; one of the four charming sweetnesses unique to Him. [1.1]

Līlāsukha – A name of Śrīla Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura meaning that like Śukadeva Gosvāmī, he can describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes (*līlā*) as sweetly as a parrot (*sukha*). [1.3a, 8.4d]

M

Mādhāi – Previously a drunkard and rogue, Mādhāi was delivered by the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu. [3.2f]

madhura – Amorous affection; one of the five types of relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [2.2c, 7.2b]

madhurī – Sweetness; Śrī Kṛṣṇa has four charming *madhurīs*, unique to Him. [1.1, 8.1a-f, 8.5d]

mādhurya – A divine, inexpressible sweetness.

Mādhurya-kādambinī – “A Cloud Bank of Nectar”. [1.1, 2.1, 8.6]

Mādhurya-kādambinī

mahā-bhāgavata – Topmost devotee of the Supreme Lord.

mahābhāva – The highest stage of love of God.

Mahādeva – A name for Lord Śiva. [3.2e, 3.3a-c-d-i-k, 3.4d]

mahājanas – Wise, saintly personalities. [1.2, 3.5h, 8.1a]

mahā-kalpa – Lifetime of Lord Brahmā

mahā-prasāda – Foodstuffs that have been offered to the Lord. [3.5d]

mahāpuruṣa – Great personality.

mamatā – A sense of possessiveness, “mine-ness”. [7.1f, 7.2a, 8.1a, 8.5a-c-d-e]

māna – Vexation in love. [7.2c, 8.5a]

mānasī-niṣṭhā – Fixed devotional practices related to the mind. [4.3a]

Mandākinī River – The celestial Ganges. [7.2g]

maṅgalācaraṇa – Prayer to obtain divine blessings; blessed invocation [1.1, 1.2]

mañjarī – A maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī [2.2c, 8.4e, 8.5a]

māyā – “Not this”; illusion, or deception.

māyā-śakti – The Supreme Lord’s deluding potency, which is fully material. [3.3h]

Māyāvādī – One who propounds the doctrine that everything is one and any apparent variety is simply illusion, or *māyā*. [7.2g]

mohana – A stage of *prema*; when it arises in Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s heart in Her agony of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He falls unconscious even if in the embrace of Satyabhāmā or another Dvārakā queen; by the influence of that *bhāva*, the entire universe is plunged into anguish. [1.2]

mokṣa – Emancipation from the material energy. [1.4c, 1.5d-k, 3.3d, 7.1b, 8.5b]

mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt – “Liberation is rendered insignificant”; one of the two characteristics of *bhāva-bhakti*. [7.1b]

N

naiṣṭhikī-bhakti – Unflinching devotion. [4.1, 4.2c, 4.3c]

nāma – The holy name of the Supreme Lord.

nāma-ābhāsa – A semblance of the holy name. [3.5a]

nāma-āparādha – An offence to the holy name. [3]

nāma-kīrtana – Chanting the holy name.

nāmī – One who is addressed by the name, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [3.3l]

navadhā-bhakti – The nine most prominent ways of engaging in devotional service: hearing, chanting and remembering the Lord, serving His lotus feet, worshipping Him, offering Him obeisance, becoming His friend, becoming His servant, and offering Him one’s very self. [1.1]

nindā – Blasphemy. [3.2a]

nirguṇa-bhakti – *Bhakti* that is transcendental to the three modes of material nature (goodness, passion and ignorance). [1.2, 1.5l, 7.1e]

nirviśeṣa-brahma – The featureless aspect of the Absolute Truth. [1.5l, 3.3e-g]

nīścalatā – The quality of being unwavering. [4.2a]

niṣkāma – Devoid of desire. [1.4b, 1.5f, 2.2a, 2.3c, 3.1d]

niṣṭhā – Fixed, unwavering faith. [3.1h, 3.4c-f, 4]

niṣṭhitā – Fixed. [2.5c, 4.1, 4.3c]

niṣṭhitā-bhajana-kriyā – The practice of steady devotion. [4.1]

Nityānanda Prabhu – The elder brother of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. [3.2f]

nitya-siddha-bhāva – Eternally perfect mood of service. [7.1a]

niyama – Adherence to codes of conduct. [1.1, 1.6a, 3.2a, 3.5b]

niyamākṣamā – Inability to uphold vows; the fifth stage of unsteady devotional practice. [2.5c]

nṛtya – Dancing. [7.2c]

O

Offence – *Aparādha*. [3]

P

pāpa – Sin, wretched activity. [2.3b, 3.1a-c-d, 3.2a, 3.5a-5b-f-g]

Parabrahma – The Supreme Spirit; the Absolute Truth. [1.1, 1.3a-b, 1.5k, 7.2b, 8.5b]

paramānanda – Zenith of divine rapture. [1.1, 1.3a, 1.4a]

paramārtha – Highest wealth. [1.3a, 3.1a, 8.5e]

Parameśvara – The Supreme (*parama*) Controller (*īśvara*). [3.3a]

Pārvatī – Wife of Lord Śiva. [3.4d]

Pātāla-loka – Subterranean heavenly planet. [3.2f]

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti – “The commentary that showers nectar”.

praṇāma – Respectful and affectionate obeisance.

pranaya – Intimate love. [1.6a, 7.2c, 8.5a]

prāpty-abhilāṣa – A deep yearning to attain the Lord. [5.1, 6.1c, 7.1a, 8.1a] Also known as *bhagavat-prāpty-abhilāṣa*.

prārabdha – Fructified past action. [1.4a, 1.5k, 3.5f-h]

prārabdha-papa – The fructified result of sinful action. [3.5f]

pratibimba-raty-ābhāsa – A reflection of the semblance of rati. [7.1g]

pratiṣṭhā – Recognition; prestige. [3.4a-f]

prāyaścitta – Atonement. [3.1c-d, 3.2b]

prāyiki – Almost completely free; the third stage in the eradication of obstacles to devotion [3.4b-f]. The third stage in the spiritualization of “I” and “mine”. [8.5e]

Mādhurya-kādambinī

prema – Transcendental love for the Supreme Lord.

prema-bhakti – Loving devotion to the Supreme Lord.

prema-mādhurya – The charming sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s love; one of the four charming sweetnesses unique to Him. [1.1]

premānanda – The bliss of divine love. [8.1f]

prema-rasa – Nectareous loving exchanges with the Supreme Lord. [1.1, 1.2, 8.1c]

premi-bhakta – A devotee who has attained pure love of God (*prema*). [1.3a, 1.6a, 3.4c, 8]

preyasī – Beloved. [7.2b, 8.2b-c, 8.4e]

prīti – Love. [1.3c, 7.2b-c]

priyatā-rati – Transcendental amorous love. [7.2b-c] (Also referred to as *madhura-rati*.)

pūjā – Worship [3.3c]. Adoration [3.4a-f]

Purāṇas – Recorded Vedic histories, of which eighteen volumes are prominent.

pūrṇā – Complete, the fourth stage in the eradication of obstacles to devotion [3.4b-f]. The fourth stage in the spiritualization of “I” and “mine”. [8.5f]

puruṣārtha – The four objects of human pursuit: religiosity, the accumulation of wealth, the satisfaction of material desires, liberation. [1.6a]

R

rāga – Ardent attachment; spontaneous affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [8.3c] A stage after

prema in which there is extremely deep attachment to Kṛṣṇa. [1.2, 1.6a, 7.2c, 8.5a] Strong attachment to materiality; one of the five types of *kleśa*, or misery. [2.3a, 3.1a, 3.3f, 5.2]

rāga-bhakti – Devotional service performed with ardent spontaneity. [1.1, 2.2c, 2.3a, 7.2a, 8.5a]

rāga-mārga-bhakti – *Bhakti* performed on the path of ardent attachment to Kṛṣṇa. [1.1, 1.2]

rāgānugā – Following those with ardent attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; spontaneous. [2.2c, 2.4, 7.1f]

raja / rājas – Of the mode of passion. [3.3d-e, 4.2c]

rajo-guṇa – The mode of passion. [3.3e]

rasa – The exquisite relish of transcendental relationships; nectar.

rasarāja – The king of those who taste *rasa*, Kṛṣṇa. [1.3a]

rasarāja-mahābhāva – The combined form of Kṛṣṇa (*rasarāja*) and Rādhā (*mahābhāva*, the quintessence of loving emotions for Kṛṣṇa). [1.1]

rasāsvāda – Taste for mundane pleasure; the fifth of five obstacles to steadiness in devotion. [4.2a-b]

rasika – A person who is expert in tasting the highest mellows of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [1.1, 5.1]

rasika-śekhara – A name for Śrī Kṛṣṇa meaning “the supreme connoisseur, or enjoyer, of rasa”. [1.1, 1.2]

rati – One’s eternal affection, or relationship, with Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *bhāva-bhakti*. [1.2, 1.6a, 3.4c, 4.1, 7.1a-d-e-g, 7.2c]

raty-ābhāsa – Semblance of *rati*. [7.1g]

rṣi – Great sage, seer.

ruci – Pure spiritual relish. [5]

rūḍha-bhāva – A stage of *prema* in which one feels dejected due to the anxiety that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is undergoing some inconvenience, even though He is actually happy; in that condition, any delay in seeing Him, if for but one moment, becomes unbearable. [1.2]

Rudra – A name for Lord Śīva. [3.3d-j, 4.2a, 8.1c]

Rūpa Gosvāmī – The foremost follower of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; his followers are known as *rūpānugas*; he authored many books to fulfil Mahāprabhu’s mission; his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.4.15–16) contains the seed verse of *Mādhurya-kādambinī*: *ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-* etc.

rūpa-mādhurya – The charming beauty of Kṛṣṇa’s form, one of the four charming sweetnesses unique to Him. [1.1, 8.5d]

S

sādhaka – One who practises to achieve perfection in a particular discipline.

sādhana – The process to attain a goal.

sādhana-bhajana – Meditative devotional practice.

sādhana-bhakti – The practice of devotion.

sādhu – Saintry person.

sadhu-saṅga – Associating with saintly personalities.

sakāma-karma – Materially motivated pious action. [3.1a, 3.3l]

sakhā – Friend. [2.2c]

sakhī – Close female friend [8.4e]; Kṛṣṇa’s beloved. [8.4j]

sakhya – Friendship, one of the five types of relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [2.2c, 7.2b]

sākṣād-bhakti-vartinī – Resting in devotion herself, that is, directly related to the nine limbs of devotion; one of the two types of *niṣṭhā*. [4.3a]

sālagrāma-silā – A sacred stone that is non-different from Śrī Viṣṇu. [6.2a]

salokya-mukti – Liberation that grants residence in the same realm as the Supreme Lord. [1.5k]

samādhi – Trance [1.5k]. Final resting place of a transcendental personality, in which he remains absorbed in his eternal service to the Supreme Lord. [Introduction, 8.1c]

samskāras – Impressions on the mind of one’s previous actions. [1.1, 1.5g, 8.5c]

saṁvit – Cognizance potency; one of Kṛṣṇa’s three internal energies. [1.3b, 3.3c, 7.1a]

Mādhurya-kāḍambinī

sañcārī-bhāva – The internal transitory emotions, which arise like waves from the ocean of one’s particular relationship with Kṛṣṇa, enhance it and then submerge once again into that ocean; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*. [7.2c] (Also see *vyabhicārī-bhāva*.)

sandhinī – Existence potency, one of Kṛṣṇa’s three internal energies. [1.3b, 7.1a]

sāndrānanda-višeṣātmā – Condensed, superlative pleasure, one of the two characteristics of *prema-bhakti*. [8.1c]

Śāṅkara – A name of Lord Śiva. [3.4d]

sañkīrtana – Congregational singing of the Lord’s sacred names. [1.1, 1.5b-h, 3.1b, 3.2a-b-c-d-l, 3.3k, 3.5c-h, 7.1g]

sāñkhya – Analysis of matter and spirit. [1.6a]

sānta – Neutrality, one of the five types of emotion in relation to the Supreme Lord. [2.2c, 7.2b-c]

Sārārtha-darśinī-ṭikā – Commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhagavatām* by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. [1.4d, 1.5k, 2.5b, 3.5a-c, 4.2c]

sāstra – Scripture.

sat – Eternality; reality.

sattva-guṇa – The mode of goodness. [1.5, 3.3e]

sāttvika-bhāvas – Eight symptoms of spiritual ecstasy arising exclusively from tran-

scendence; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*. [7.2c, 8.5a]

sāttvika-vikāra – Bodily transformations resulting from spiritual ecstasy. [3.5c]

sauhārdya-abhilāṣa – A deep yearning to serve the Lord with intimacy. [5.1, 6.1c, 7.1a, 8.1a]

saukumārya – The Lord’s tender touch. [8.2b]

saundarya – The Lord’s beauty. [8.2a]

saurabhya – The Lord’s fragrance [8.1f, 8.2a-b]

saurasya – The savour of the Lord’s lips. [8.2a-c]

sausvaryā – The Lord’s mellifluous voice. [8.2b]

sāyujya-mukti – Merging with the featureless aspect or form of the Absolute Truth. [1.5a-k, 1.6, 3.3g-i-l, 8.5c] (Also see *brahma-sāyujya* and *īśvara-sāyujya*.)

siddha-deha – Spiritual body. [7.1f]

Śiva – A partial manifestation of the Supreme Lord. [3.1b, 3.2a, 3.3a-c-d-e-i-j-k] (Also see Mahādeva.)

smaraṇa – Remembrance. [5.1]

Smṛti – Records of Vedic injunctions that were traditionally remembered by successions of generations. [1.3a, 1.5d]

sneha – Affection that manifests after *prema*. [1.2, 1.6a, 7.2c, 8.3c, 8.5a]

snigdha – Melted with affection. [2.5b, 8.1a]

sphūrti – Momentary internal vision. [6.2e, 7.1d, 8.1d-e, 8.4f, 8.5b-f]

śraddhā – Transcendental faith. [1.1, 1.2, 1.5d-g, 2.5a-b, 3.1a, 4.2b, 8.5a]

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam – The crest jewel of Vedic literatures; the spotless Purāṇa.

Śruti – That which is heard; recorded literatures by perfected sages. [1.2, 1.3a-b, 1.4d, 3.1f, 3.2a, 3.3l]

sthāyi-bhāva – Permanent ecstasy; one of the five relationships with Kṛṣṇa: neutrality, servitude, friendship, parental affection and amorous love; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*. [1.2, 7.1a, 7.2c]

śubha-dā – The bestowal of auspiciousness, which begins upon starting the practice of *bhakti*; one of the two characteristics of *sādhana-bhakti*. [2.2b-c, 3a-c, 4]

śubha-karma – Pious action. [1.3c-e]

śuddha-bhakti – Pure, unalloyed devotion. [2.2a]

śuddha-sattva – Transcendental goodness. [1.1, 1.3b, 1.4a, 2.5a, 3.3l, 4.2b, 4.3c, 7.1a, 7.2c]

śuddha-sattva-viśeṣa – The essential portion of the knowledge potency (*saṃvit*) endowed with the essential function of the bliss potency (*hlādinī*). [7.1a]

sudurlabhā – “Most rarely obtained”; one of the two characteristics of *bhāva-bhakti*. [7.1b]

Śukrācārya – The *guru* of the demons. [3.2f]

sukṛti – Spiritual merit. [3.1a, 3.5d]

sukṛtotha / sukṛti-jāta – Obstacles to devotion arising from past pious activities; one of the four types of impediments to devotion. [3.1a, 3.4f]

sūrya-kānta-maṇi – A gemstone imbued with the potency of the sun; Star Ruby. [3.3d-j]

svāmiśa – Personal expansions of the Supreme Lord. [3.3]

svarūpa – Intrinsic form, nature or character.

svarūpa-lakṣaṇa – Intrinsic characteristics. [7.1a]

svarūpānanda – The Supreme Lord’s intrinsic bliss. [1.3b, 8.1f]

svarūpa-śakti – The Lord’s intrinsic spiritual energy.

Svayam Bhagavān – The original form of the Supreme Lord who has no source other than Himself and who is the source of all other incarnations of Godhead.

T

tad-anukūla-vastu-vartinī – Resting in that which is favourable to devotion; one of the two types of *niṣṭhā*. [4.3a] (Also referred to as *bhakti-anukūla-vartinī*.)

tama / tamas – Ignorance. [3.3c-d]

tamo-guṇa – The mode of ignorance. [3.3e]

Mādhurya-kādambinī

tarāṅga-raṅginī – Delighting in the mundane benefits of devotion; the sixth stage of unsteady devotional practice. [2.5c]

taṭastha-lakṣaṇa – Marginal, or extrinsic, characteristics. [7.1a]

tattva – “Truth” or “reality”; existential fact.

tilaka – Clay marking on the forehead to denote one’s spiritual aspiration. [1.1, 3.1b, 3.4a]

U

uddipana – A stimulus for remembrance by which love appears. [7.2c]

Ujjvala-nīlamanī – A treatise by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī that exclusively focuses on the pure, transcendental amour of Vraja. [1.1, 1.2, 8.5a]

ujjvala-rasa – Amorous love. [7.2c]

upaśākhā – Parasitic creeper. [2.11, 3.4a]

utsāha-mayī – Filled with enthusiasm based on over-confidence; the first stage of unsteady devotional practice. [2.5c, 2.6]

V

vācīkī-niṣṭhā – Fixed devotional practices related to the body. [4.3a]

vaidha-bhakty-uttha – Awakened by following the process of regulative devotion. [7.2a]

vaidhī-bhakti – Regulated devotional service. [2.2c, 7.2a]

Vaikunṭha – The spiritual world, beyond the material realm of birth and death. [1.6, 3.2f, 3.3b-i-j, 3.4e, 3.5a-c-f]

Vaiṣṇava – A devotee of Viṣṇu, God.

vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-anapekṣinī – The second, superior type of *ruci*, meaning “taste that is not dependent on external excellence in relation to the service of Bhagavān”. [5.3]

vastu-vaiśiṣṭya-apekṣinī – The first, inferior type of *ruci*, meaning “taste that is dependent on external excellence in relation to the service of Bhagavān”. [5.3]

vātsalya – Parenthood, one of the five types of relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [2.2c, 7.2b]

Veda – Knowledge. [1.3a]

Vedānta-sūtra – Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s conclusive summary of Vedic philosophical knowledge, written in aphorisms.

Vedas – Ṛg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, and Atharva Veda are the original four Vedas. [1.3a]

veṇu-mādhurya – The sweetness of Kṛṣṇa’s flute-song, one of the four charming sweetnesses unique to Him. [1.1]

vibhāva – That which stimulates one’s inherent relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and thus causes it to be tasted; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*. [7.2b-c]

vibhinnāmśa – Eternally separated expansion of the Supreme Lord; the living entity. [1.5k, 3.3g]

vikṣepa – Distraction or inattentiveness; the second of five obstacles to steadiness in devotion. [4.2a-b]

vilāsa-mūrti – Pastime expansion. [3.3b]
viṣaya-saṅgarā – Battle with sense pleasure; the fourth stage in the unsteady practice of devotion. [2.5c, 2.9, 2.10]
Viṣṇu – The Supreme Person.
Vraja – The highest of all of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s spiritual abodes, where a mood of natural, pure, fully selfless love for Him prevails. [1.1, 1.2, 1.5g, 2.2c, 7.3b, 8.4e]
Vrajavāsī – One who resides in Vraja.
vyābhicārī-bhāva – Fleeting waves of sacred emotion; one of the five ingredients of *rasa*. [1.1, 1.2, 7.2c] (Also see *sañcarī-bhāva*.)

vyūḍha-vikalpā – Indecisiveness, the third stage in the unsteady practice of devotion. [2.5c]

Y

yajña – Offering oblations into fire. [1.4b-c, 1.5e-k, 3.2f, 3.3]
yama – Prohibitive injunctions. [3.5b]
Yamarāja – The lord of justice. [3.5b]
Yamunā – Vṛndāvana’s sacred river. [8.4e]
yāvad-āśraya-vṛtti – The highest state of *anurāga*. [8.5a]
yuddha-rasa – The relish of combat. [3.4e]

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