

Heart and Halo



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Foreword

It is a privilege and a great fortune once again to be able to present more nectarean words from the lips of His Divine Grace Om Visnupada Paramahansa Sri Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Dev-Goswami Maharaj to the English-speaking public. It is hoped that these words will find their way into the hearts of all good souls, as well as enliven the practitioners on the path of bhakti. Some people like to read a book out of curiosity, others with keen interest but a critical eye, whilst others again intend to profit by the fruit of their study, and it is this class we mainly appeal to in the present work. The successful reception worldwide of our previous publication *The Golden Staircase* has encouraged us in this attempt. Srila Guru Maharaj writes in his *Sri Sri Prapanna-jivanamrtam* (1.8):

*yakthokta rupa-padena, nicanotpadite 'nale
hemnah suddhis tathaivatra, virahartti-hrtih satam*

"As Srila Rupa Goswamipad has in his humility expressed that gold can be purified with fire lit by a barbarian, similarly the pure devotee's grief born of separation from the Lord may also be dispelled by this book."

The words of Srila Sridhar Maharaj are already living in the hearts and homes of many, many people in the world today, in the form of books, and audio and video cassettes. The sweet vibration of his kirtana in the form of Hari-katha continues to expand to the limits of the universe. Srila Sridhar Maharaj was once described as a "man of eternal mind" - such was the feeling of those persons fortunate enough to hear him speak about the spiritual world. The preciseness of his representation of siddhanta (devotional conclusions), the clarity of theological and ontological analysis, the startling effectiveness and simplicity of his analogies, along with the extraordinary combination of gravity and, at times, child-like simplicity, marked him as truly unique. One felt he was the most genuine person one could ever meet. His own Guru Maharaj Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur referred to him as "a man of substance." Small wonder then that devotees from far and wide would seek him out for his reliable and final judgment on any matter of importance. Even many of those who were placed in 'opposition' to him eventually could not help but be charmed. When he himself once inquired from one such gentleman as to why, even while maintaining this frame of mind, he still continued to visit him regularly, the man replied: "Because of your deep intelligence, sound common sense and disinterested nature."

The present selection is from informal talks recorded at the Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math between 1982-85. The title of the book *Heart and Halo* is Srila Sridhar Maharaj's own sweet expression to describe the bhava and kanti of Srimati Radharani, the supreme predominated moiety, consort of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna. Once when His Divine Grace was searching for a fitting expression to describe Her inner and outer qualities, the devotees attending his talk at the time attempted to provide suitable expressions: "mood and luster," "felling and effulgence," and several other such versions were put forward, but each time Srila Sridhar Maharaj shook his head, unsatisfied. Suddenly, with a smile lighting up his countenance, he looked up and said sweetly: "Heart and Halo."

We would like to personally express our gratitude to all those who have helped this work through its various stages to completion, especially: Sripad B. A. Sagar Maharaj, Sripad B. P. Janardan Maharaj, Sripad B. C. Parvat Maharaj, Sri Srutasrava Prabhu, Sri Sarvabhavana Prabhu, Sri

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We apologize if any mistakes of any kind remain in this work despite every effort to eradicate them.

Hare Krishan
Swami B. S. Tridandi Maharaj
Saphala Ekadasi
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Part One

The Soul And The Supreme Shelter

The Key Is In Your Own Hand

There is consciousness of the higher, the subjective world, and consciousness of the lower, objective world. Connection with the lower objective world binds us with misery, and relationship with the superior consciousness lifts us up, gives us real fortune. One result is from dedication, and another is from enjoyment. In a word: enjoyment is bad, and devotion is good. On the side of devotion is the Lord, and on that of enjoyment, misery. "There are so many things to be enjoyed": this is fascination with hell, with reaction.

*bhaktis tvayi sthritara bhagavan yadi syad
daivena nah phalati divya-kisora-murtih
muktih svayam mukulitanjali sevate 'sman
dharmartha-kama-gatayah samaya-pratiksah
(Krsna-karnamrta 107)*

In his Krishna-karnamrta, Bilvamangala Thakur says: "bhaktis tvayi sthritara bhagavan yadi syat, My Lord, if my dedication, my veneration to You is permanent, is in a settled stage, daivena nah phalati divya-kisora-murtih, and if it reaches to such a height that we can find divya-kisora-murtih, a young pair engaged in that highest pastime - if we can reach so far, to find out the eternal pastimes of the Divine Couple, if we can reach to this extent - then we will find, muktih svayam mukulitanjali sevate 'sman, oh, the facility of liberation, emancipation, with folded palms will come to serve us in any way we like. And, dharmartha-kama-gatayah sramaya-pratiksah: dharma, the results of dutifulness; artha, moneymaking; and kama, the objects of sense perception - they are all ready and waiting outside, and whenever a call comes they will come in front of us, 'What do you want, my master, my lord?' That will be our position: dharma, artha and kama will wait outside, and

whenever we call them they will present themselves: 'What do you want me to do?' And mukti, liberation, will be always moving around us with folded palms doing service of different types, if in our fortune we can rise up to such a height as to find that Divine Couple engaged in happy pastimes."

Bilvamangala Thakura showed in his life a peculiar example: how from the hose of the prostitute he went straight to Vrndavan and got the grace of the Supreme Entity; how in his life he was so much engrossed in, almost swallowed by, sensualism of the lowest type; and from that position, in a single life he could raise himself to the highest stage of realization of the Beautiful.

Mahaprabhu took two books from South India; one was Brahma-samhita, and the other was Krishna-karnamrta. Krishna-karnamrta is about the pastimes of Vrndavan, and Brahma-samhita shows the ontological basis of the Absolute, how the Lord of Vrndavan is the highest conception of Reality.

Krishna-lila is not a matter of history. In history events occur, they happen once and can't re-occur at any time. It is an eternal flow in which what is going on in the past never comes again. There is an expression "history repeats itself," but that is in the similar nature of the event, not the actual fact; history repeats its nature, but what is gone, is gone. Once it has gone, it has gone forever. But in Krishna-lila, in the eternal world, it is not so. It may present the same thing every time, at every second; thus it is called nitya-lila, 'eternal pastimes' - crossing the limitation, the jurisdiction of history. In history, what is past is dead. But the pastimes of the Lord are eternal, nitya, always present. Every lila is eternally present; He can show Himself in His eternal forms simultaneously. So in His past, present and future, all events are simultaneously occurring. When He enters the arena of Kamsa, different groups are seeing Him in different ways. What is seen by one section of people is seen differently by another, according to their own nature. Even the blind can see Him if He wills. If He wills to show Himself to anyone, though blind one can see Him clearly, because these eyes of flesh are not necessary to see Him. By His willpower alone He can reveal Himself to any person. That was the case with Dhrtarastra in the Kuru-sabha. Dhrtarastra said, "For the time being, my Lord, restore my eyesight so that I can see Your wonderful form which the others are seeing and praising. You can do anything, so only for the time being remove my blindness."

"It is not necessary to remove your blindness, Dhrtarastra! I say 'You see Me' and you will see Me." And by His order, Dhrtarastra saw! His order, His wish is everything. His simple will is everything, the cause of all existence.

The Kurus wanted to see Draupadi naked, but Draupadi's appeal reached Him and He sanctioned cloth, and that cloth became infinite, of infinite character. As much cloth as they removed, so much cloth remained. It is the will, the vicara, which is everything. Such great potency of such high quality is in the Prime Cause. We are accustomed to think: "This is good, this is bad," and "this is possible, this is impossible." We are accustomed to such considerations within our rules of thought. But these rules do not apply in His case. All of our experience will fail to occupy even a very negligible part of His Kingdom.

He is wonderful. In the example of Vamanavatara it is told of His 'wonderful stride,' adbutkrama. With one stride He covered the whole earth, and with the next He captured the whole of heaven. He then needed a place to put His third step, but where? He is adbutkrama, He of wonderful stride; all His steps are wonderful. He is wonder, the source of all wonder to our tiny brain. He is

here, He is also everywhere. With His full representation He is everywhere; yet He is nowhere! Everything is in Him, and nothing is in Him! Krishna said, "Try to understand My peculiar position, Arjuna." He is the Mystery of all mysteries. Even our own soul is astonishing to our worldly experience:

*ascaryavat pasyati kascid enam
ascaryavad vadati tathaiva canyah
ascaryavac caiman anyah srnoti
srutvapy enam veda na caiva kascit
(Bhagavad-gita 2.29)*

We do not even know the extraordinary nature of our own self. It is of a very high order, but our attention is focused towards so many mortal things; we have been introduced to, and captured by, the meanest aspect of the world. This is the consequence of the mood of enjoyment. We want to enjoy, we want to exploit. A good exploiter is a king to us! But exploitation in itself is degrading, very mean and low. It takes us to the lowest position and makes us victims of a great reaction.

Exploitation and enjoyment: we are in the midst of them and do not know anything but enjoyment. We want to understand anything and everything in terms of enjoyment; we are in such a filthy, degraded position. Only, 'enjoyment, enjoyment' - that is exploitation. But to exploit is the meanest type of nature, it is hateful, and we must get out of the clutches of that ghost of exploitation. And there is another ghost: renunciation, idleness. But the noble thing is dedication, a dedicated life.

There are two ghosts, one of renunciation and the other of exploitation, and we have to get out of that nightmare, that mania, which is based on our tendency of measuring things to be good and bad. In exploitation there is division into regular and irregular, or dharma and adharma.

And then renunciation. So many great stalwarts of that conception recommend a complete cessation of the dynamic life. A dead stop! But that should not be the prospect of any conscious man. A dead stop to life: is that any goal of life for the saner section?

A life of nobility, a life of dedication - and not only ordinary dedication for the environment, but dedication for the highest good - is the highest form of life. In the lower stage that dedication is calculative; in the higher stage, spontaneous, automatic. And really, there is joy. Joy is there in quality and quantity; in every way, real life is there. Life is there, and here is the worst shadow, the perverted reflection. And we are told, *uddhared atmanatmanam*, the key is in our own hand, the freedom by which we can associate with anything, good or bad, and reap the result accordingly.

Ultimately, we are told that the key is in our own hand; none else is to be blamed for our present condition. But there is always the possibility of noble help being extended to us, and we must accept that. Our past actions also influence us a great deal - whether they were good, bad, or of the eternal aspiration, *sukrti*. But ultimately the possibility of free action is not taken away from us at any stage; even if we are reduced to the level of taking birth as a tree, there also, the freedom is within. It is hard to think that a tree has got independence, free will, but it is there, in a suppressed position. Freedom is within us also, and we may try as far as possible to understand how it is so, but our freedom is also covered by so many conditions that we may think we are not free but are forced

by circumstances. But still, we are free for our selection of any path, good or bad. Our existence is very small and so our freedom is also small and meagre, but it is there. Though almost negligible, it exists.

Journey to the Center

Generally, if all our activity is stopped by unfavourable weather, we think "This is very bad!" We are men of action, men who exploit the environment and nature for gathering some energy. We are always trying to collect some energy for our use. That is our nature. The very nature of those who live in this mortal world is to collect more and more energy and wealth that can be utilized in a time of need. If there is any hindrance to that end we think it is a very bad circumstance, in opposition to the object of our life. But to remind us about the importance of our inner wealth, we are advised that the outer nature cannot do us so much harm as can our internal nature, that is, our apathy to collect more wealth for the inner existence, the inner self. Be mindful of that!

Losing things of this mortal world is not bad; it is all coming and going. The body itself, the center of all this activity, will also vanish. Then what is the necessity of collecting so much energy for the bodily connection? So, awaken your soul, the real person within; search him out and try to help him. That is possible only with help from the sadhu.

The day in which we do not find any saint, or have any discussion about the real purpose of life, the inner life, the inner substance, that day we are the loser. Be conscious of that. In all respects, in any way possible, mind your own lesson, mind your own interest, find your own self. Be unmindful towards the external world and circumstances and dive deep into the reality, the inner world. Find your inner self and the inner world where you live, where your inner self is living. Try to find your Home, to go back to God, back to Home. Your energy must be utilized for going Home, and not for wandering in the other land, the land of death. Try to avoid the land of death at any cost; always try to find the eternal soil, that soil to which you belong. Try to understand what is your Home and why it is your Home. Home comfort: what does it mean? It means our birth-place – the place where we are born.

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam* we find this verse:

*satam prasangan mama virya-samvido
bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah
taj-josanad asvapavarga-vartmani
sraddha ratir bhaktir anukramisyati
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.25.25)*

“In the association of pure devotees, discussions about Me are very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. Such talks, which are full of spiritual potency, are a source of sweetness, and by such cultivation the path of liberation from worldly life quickly opens. Then gradually one attains firm faith, which in due course develops into taste, and then real love for Me.”

This was spoken by the incarnation of the Lord, Sri Kapiladeva, to his mother, Devahuti, in response to her inquiry as to what is the real goal of life and how to attain it. It came about in this way. Devahuti was married to the sage, Kardama-rsi. After passing some years in the enjoyment of

married life, Devahuti conceived a child in her womb from the *rsi*. In *Bhagavad-gita* the Lord says: *prajanas casmi kandarpah*, “Of Cupids, I am He who ensures progeny.” And elsewhere it is said, *prajanaya na rataye*, married life is not meant for enjoyment, but for the purpose of producing good progeny. So, when the objective of their marriage was achieved, the *rsi* proposed that he retire from married life. He told Devahuti; “You have a child in your womb and it is not an ordinary child; the Lord Himself is coming. So I am going to live alone for my own higher purpose of life.” Then Devahuti said, “I have such a good partner; I am fortunate to have a saint like you as my husband, but I did not take advantage of your noble personality to learn anything about *brahma*, about the Lord, about my inner life’s necessity and its fulfilment. I did not inquire about that. I was only busy to serve you, to satisfy your desires. Though I had such a noble companion, I did not utilize my fortunate. Now I pray that you may stay for some time and teach me, help me in spiritual life, and then you may go.”

Kardama-rsi said, “You will get help from your son. IT IS THE lord Himself who is coming, not an ordinary child. Remember this, and in time you will receive that spiritual help from Him. So I won’t stay; I shall go now.” He departed, but soon the child appeared and He was brought up by Devahuti. Because of her great motherly affection, however, as her son grew, she gradually forgot what her husband had revealed: That He was not an ordinary child.

In the course of time, when the boy had grown and was one day absorbed, Devahuti was reminded, “Oh, the mood of my child does not seem to be ordinary.” She could understand that He was engaged in deep thought, and considered: “His father foretold that the Lord would appear through me, and now I see it is true. My son’s mood does not seem to be worldly, but it is from above. His mind is absorbed in transcendental thought.”

She then slowly approached Him: “Child, your father told me that You are not an ordinary boy of this world. You are divine. I wanted some spiritual advice from him, but he told me that You would advise me. For so long I did not heed that, but today Your mood is encouraging me; it is reminding me of those words of Your father and encouraging me to approach You for spiritual advice. Be pleased to advise me about what is spiritual truth. Who am I? What is this world? How can I find the proper direction of life? Who is the owner of this world, and what is my duty towards Him? You are not an ordinary boy, so I want to know all these things from You, my child.” Then from the lips of her son came this verse, given in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*:

*satam prasangan mama virya-samvido
bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah
taj-josanad asvapavarga-vartmani
sraddha ratir bhakti anukramisyati
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.25.25)*

Lord Kapila said, *satam prasangan mama virya-samvido*, “Talks about Me which are full of potency can only be found coming from the lips of My devotees. Not only lip-deep words, but words that have got depth, spirit, power, that represent Reality come from the Lips of My real devotee. Such words are not shallow, but are surcharged with spirit, with life, and can enliven us. *Bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah*, they satisfy both our ear and our heart and give a taste of spiritual joy, *rasayanah*. Their words are surcharged with the ecstasy of the spiritual world, and color our ear, our mind, and our heart – physically, mentally, and also on the plane of our soul. *Taj-josanad*,

by hearing from the real source, from that real *sadhu*, *asvarpavarga-vartmani*, we are led towards relief from this worldly life. By a gradual process, we attain these things: *sraddha ratir bhakti anukramisyati*, first, *sraddha*, ever increasing faith; then *ratir*, slight taste; then we get real live, *bhakti*. By *anukramisyati*, a gradual process, we are taken towards the higher domain.”

In this way the boy began to advise His mother, Devahuti. This Devahuti-nandana, Kapila, was the son of Kardama-rsi, but there was another Kapila whose *sankhya* philosophy does not recognize God; it only analyzes the material elements, gradually eliminating everything of spiritual substance. So there are two Kaipilas, both of whom gave *sankhya* philosophy (*sankhya* – to enumerate or count): the divine son of Kardama-rsi (Kardama Kapila) and the other, Sankhyaka Kapila. Kapila, the son of Kardama and Devahuti, gave what is known as *sankhya*, but He has given recognition to the Supreme Lord, Isvara, whereas the atheist Kapila claimed *Isvara-asiddhe*, there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this world. That is his conclusion. The *nyayikas* (logicians) say that there must be One who has created this world. This world has been created, so there must be someone who has done it. Their highest conclusion is that there must be a creator, and He is God, *Isvara*. But the atheistic Kapila says, “No, there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this material world: *Isvara-asiddhe*. His finding, his conclusion, is that there is no necessity of a creator; automatically everything exists. Only two things are necessary: first, a particle of spirit, and second, matter. Matter and spirit combined, *siva* and *sakti*, have created this world. There are so many spiritual particles, like specks of sand or dust, and by their combination with matter this world is going on automatically.

Once, while at the Madras Math, I met a gentleman from Madhupur who was a follower of this school of thought. He was an educated Bengali gentleman, and I asked him, “What have you got from your guru, that Kapila?”

He said “So many souls are there, *yata jiva*, and everyone is a *siva*, independent of this matter.”

I said, “You are satisfied with this explanation?”

“Yes, I am satisfied: *pasa baddhah bhavet jivah, pasa mukta sada siva* (the soul while conditioned is *jiva*, when liberated is *siva*).”

I told him: “Where your philosophy ends, our philosophy, that of the *Bhagavata* school, begins.”

“How is it so?” that gentleman asked.

“You will have to explain where these *sivas* exist. There are so many *sivas*, like particles of spiritual dust; but should we not think they must be living in some position, and that there must exist some relationship between them? There are so many, and some sort of relationship must be there between them, and they must also stay somewhere, in some position, some plane. And how are they harmonized together, or are they each an independent unit, all fighting with one another? If not, then what is their nature? The *Bhagavata* has come to explain about the *mukta-jivas*, the liberated souls. These souls, who were once diseased, are now free from that disease. In their healthy condition, what do they do? What is their position, their characteristic, their nature, their object, their pastimes? We have to know that. So, *Bhagavatam* has given us an explanation.”

Devarsi Narada asked Vyasadeva, “Explain what is the normal, natural condition of the liberated souls who are not diseased.” And that has been given. There is a Center, and all function in connection with Him and are all harmonized together.

In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* the Lord says:

*yat sankhyaih prapyate stanam
tad yogair api gamyate
ekam sankhyam ca yogam ca
yah pasyati sa pasyati
(Bhagavad-gita 5.5)*

“He has true vision who can see that the *sankhya* and yoga systems are one and the same.” One person is trying to reach the ultimate goal by external elimination, and the other by internal elimination: “this is body, this is mind, this is soul (*atma*), then supersoul (*paramatma*),” and onwards. The search is all within. The process of elimination is within. And by that he is trying to reach the core. And the other, by elimination of the elements of the external world (earth, water, fire, air, ether) is trying to understand the Origin.

That is *sankhya*: *neti, neti, neti*, “This is not it, this is not it; this is dependent, this is also dependent; this is not original, nor this, nor this. All are effects. Then what is the Cause?” To inquire through the external process is *sankhya*, and the internal process is through yoga – *pranayama* (breath-control), *pratyahara* (withdrawing the senses from their objects), *dhyana* (concentration), *dharana* (meditation), *samadhi* (full absorption and trance). So by elimination of the effect we come in contact with the cause; from the gross we start towards the subtle, and we reach more and more subtle planes in the causal direction.

This is the process in both *sankhya* and yoga. But in the beginning of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Sukadeva Goswami, who is speaking to Pariksit Maharaj, begins his talk by saying that these two, *sankhya* and yoga, and also *sva-dharma parinisthaya* (fulfilling one’s Vedic duty), can all give us liberation, but there is something more:

*etavan sankhya-yogabhyam sva-dharma-parinisthaya
janma labhah parah pumsam ante narayana-smrtih
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.6)*

He says, *etavan*, so far, by these processes, we are told our liberation may be achieved: by *sankhya*, external elimination; by yoga, internal elimination; and also by *sva-dharma parinisthaya*, discharging one’s duty as it is recommended in the Veda. To perform whatever is one’s respective duty as it is recommended, without any special aim or object, is *niskama* (action free from personal desire). Because it has been advised by the *sastra* as my duty in my present position, I am doing it, but in a disinterested way, without any special end. As a *brahmana*, I am told, “You must do these things,” so I am doing them. As a *ksatriya*, my duty is to keep the peace and control the evil-doers; that is my duty and I am doing it. As a *vaisya*, I am advised to do such and such. Because it is advised in the *sastra*, I am doing my respective duty in a disinterested way, that is, without any special aim or interest. All these three processes – *sankhya*, yoga and Vedic duty – lead us to liberation (*mukti*). But, *janma labhah parah pumsam ante narayana smrtih*, after we get relief from the external bondage, the fulfilment of life is in remembering our Lord Narayan, the Creator, and our relationship with Him. We must get out of the net we are entangled in, and after getting release from this entanglement we must search out our proper relationship with the Prime Cause. Who are we in our relationship with Him? Here the *Bhagavata* begins:

*etavan sankhya-yogabhyam sva-dharma-parinisthaya
janma labhah parah pumsam ante narayan-smrtih
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 2.1.6)*

Janma-labhah means fulfilment of our existence, our birth; *labhah* means the gain, the fulfilment, the end. What is that? *Ante narayana-smrtih*, our connection, our reconnection with the Center, the all-harmonizing Center, that should be our goal, and the *Bhagavatam* comes to tell us this. So many other *sastras* come to give us release from this external bondage; but with internal progress, after crossing the marginal plane, we get admission into the *paravyoma*, the special area, *Vaikuntha*. That is, we get the visa: ‘*viraja*’, ‘*brahmaloka*’ *bedi*’ ‘*para-vyoma*’ *paya*. We catch the flow of the current going towards the Center; that is the visa. *Sankhya*, *yoga* and *sva-dharma parinisthaya* can give us the passport to get out of the land where we are living, but after that, if we want to attain something, then a visa is necessary.

The Real Judgement of Love

According to Indian medical authorities, in the body is air, bile and mucus, which correspond to air, fire, and water, three elements in the ether that influence the earth. Earth is mainly influenced by water, and water by heat, heat by air, and all are fighting, struggling within ether. This is the nature of the material world. Then there is the mental world, the manifestation of the mental energy: “I want this, I do not want that; I like this, I don’t like that.” And, the intelligence gives direction to the mind: “Don’t take this, take that.” But it is all within the *ahankara*, material ego. Above that is the soul, who experiences everything, good or bad. He is called *purusa*:

*purusah sukha-duhkhanam, bhoktrtve hetur ucyate
(Bhagavad-gita 13.21)*

“It is established that it is the conditioned living being, *purusa* himself who is the responsible cause of the feelings of joy and sorrow which he experiences in this world.”

This is the difference between spirit and matter. Matter, called *prakrti*, is energy, but the soul, *purusa*, experiences good and bad; he is the person who feels good or bad, sorrow or happiness. He is of one substance, and that which is felt is of another:

*karya-karana-kartrtve, hetuh praktir ucyate
(Bhagavad-gita 13.21)*

“Certainly in this impermanent world all movement occurs through the inherent quality of the predominated material nature, *prakrti*, which is responsible for both cause (the force of the senses) and effect (the material body).”

So all the activity we find here, all movement, is due to that material energy, and the feeler of everything, the knower, the conceiver, is the soul. The soul is like the eye, and eye seeing anything and everything.

In *sankhya* philosophy, this *prakrti-purusa* relationship has been compared to that of a blind man and a crippled man. A crippled man may ride on the shoulder of a blind man. He who is moving (*prakrti*), is blind; and he who is crippled, who is on his shoulder (*purusa*), has got eyes to see and can guide. The soul is ‘crippled’; he cannot move, but he can see. The blind man is the commander of the energy, who can move here and there; he can carry, but he is blind. In this way, soul is the knower, the feeler, the subjective existence, and the energetic aspect is that of the force, *prakrti*. So, there is force and consciousness.

We are so much engrossed with force; we only require the force, the energy, and we have forgotten that we are the feeler of that force! That “feeler” is astonishing; if we try to understand our own self, we will be dumfounded: “Oh, what is this? I am of such a nature! I have nothing to do with this world of mortality; I can live independently of this mortal world? Is it so?”

Then we will be able to understand further, that there is Supersoul. In the material world there are so many different planes: the world of heat, that of water, of air. Everything is evolving from a more subtle plane down to gross things, like stone or wood. Just as there is development in this direction in the material world, so in the subjective world there is also development, but upwards, from the soul to Supersoul, to Super-Supersoul; in this way there is development and it is infinite. And we are *tatstha*, marginal; our soul is in the marginal position, between higher, and lower, between the subtle and the gross side. The upper side is eternal, it is *sat-cit-anandam*, eternal, conscious, and happy; and here: *asat, acit, nirananda*. It is *asat*, flickering, every minute it is dying; and *acit*, unconscious; and *nirananda*, with no feeling of joy or happiness. These are the respective natures of *this* world, and of *that* world. And if we want to have association with that world, we are told that in the highest position there is infinite beauty, love, and ecstasy. That world can come down to us, and we can be taken in as one of the Lord’s own family members. We can live as a family member with the highest Entity of that world! Mahaprabhu told us it is possible, but only through affection, and not by knowledge or any mystic realization. By affection and love we can attract Him in such a way that we can be given recognition as a family member, a position very near to Him – to such an extent it is possible.

In *Bhagavad-gita* the Lord says:

tato mam tattvato jnatva, visate tad anantaram
(*Bhagavad-gita* 18.55)

“After realizing My proper position, they enter there; that is, into My own special jurisdiction, into My family.” And the *Bhagavatam* says:

mamatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai
(*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 11.29.34)

“They get such high recognition which qualifies them to live with Me eternally, as My own. If they selflessly come forward to satisfy Me, leaving aside everything, *ananya bhajana*, if they want Me alone and nothing else, then such is their future prospect.”

marttyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma
niveditatma vicikirsito me

*tadamrtatvam pratipadyamano
mamatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.29.34)*

Sanatana Goswami has analyzed what is the proper meaning of this expression *atma-bhuyaya*: “My own;” they become “My own.” What is the meaning of “own”? He says it means to enter into His family; and “family” means there is gradation: the servant; the friends and their associates, the filial affection group; the guardian group; and then the highest group, that of consorthood.

There is one story I heard from my godbrother Vaikanasa Maharaj, who was a *brahmana* scholar of Orissa, about an incident which occurred in recent history, in connection with the Jagannatha Temple at Puri, where it was customary that no *khechuranna* (*kitri*) used to be offered to the Lord.

Once there was a raid by the Mohammedans on Orissa, and one of the girls of the royal family was abducted for the pleasure of the Mohammedan general, by his soldiers. He later left the state, but that girl was left on the outskirts of some village or town, and there she gave birth to a child who was a great devotee. It was a very peculiar thing; the girl was also a devotee, but somehow she had to undergo such a horrible experience. She gave birth to a child and he lived on the outskirts of that town. When he grew up he used to cook *kitri*, that is, rice and beans cooked together, boiled into a half-liquid consistency, and he used to offer that to Jagannath from afar. By dint of his devotion, Jagannath had to go there and accept that *kitri* offering.

One day the boy was perhaps late in his offering; Jagannatha took the *kitri* but the time was then late for the temple offering, so He had to run back to install Himself in His position in the temple, and a particle of that *kitri* was on His lips. The *pandas*, the *pujaris* (the priestly class) noticed: “What is this? How has this happened? We can detect this is not the proper offering to Jagannath; then how is it here on His lips?” So it was referred to the leader of the *pandas* and he also searched, but he could not ascertain the cause. Then it was taken to the king and he also investigated it; “Who has taken this food and smeared it on the mouth of Jagannatha?”

Finally the priest who had been in charge at the time of the offering of food in the temple was apprehended: “You are responsible! You were in charge of the temple at the time of Jagannatha’s offering, then how has this impure thing come in His mouth? You must explain or you will be punished.” The man was innocent and he said, “I do not know anything; I do not know anything!”

Then, when he was about to be punished, Jagannatha came in a dream to the king as well as to the leading priest: “That man is innocent; don’t disturb him. On the outskirts of the town is My devotee. He offered that food to Me, and I ate it, but the time was late and I had to hurry back to occupy My position in the temple, so My mouth was not cleansed. This is the name of that boy. He is living there; he is My devotee and I have taken this food there.” And it was as a result of the Mohammedan’s exploitation of the princess that this devotee appeared. So, *Krishna-bhakti*, devotion to Krishna, does not care for the formality of purity or impurity by any worldly considerations; it is independent.

Krishna-bhakti is so powerful and does not care for anything. Jagannatha accepted the offering of that boy who was considered to have the worst fate, a cursed fate. The princess was taken by

the Mohammedan, and her issue came in the form of that boy, so he was the “curse of the cursed”. But his offering attracted Jagannatha so much.

So, love is wonderfully above everything, surpassing all. Mahaprabhu asked us to accept the path of love, which means giving one’s heart, one’s self. It is so powerful, nothing else can attract Krishna. He is very greedy to eat this love, this prema. He lives on *prema*: he is the Lord of love. That love has its inner existence; it is the inner existence of all of us. He is Love personified, and there is a tinge within us also; and like ‘birds of a feather,’ love likes love.

Once Mahaprabhu, at the time when He had conquered and captured the Kazi, was leading the *sankirtana* party and was feeling very tired. He came to Sridhar Pandit, the poor *brahmana* who used to sell plantains in the market to somehow meagrely earn his livelihood. Sridhar Pandit had a well, and nearby an iron pot which he used for drawing water. Mahaprabhu began to drink water from the well with that pot, which had been left outside. All the devotees objected, “What are You doing? This pot is always kept outside and is very dirty. WE are bringing a clean pot for Your drinking water!” Mahaprabhu ignored them and continued drinking water from that iron pot. He commented, “This is the pot of My devotee Sridhar; it is purer than anything.”

In *Bhagavad-gita* the Lord says:

*api cet suduracaro, bhajate mam anaya-bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah, samyag vyavasito hi sah
(Bhagavad-gita 9.30)*

“If a person is an unalloyed devotee who worships Me exclusively, having abandoned all other pursuits based on exploitation and renunciation, even if he commits some abominable action, he is to be considered saintly. He is cent-per-sent pure, because his endeavours are completely on My behalf and his determination is fixed in that resolve.”

This is because one who has really surrendered to Krishna is accepted by Him as His own, and such a surrendered soul should never be considered impure, a transgressor. So, what is *bhajana*? It is a transaction of the heart, not of any formality. In Krishna devotion, *Krishna-bhakti*, the only consideration is the dedication of the heart. Krishna wants that, and not any external formality of the civilized or non-civilized world. In the case of Lord Ramachandra also, we see that although in the highest consideration He is the director of moral laws, *niti*, He could not contain Himself when offered something with devotion by an ‘untouchable’ lady. And that was after she had first taken it herself, after she had taken some sweet. Whatever remained that she considered most tasteful, she kept for Rama, and He accepted it.

There is another incident that happened in Vidura’s house. While Vidura was out collecting alms, Krishna suddenly appeared as a guest at his house. Vidura’s wife received Him, but there was nothing to offer, only some bananas. So after seating Him nicely she gave Him that, but she was offering the banana peels to Krishna and discarding the fruit on the ground. She was so bewildered, overwhelmed by the joy of finding that Krishna was suddenly present in her house, that she was discarding the fruit and giving Him the peels, and He was eating them.

At that very moment Narada and Vidura arrived. Vidura exclaimed: “What are you doing? You are leaving the fruit and giving the peels to my Lord!” But Narada came to her relief: “She is

bewildered, but He who is eating is not at all disturbed! One might think that He would say, ‘Oh, give me the fruit. Why are you giving Me the peels?’ But He is eating without any concern.” Then Krishna answered, “I am eating neither the fruit nor the peels, but I am eating that which is devotion! I am accepting her devotion. Neither the peel nor the fruit can satisfy Me; I need neither the one nor the other, but I live on devotion, Narada.”

*patram puspam phalam toyam,
yo me bhaktya prayacchati
tad aham bhakty-upahrtam,
asnami prayatatmanah
(Bhagavad-gita 9.26)*

The Lord says, “I accept all those foodstuffs that are offered; but actually it is not the food itself that I take, rather it is the purpose behind that offering, the ideal. It is the very spirit of the thing I am concerned with and never the outward show. I am living in the inner world, so with food also it is the inner substance with which I am concerned, not the external appearance.” Therefore it is said, *bhava-grahi-janardana*, “Lord Janardana (Krishna) sees the mood of devotion.” Devotion does not care for the ordinary rules and regulations of this material world. Still, in our lower condition we are advised to go on with *arcana*, and depending on our stage of realization, what we think to be pure we offer, and what is impure we reject. In the preliminary stage this is necessary for our fortune, but as we advance these external considerations are eliminated and the internal ones are given more and more importance.

There is another story which illustrates this. Vrajen Sil was a big scholar of Bengal, a scholar of philosophy so extraordinary that once after he had delivered a lecture at the World Conference of Philosophy in Rome, the president of the meeting told him, “I took you to be Aristotle!” He was respected as Aristotle, he was such a learned man. He had been a student of Scottish Church College in Calcutta and once was taking an examination there. While in the examination hall, he was given the questions and paper, and began to write his answers. Many questions were there, but he became so engrossed in answering one particular question that he forgot everything else. So deeply engaged was he in answering this single question that he spent the whole time on it and ignored all the others. When the bell rang and the examination time had expired he was perplexed as to what to do? He had only dealt with one question; but he left his paper and went away.

He was the brightest student of the college, but was thinking that his name could not possibly be on the list of successful candidates because he had only answered one question out of perhaps five or six. But still he was stealthily coming to see if the list of successful candidates had been posted. Then one day he found that his name had appeared at the head of that list. He was perplexed: “How is this? I only dealt with one question and I am at the head of the list; how is it possible?” So he asked the professor, “Sir, I had answered only one question; how then is it possible that you have given me first place?”

“Oh Mr. Sil, your answer is on the level of a research scholar, not an ordinary student, so I gave you first place!”

So, this is like *raga-marga* where the formal things are all ignored and the substance drawn out. Although normally Mr. Sil should have placed amongst the lowest of those candidates who failed, the Professor was a judge of a bold type and thought, “Oh, his answer to just one question is of

such high quality; this student can never be considered to be a failure.” Rather, he was given the highest position.

So, love is such: it does not care for any formality in its real judgment.

Part two

The Way Home

Delusion, Divinity and the Real Devotee

Devotee: Maharaj, if a devotee falls down and becomes disconnected, is that worse than if he becomes a *sahajiya*?

Srila Guru Maharaj: Which is better, a poor man or a thief? One had money and lost it; the other is imitating that he is wealthy, by committing wrong. One who is disconnected may be reconnected again soon; but *sahajiya* means either that he had a real connection with the truth, became disconnected, then chose a wrong path, or that already he is engaged in the wrong path. So which is the better position: not to get the real thing, or to get the wrong thing? Which is superior?

In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* it is mentioned that in *tamo-guna*, the lowest position, one thinks ‘A’ to be ‘B’. In *rajo-guna*, there is doubt whether *this* is real, or *that* is real. He cannot ascertain what is true; but to think that ‘A’ is ‘B’, and ‘B’ is ‘A’ – that is the worst kind of error. They are misguided; *sahajiya* means misguided. They are accepting matter as consciousness, so their position is more detrimental than that of those who have nothing, or who have lost their connection with the real thing. In a similar way, the conclusion of the *mayavadi* section who think that ‘merging’ into formless *brahma* is the highest end, is more dangerous, because “a half truth is worse than a lie.”

*se du'yet madhye visayi tabu bhalo
mayavadi sanga nahi magi kona kala
(Saranagati 27.3)*

Association with those who are out-and-out sense enjoyers can never be so detrimental to one’s spiritual welfare as is the company of an impersonalist.

If one man admits “I have no money,” and another, who really has no money, shows some counterfeit currency and claims “this is money,” then his condition is worse because he is engaged in falsehood.

So to become a *sahajiya* is worse. He is deceived, his attention is captured by, engrossed in, a wrong conception. One person had some conception for some time and became disconnected, but he may again easily re-establish his connection, but the other has become captivated by a wrong conception, so to convince him of the truth is more difficult because his mind is possessed and cap-

tured by that prejudice. The first person has no engagement; the engagement he had is gone. But the second has mistaken one thing for another. He has taken matter to be divine, and that is worse.

Once, in my childhood, I heard this example from my teacher in school. He said that in America there is a school of music, to attend that school he had to pay double the normal fee, but those who had no musical knowledge only had to pay the standard fee. That is because they do not know anything, so they can be taught easily; but the others who had some knowledge of music had to pay double, because everything which they had previously learned would first have to be forgotten, and only then would they be allowed to start learning in the proper way. They had to be taught first to forget their previous prejudices, their misconceptions of musical science, so for them there was a double charge. It is something like that. In one case, no *bhakti*, no devotion; and in the other, in the name of devotion, some non-devotional thing has captured the man. That is imitation, and worse, it is offensive. Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur said it is *vancanam*, to ridicule the devotees – Mahaprabhu, Rupa, Sanatana – it is to ridicule them because it confuses what is *prema* and what is *kama*. They are at opposite ends; and to accept *kama* in the name of *prema* is not only heinous and injurious to oneself, but it contaminates the whole atmosphere. So Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says:

*kame preme dekho bhai, laksanete bheda nai,
tabu kama 'prema' nahi hoy,
tumi ta' barile kama, mithya tahe 'prema'-nama
aropile kise subha hoy*

*keno mana, kamere nacao prema praya
carma-mamsamaya-kama, jada-sukha abirama
jada-bisayete sada dhay
(Kalyana Kalpataru 18-19)*

“Just give your attention to this, my brother: lust and love, their symptoms may appear as similar; still, lust is not love. But you have accepted lust in place of love, and if you give the certificate, that ‘this is *prema*,’ by this mistake you only cheat yourself. By mistaking one thing for another in this way, you will never get anything auspicious. Lust is concerned with flesh and blood, but love is in the highest position of spiritual existence.”

So they are opposites, like the South Pole and the North Pole. One is concerned with this body, the other, with the Supersoul; a great gulf lies between them! There is the ocean of dedication, and the highest point of that dedication is *gopi-prema*. It only exists where Krishna is, and here there is only imitation.

*koti-mukta-madhya 'durlabha' eka krsna-bhakta
(Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrta, Madhya-lila 19.148)*

“Out of many millions of liberated persons, a pure devotee of Krishna is very difficult to find.” We must consider all these things. Such dedication is possible only in the highest position of spiritual existence, the conscious area which is all-spiritual, and is not in any way concerned with flesh and blood. It is not concerned with the body.

The most heinous thing is that one will play the part of Krishna and a lady will play the part of a *gopi* and they will unite, and in that way they will enjoy. To think *this* to be *that*, it is impossible. Any ordinary moral man will hate this. What to speak of the higher devotees, even an ordinary moral man will hate it.

The steps are shown to us:

*adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sango 'tha bhajana-kriya
tato 'nartha-nivrttih syat tato nistha rucis tatah
(Sri Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhuh 1.4.15)*

In the beginning is faith, then association with devotees, engagement in service, purging of faults, attainment of steadiness in devotion, spiritual taste, firm attachment, transcendental emotion and pure love of Krishna. These are the steps.

And from another standpoint:

*vaikunthera prthivy-adi sakala cinmaya
(Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrta, Adi-lila 5.53)*

“The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuntha are all spiritual.”

We must always remember this: “I am the offspring of *tatastha-sakti*, the marginal potency; that is where I was born, and I must go through *svarupa-sakti*, which is higher than me. There the soil is of higher stuff than that of which I myself am made. The earth, the air, the water, the trees, birds, everything there is superior to me. And I am to enter there? It is not a small thing, not an easy thing. It is not within the power of the person who wants to go there to enter, rather it is completely dependent on the grace of his superiors: *guru-krpa*, *vaisnava-krpa*.

We have to walk there on our head, not on our feet. All are guru; the soil is guru, the entire paraphernalia is guru, superior. I am made of a lower stuff, and that plane is of higher substance, so it is impossible to enter there at my sweet will. To approach that direction as far as *mukti*, liberation, may be easy, but thereafter we can only be drawn by their grace; it is not a matter of right that anyone can enter that realm. It is only the wholesale, cent-per-cent grace of a child of that soil which can take us there. Just as in court there is a guarantor, someone who stands as a guarantee for the subject, so some agent of that soil must take responsibility for me, and at his risk, I can go. Vaisnava and guru, children of that soil, they will take the risk and bring me there. So without their grace, *vaisnava-krpa*, *guru-krpa*, *bhagavata-krpa*, we cannot enter there.

No right – all grace. That grace can take me there. From our side, we have no right. I am a child of the marginal potency, but there the whole substance, everything, is made of a higher stuff than my own existence. I have my existence as a person, and there they are also all persons, but all there are of an existence superior to me. How then can this person stand on the head of those? Only for their service; otherwise, it is inconceivable and impossible. Even to accept this principle is most difficult, what to speak of entering there:

*bahunam janmanam ante, jnanavan mam prapadyate
vasudevah sarvam iti, sa mahatma sudurlabhah
(Bhagavad-gita 7.19)*

“After many births, one who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me (Vasudeva) realizing that it is I who am both the source and substance of all that be. Such a great soul is extremely rare.”

And *Srimad-Bhagavatam* states:

*muktanam api siddhanam narayana-parayanah
sudurlabhah prasantatma kotisv api maha-mune
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.14.5)*

“O great sage, out of many millions of souls who are liberated and free from ignorance, and out of many millions of *siddhas* who have nearly attained perfection, there is hardly one pure devotee of Narayana. Only such a devotee is completely satisfied and peaceful.”

It is easy to think of, but hard to attain! No right can be established there; it is not as a matter of right that we can go there, so the ‘right-seeker’ will be totally frustrated. We must be prepared for “all risk, no gain.” But if somehow we can reach there, it will be “all gain, no risk!”

So to become a Vaisnava proper is almost impossible. It is only as a matter of grace from that level that we can go there; there is nothing we can do from our side. Only with complete surrender, complete self-forgetfulness, complete dedication to the interest of that place, can we hope to be taken there:

*vaikunthera prthivy-adi sakala cinmaya
mayika bhutera tathi janma nahi haya
(Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrta, Adi-lila 5.53)*

“The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuntha are all spiritual. Material elements are not found there.”

Uddhava is a devotee of such quality that he prays: “If I can be creeper there, I shall consider my fortune to have reached its highest extent.” In Vrindavan the creeper is such a valuable thing that Uddhava – about whom the Lord says, “You are My most favourite devotee; I love you even more than My own Self” – he is aspiring to take such a birth that will give him that position there. This is not mere hyperbole. When Uddhava is aspiring to be a shrub, to be some grass there, then how are we to prepare ourselves, that we shall walk over that place? I shall have to walk over the head of Uddhava? So, how much higher a conception must that place be?

And the *sahajiyas* – ridiculous! By imitation, here in the plane of flesh and blood, they think they will achieve that. They are the worst enemies, because by imitating in this way not only are they themselves going to hell but they are attracting so many others there also. They are not conscious of the facts, of what is what. So they have got their hated position in society; the general society has got hate for them, those ‘babajis.’

But we have to put faith in our *Guru Maharaj* who said; “It is my misfortune. I could not find a single Vaisnava in this *Vraja-mandala*.” Pressing his hand to his forehead he said, “It is my mis-

fortune that I could not find a single Vaisnava in this great, holy place of *Vraja-mandala*.” That was his conclusion.

And after he had performed *Vraja-mandala-parikrama*, he said about one *babaji* who was generally recognized as the best of the *sahajiya* ‘Vaisnavas,’ as their leader: “He is a *kanistha adhikari*. He may be considered as a beginner, to have admission into the infant-class.” That man was considered unanimously as a *siddha-babaji*, to have attained the highest position among them, but Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura said, “He has got admission into the primary class.” In writing, in the *Gaudiya-patrika* newspaper, he stated this. And we are trained accordingly, and consciously, not with blind faith. He explained to us what is what; we tried to follow his directions, and we have also come to such conclusions.

Step by step we must approach the highest point. It is not mental concoction, imitation. Imitation is the worst. It is hateful, filthy. If in the name of that higher love we represent this fleshy connection with the body and the mind – then that is the most hateful thing. We must try to avoid it with our utmost will and energy.

Srila Kaviraja Goswami describes: *vaikunthera prthivy-adi sakala cinmaya*, that the elements of that Vaikuntha world are all-spiritual and the scientific survey of that land is possible to our soul’s eye. We must understand that, how it is true. And for that we must first understand what is the *tatastha* region: what is *viraja*, what is *brahmaloka*.

But we are in such a material position that we cannot even understand this lower process:

*indriyani parany ahur, indriyebhyah param manah
manasas tu para buddhir, buddher yah paratas tu sah
(Bhagavad-gita 3.42)*

What is our soul? We can’t follow, we can’t understand what our own soul is! There is the world; understand what our own soul is! There is the world; we conceive it, we perceive it through our senses, so they are higher. The mind receives experience of they are higher. The mind receives experience of the world through the senses, above the mind is the faculty of judgement within us, and above that is the soul proper. And then we approach the Supersoul area; through *viraja*, *brahmaloka*, eventually we reach Vaikuntha. There are so many layers to cross, but who is to cross, our own soul, we cannot even find him! We are far away from that conception, in a hopeless position, and we say that the highest conception of the Paramatma-world is in our fist! That is foolish.

First we must feel our own soul, what is our real existence and identity in the spiritual position; then that soul will have to go higher and higher; by crossing more and more valuable planes he must go up. But first he must feel his own identity.

So, the *sahajiyas*, the imitationists, should be considered as the enemy. Like Quisling (an influential Norwegian army officer during the Second World War who was in league with the enemy, the Nazi occupational force), they are *jana-satru*, the enemy who has sprung up at home, the enemy within. This kind of imitation is the worst. Ordinary imitation may be bad, but imitation of the highest reality is completely repugnant and must be rejected because what is Supreme is being exploited in such a low, mean way. *That is sahajiya*.

We cannot see our own soul! That is our position. Absorbed in this gross matter of exploitation, we cannot even know what is our mind, of what substance it is made. Then, how can one understand what is the intelligence, *buddhi*, the faculty of judgment with us; or beyond that, the soul; or ultimately, the realm of the Supersoul? But we are living in the mundane world and imagining: “I have got the Lord of my dreams!”

Transcendental Knowledge

Sometimes we may be misguided to believe that we must not study the devotional books, thinking: “To analyze, to know, that is not part of devotion. That is not necessary; it is knowledge, *jnana*, and that is anti-devotion.” Thinking in this way we will go on taking the Holy Name, and wherever there is some explanation being given about the devotional school, we will try to avoid it. But that is not always best, because by hearing from the proper source we get the kind of knowledge that gives us impetus to go on in our *sadhana*.

In *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta* Srila Krishnadas Kaviraja Goswami says: *siddhanta baliya*, we should discuss the *siddhanta* (perfect conclusions of devotion). Sanatana Goswami is the *acharya* of *siddhanta*.

One may say, “What is the necessity of knowing *siddhanta*, what is what? I shall go on chanting the Name and wherever there is any class being given to explain *Srimad Bhagavatam* or *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta* I shall avoid it. That is all knowledge: *jnane prayasam udapasya*. “One should totally abandon the unnecessary endeavor of gaining knowledge by discussing empirical philosophical truths.” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 10.14.3)

But the *jnana* mentioned in this verse does not describe that sort of knowledge which gives us a real conception of what is the devotee, and what is God. That ‘knowledge’ appears similar to *jnana* externally, but if it is coming from a genuine source; it is of another type, another substance.

The warning about *jnana* is given because *anyone* may give *any* kind of interpretation of the revealed scriptures. It is not that we should try to know anything and everything, that whatever anyone will say, we will run there to learn something. But when there is any revelation coming through a real agent who is higher than us, we should be very earnest to hear; that will consolidate our position and help us to go on, to progress in our *sadhana*.

We should not reject as ‘knowledge’ that *siddhanta*: who is Krishna and how He is *Svayam Bhagavan*; who is Narayana; where are the twenty-four layers of misconception (twenty-four elements by which the *baddha-jiva* – conditioned soul - is covered); where is Vaikuntha, Goloka; who is Baladeva; what are all the different *rasas*. If I say, “Oh, no, this is all *jnana*, dismiss it, and take the Name,” that is foolishness. It should be considered as indolence, or idleness. We should invite that knowledge which will enhance our faith more profoundly. One should welcome such discussions. The Lord Himself says:

*mad citta mad-gata-prana, bodhayantah parasparam
kathayantas ca mam nityam, tusyanti ca ramanti ca
(Bhagavad-gita 10.9)*

“The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss always enlightening one another and conversing about Me.”

So, in the association of the *sadhus*, to discuss about Him from different standpoints is not ‘knowledge’ to be abandoned; rather it should be spontaneously and naturally encouraged. It is called *istha-gosthi*: *gosthi* means “combination” and *istha*, “desirable company.” In that association we must talk about Him. That is a necessary part of devotion.

And when *bhava-bhakti* (true devotional feeling) awakens, automatically these things will come:

*ksantir avyatha-kalatvam viraktir mana-sunyata
asa-bandhah samutkantha nama-gane sada rucih
asaktis tad-gunakhyane pritis tad vasati-sthale
ityadayo 'nubhavah syur jata-bhavankure jane
(Sri Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhuh 1.3.25-26)*

“When the seed of ecstatic emotion for Krishna fructifies in the heart of the devotee, the following symptoms naturally manifest in his behaviour: he feels forbearance; he doesn’t like to waste any time; he is detached from the mundane; he is free from pride; he lives in full hope; he is always eager to serve; he always has a taste for chanting the Lord’s Name; he loves to tell of the Divine qualities of the Lord; and he loves the Holy Abode of the Lord. These nine are called *anubhava*, subordinate signs of ecstatic love.”

If a *sadhu* spontaneously out of his own accord is expressing so many qualities of Krishna, and we go away, losing the benefit of that – it is suicidal! Rather, we need attachment for that, *asaktih*. “Oh, the good qualities of Krishna are being explained through this agent; I must try to give my ear to that.” Otherwise, why has the ear been created? It has been created only to receive tidings of Him! The ear and the brain have been created for that purpose only, and both must have their fulfilment in *Krishna-katha*, *hari-katha*.

For what purpose is the *Gita* there, the *Bhagavata*? What is *maya*? What is *svarupa-sakti*? What is real knowledge and what is misconceived, apparent ‘knowledge’? All these things we must know to a certain extent, because to avoid what is undesirable and to accept what is desirable presupposes some sort of knowledge at every stop of our progress.

So, *jnane prayasam udapasya*, to abandon fruitless knowledge-seeking does not mean we must not talk about Krishna amongst ourselves, or that when a *sadhu* is explaining about the Lord’s *nama*, *rupa*, *guna*, *lila* (Names, Forms, Qualities and Pastimes) we should flee from that place! It is not like that. By *jnana*, in the sense used here, is meant the teachings of the *sankhya* of the atheist Kapila, the schools of Patanjali (yoga), Jaimini (*karma-mimamsa*), the Buddhist school, etc.; and the advice to avoid them is also meant for the beginner, but the preacher will have to come into contact with everything – to smash them.

And also sometimes *jnana*, knowledge which is necessary, can come from within. There is a stage of devotion when the necessary knowledge comes from within, automatically. There is a stage of *bhakti* where things occur in this way; it is revelatory, through revelation we can understand. Wi-

thout any study but being supplied internally by *caitya-guru* sometimes knowledge of devotion may come to us; but generally it will be by hearing from the lips of the devotees.

So the plane, the conception of Krishna in Vrndavan, is not lacking in *cit*, in knowledge. *Cit* means *cetana*, that is, consciousness, to know. It is not in want of grandeur and awe, such as is found in Vaikuntha. But when *ananda* (joy, ecstasy) takes precedence over *cit*, then it is advised, “Don’t endeavour much through knowledge.” There is *sat-cit-anandam* (eternity, knowledge and bliss) and by *cit*, by the faculty of knowing and understanding, we cannot achieve everything. But everything comes automatically to us by service. In service, there is also knowledge, a department of knowledge, and that develops automatically.

The Sweetest Struggle

Devotee: Srila Guru Maharaja, some time ago I was told that if one is not struggling in Krishna-consciousness it is not a good thing. Should that be the condition of someone who is striving to be Krishna-conscious, that he is struggling?

Srila Guru Maharaj: When a devotee is trying to conquer his senses, when he is trying to conquer the influences of *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *matsarya* (lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion and envy), at that time he cannot avoid that struggle. Progress means a struggle, of different kinds, and that happens in the stage of *madhyama-adhikara* (the intermediate stage). Generally, that is the time of difficulties. In *kanistha-adhikara*, in the lower stage, one does not concern himself with the stage of his progress, or if he is getting devotion or not; with a peaceful mind he is engaged in arca-ne (deity worship), or whatever may be his service. But when the stage of *madhyama-adhikara* begins, real struggle begins in one’s life. He will have to adjust many things, *laukiki vaidhiki vapi*, not only regarding his devotional life, as advised by the scriptures (*vaidhiki*), but also his social position (*laukiki*), his ordinary dealings, his quarrels, his relationships with society, with education.

Generally the tendency to preach comes in this stage; he wants to extend himself to try to remove the difficulties in the environment and convert it to his purpose. The *madhyama-adhikari*’s life is one of struggle. And when he reaches *uttama-adhikara* (the advanced stage of realization) then he becomes somewhat peaceful in his life. He becomes peaceful; he sees that everywhere things are going well, according to the will of Krishna. He can see the will of Krishna very easily and that His backing is everywhere. So he has not much to do, or struggle for:

*sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavam atmanah
bhutani bhagavaty atmany esa bhagavatottamah
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.2.45)*

“One on the topmost platform of devotional service (*uttama-bhagavata*) sees within everything the Soul of souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna. He sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situated within the Lord.”

But when one is living in the plane of ignorance, of misconception, it is necessary for him to find harmony, because he is seeing both things, *maya* (illusion) and *isvara* (the presence of God-

head). He wants to install *isvara* – God, Godliness, God-consciousness – and he tries his hardest to remove misconception. So, *madhyama-adhikara* is a period of struggle; it is in the stage of *sadhana-dasa*, the stage of practice.

As a result of *sukrti*, spiritual fortune due to devotional service rendered knowingly or unknowingly, the soul first acquires *sraddha*, divine faith, then *sadhu-sangha*, one gets the association of real devotees. That is the stage of hearing, *sravana-dasa*; then *varana-dasa* one accepts the principle, the teachings, the path of devotion; and then comes *sadhana-dasa*, the stage of practice, and this stage is full of struggle. Then, in the *apana-dasa* stage of advanced realization, one feels peaceful in *bhava-bhakti*, the first opening of the bud of divine love, which in the stage of *prapana-dasa*, full surrender, becomes *prema-bhakti*, pure love of God.

And again, when he is already in *lila*, situated in the transcendental pastimes, there is another struggle, but that is of another kind. In Vraja, Vrndavan, there is also competition, a struggle. Yasoda will think, “How to control this naughty child? I fail to do so; I can’t manage Him!” In this way there is struggle, but that is produced by *yoga-maya*; it is in *prema-bhakti*, *ahi bhavati premna*, and it is dynamic in character, not static. Where the plane is dynamic, there must be struggle; in some way or other it is present as competition in the plane of *lila*.

In the *sakhya-rasa* there is play where there are two parties; on one side is Krishna, on the other, Balarama, and each wants to be victorious. That is also a struggle, but it is purely of another kind: it is transcendental play.

In *madhura-rasa* also, several parties are there: Radharani’s party, Chandravali’s party and so many others; and the servitors of each party have to manage for their own interest, the interest of their mistress.

So the dynamic character means a kind of struggle – a sweet struggle. And in this world there is struggle also, but that is bitter. When we have to struggle to remove the nescience and invite the real science, to go from misunderstanding to pure knowledge, in the beginning that struggle is very bitter. It is not only tasteless, but also sometimes painful. But when we enter the higher realm, the struggle becomes more or less sweet.

Lila must mean a kind of struggle. There are differences, there is conquering, sometimes they are taking the help of deception – one party is deceiving the other – but everything is *aprakrta*, *prakrta-vat*, super-transcendental, though it is appearing just like ordinary worldly affairs.

And so also something like immorality is there; *niti rahita*, the moral laws are being crossed for the satisfaction of Krishna. This is a very high conception: to do anything and everything for Him. The *kama-rupa* group are prepared to do anything and everything for Krishna, and for that kind of service they are under no law. Krishna is the origin and master of law, and for Him anything can be done, crossing the existing law of the society.

*ajnayaivam gunan dosan mayadistan api svakan
dharman santyajya yah sarvan mam bhajeta sa tu sattamah
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.11.32)*

Those who are ready to cross even the *sastric* orders, which have been given to us for our own benefit, for the service of Krishna, are really the highest class of devotee. Law, which has been established by the Lord, is for the ordinary people; however, a special section exists who are ready to cross over that law, only for their exclusive service to the Lord.

*sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
(Bhagavad-gita 18.66)*

“Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, so do not despair.”

Many rules and rites of *varnasrama-dharma* are given for our benefit, but that is when we are in a lower stage. And in the higher stage, “crossing the law, I shall serve Him!” – that is faith!

Suppose it is forbidden to enter the harem of the king; the general law states that it is forbidden to all, and none should transgress that. But if one perceives some urgent service is necessary, if he suspects there is some danger to the king’s life, then perhaps he will cross the law at his own risk and enter the harem, for the benefit of the king, to save him. So there is a particular section of devotees who are ready to cross over the law for the Lord’s satisfaction.

Those who can know the interest of Krishna are a special group; they are highest among the devotees. Law is meant for the general public, but the sweet will of Krishna is above all law.

So everywhere there is struggle: where there is life, there is struggle. Where there is progress there is struggle; and where there is *lila*, play, there is struggle, though of a different kind. One is sweet, the other painful. In the lower stage it is a little painful for us to cut the tie of attraction to this world; but when some permanent relationship is established with the upper world, when we have regained that, then to move forward is happy. Since progress means a struggle, that struggle will continue throughout the whole stage of *madhyama-adhikara*.

Then, in *uttama-adhikara* (the stage of advanced devotion) externally the life may become peaceful. And again, in the higher stage, in *vilasa* (pastimes), crossing *santa-rasa* (passive appreciation and adoration) which is a peaceful stage, again the struggle begins, but that is a sweet struggle. It is arranged not by *maha-maya*, but by *yoga-maya*; it is carrying us to the center. The very land there is of *rasa*; it is *rasamaya*, full of sweet taste, the land of nectar, *amrtamaya-loka*. The difference between the two kinds of struggle is something like the experience of a man working in a hot desert or in a good, healthy atmosphere, or the work of a diseased man and that of a healthy man. It is like that.

There is also an expression: “ignorance is bliss.” One who is in ignorance is living in peace, because he does not know anything, he is unconscious. That is also peaceful; because there is no consciousness, there is no pain. When a patient is in pain the doctor wants to render him unconscious by some injection, and to keep him in that state, because if he awakes he will experience so much pain, acute pain. So, it is necessary that he be placed in another state, unconsciousness.

That unconsciousness is ignorance, and it also has a kind of taste, *tamo-guna*. But that is not real peace. There is no feeling, it is zero. But zero is also of an infinite character. Infinity and zero

are similar. If we add zero to zero it comes to zero, and if we subtract zero from zero it is also zero; zero divided by zero, again zero. In the same way, if infinity is added to, subtracted from or divided by infinity, it all comes to infinity.

So, “ignorance is bliss.” If there is no consciousness, there is no question of pain. It is like the existence of a stone. The extreme liberationists reach such a stage as that of a fossil or a stone. They want peace, so they are given a stone-like state of peace:

*ye 'nye 'ravindaksa vimukta-maninas
tvayy asta-bhavad avisuddha-buddhayah
aruhaya krcchrena param padam tatah
patanty adho 'nadrta-yusmad anghrayah
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.2.32)*

“O lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who accept severe penances and austerities to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence remains impure. They simply speculate in various ways and do not seek the means to take shelter of You. Because they have no regard for Your lotus feet, they simply fall down from their position of imagined superiority into material existence again.”

To those who are determined to be ‘one’ with Him, this heavy punishment is at last given, and they are thrown down to take such an existence, that of a stone, and in that way they can live in peace for *lakhs*, *crores*, or millions of years. They can become a Himalaya, a stone, or a tree. In the *Puranas* we find examples of personalities who were cursed to such a fate; and in that state there also is a sort of peace: “ignorance is bliss.”

And those who have gone up to *santa-rasa*, they also find some peace. But entering *Vaikuntha*, again there is life, movement, and that is for service. In *dasya-rasa* there is activity, there is struggle. They are serving the order: “Do this, go here, give this to them.” There is so much movement, and movement means struggle, but that struggle gives peace. That kind of struggle begins in *dasya-rasa*. And *santa-rasa* is the marginal position, and in that position of non-activity there is also peace, but it is of a lower quality:

*atmaramas ca munayo nirgrantha apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukim bhaktim ittham-bhuta-guno harih
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.7.10)*

“All varieties of *atmaramas* (those who take pleasure in the *atma* or spiritual self), especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord possesses transcendental qualities and therefore can attract everyone, including even liberated souls.”

That is the marginal position, it is only on the threshold of service proper:

*brahma-bhutih prasannatma
na socati na kanksati*

*samah sarvesu bhutesu
mad-bhaktim labhate param
(Bhagavad-gita 18.54)*

“The spotlessly pure-hearted and self-satisfied soul who has attained to his conscious divine nature neither grieves, nor craves for anything. Seeing all beings equally (in the conception of My supreme energy), he gradually achieves supreme devotion, *prema-bhakti*, unto Me.”

So the marginal position is a position of so-called peace. But we find dynamic peace in struggle, as it appears externally in *dasya*, *sakhya* and *vatsalya-rasas*, and in *madhura-rasa* and its sub-divisions, *svakiya* and *parakiya*. Suppose the *madhura-rasa* servitors are to meet with Krishna on a dark night in the forest; on the surface it appears they have to struggle in so many ways. Being given the sign, hearing the particular flute-song of Krishna, they will have to pass through the jungle to be somewhere, at a particular time. That appears like an ordinary struggle, but it is the sweetest movement.

If ‘struggle’ means ‘movement’, then there, on that plane, where movement is so sweet, struggle is a high thing. But if we think that struggle means something painful, then that struggle must be of the lower plane. Here it is pain producing; all movement, all endeavour here produces only pain. On the higher plane, there is also movement, but that movement produces sweetness, just as sandalwood when rubbed produces a sweet scent. There is struggle for the purpose of producing sweetness.

So there on the highest level they are also very busily struggling, but that struggle is producing nectar, which they are tasting. To struggle also means to be busy. Everyone there is so busy, more than we can ever conceive. They are so active, but their activity is not painful; it produces peace. Here, trying to do away with our unholy attraction to the mundane, we experience a painful struggle. But, as the English poet Shelly wrote: “Our sweetest songs tell of saddest thought.” That kind of struggle also gives us peace. When a beginner in devotion starts to become detached from his mundane environment, to leave it is painful, but he also gets a kind of peace:

*yad anucarita-lila-karna-piyusa-viprut
sakrd adana-vidhuta-dvandva-dharma vinastah
sapadi grha-kutumbam dinam utsrjya dina
bahava iha vihanga bhkisu-caryam caranti
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.47.18)*

A devotee leaves his family, and his family is crying and wailing; he also feels pain because of their anguish. But still he feels a kind of peace of a higher quality, so he can bear the apparent pain of separation from his family life. When he is giving up his home and his family, he feels some painful reaction, but beyond that, in his heart of hearts, he feels some bright prospect. When a man goes to a foreign country to earn some money, he leaves his family and so he feels some pain, but at heart he also realizes that he is going to bring in money which will satisfy him, and enable him to enjoy.

In a similar way, when a person goes to leave this world, his association with misconception, apparently, or outwardly, he feels pain on account of what he is doing, but at heart he gets some hope of a bright future, and with that strength he can go on.

So, when we have some attraction for this mischievous world, and we try to leave it, at that stage we struggle – a painful struggle. But still, beyond that we see a bright hope of some unparalleled nectarean taste of life.

So struggle does not always mean pain. Up to a certain stage it is painful, and that is due to *maya*, misconception. And we find also the symptoms of pain in *Krishna-lila*, but that is not really pain. It is apparent pain; it only seems so. Krishna said that He would come to a particular *kunja* (forest bower) and Radharani with Her party went there, but He did not come. That is called *kalahantarita*, mistiming, that is, being let down by the lover or beloved; and there are so many other situations, like *mana* (jealousy), etc. All these things are painful, but as Krishnadasa Kaviyaja Goswami writes, describing *Krishna-prema*: *bahye visa-jvala haya, bhitaro ananda-maya*, externally there appears to be great pain, but the heart is overflowing with blissfulness. So, “Our sweetest songs are those which tell of saddest thought.” Externally it is sad, but internally, it is sweet. It is like that.

When we take the Name, in the beginning we think it our duty to count so many rounds, and sometimes it is painful. But when we get a taste for the Name, then our inner tendency incites us to take the Name more and more – not that as a duty we will somehow have to finish sixteen rounds. But when we acquire *ruci*, inner taste for that particular service, it is happy. Until and unless we acquire that position, there must be some pain.

As long as we do not have that taste and we are doing that service as a duty, we will feel some pain. So *sadhana-dasa* is a little painful, on the whole. Then in *apana-dasa* it becomes sweet. Underground, of course, sweetness is everywhere; otherwise why should a person be tempted to approach the spiritual path? Only for the hope of sweetness. But still, if we want to see by analysis, then the process is: *sravana-dasa*, hearing; then *varana-dasa*, accepting; then *sadhana-dasa*, practicing. Up to this point it is a little painful. Then *apana-dasa*, realized devotion; and finally *prapanna-dasa*, full self-surrender. And what pain exists is only apparent; substantially it is all sweet.

Heart and Halo

The prejudice of our past experience, caught within us in a subtle form, has covered, like dust, the eye of our soul. Our inner vision is densely covered with the dust of many different misconceptions of separate interest, causing us to ignore the universal interest.

This mental cover is made up of the prejudices of local and provincial interest, and it keeps us from seeing reality: *visaya-dhulite kemane se paratattva paiye dekhite*. How will a person be able to read the universal wave when his mind is fully engrossed with local interest of different kinds? How can one detect the universal interest, the universal wave? Only one who has fully eliminated all kinds of local interest, and is eager to understand the universal wave, can see it clearly.

Arthesv abhijnah svarat: what is the purpose of the movement of this world? The answer is clear: “For itself.” Reality is for itself; not to satisfy many, but to satisfy One. All the waves are meant to satisfy that One, and if we can put ourselves on that level we can understand the truth; otherwise we are all cheaters.

We are far from the truth when we cannot see that everything, all waves are flowing towards the satisfaction of One, *svayam bhagavan*. We are labouring under a deception; we are deceivers who are not just deceiving ourselves but the world also. We are guilty of misunderstanding everything and of carrying that false knowledge to others. Everyone, all the *baddha jivas*, are more or less cheaters. That is our position and we must be relieved of such misunderstanding, such deception of our own self as well as of the environment, if we are to be placed in our proper position.

Then we can go there and find that universal wave, see it: *darsan*. *Darsan* means ‘to see,’ and how to see, that must be learned. What to see, how to read what is going on, in myself and outside, that is proper understanding and proper education. A proper understanding of one’s own self and also of the environment is proper education. Education must be Vedic. The standard must be drawn from outside this area of *maya*, misunderstanding; it must be drawn from the perfect realm through *veda*, revealed truth.

We must accept revealed truth and bid farewell to so-called scientific knowledge and other kinds of perceptions, which are all erroneous, based on false experience and false information. “It belongs to me; it belongs to him; it belongs to them”: this calculation is all false. So we have to be relieved, we have to get wholesale relief from this mania, this misconception. And not only must we get relief from the misconception, from misunderstanding the external waves, but we must attain a positive position, to learn to understand the wave, the vibration of Goloka. Goloka is the most universal, most fundamental plane, and if we can harmonize ourselves with that plane we will be led to Vrndavan, or Nabadwip, and there we shall see things as they are.

Some are more attracted to Krishna-*lila*, others more towards Nabadwip-*lila*, and others have an inclination to be accommodated in both places. In Krishna-*lila* also some are attracted to Radharani’s camp, some to Krishna’s camp and some are holding the middle position. We find this sort of division, and that is necessary for the *lila*, by the arrangement of *yoga-maya*. So, in the highest plane, we find two kinds of pastimes, Krishna-*lila* and Gaura-*lila*, and they are of the same value. In one there is transaction within a ‘limited’ camp and in the other there is transaction, along with a tendency towards distribution to others. But they are of the same value. That which is being distributed, and that which is being enjoyed are of one and the same value of ecstasy, sweetness, love and beauty. Some are more attracted to the one *lila*, some to the other.

Within Gaura-*lila* also, we find those like Narahari Sarkara and his followers, who were more given to Krishna than Gauranga, and others who are more inclined towards Gauranga than to Krishna. This is all by the grant of the Lord, the Supreme will – His *lila*.

In Gaura-*lila*, Gadadhar Pandit is holding the helm, everything belongs to him; still he has to admit he’s dispossessed, that Gauranga has taken everything! He is exhaustively dedicated to Gauranga. So Srila Kaviraja Goswami says: *teho laksmi-rupa, tara sama keha nai*, that he represents the main potency of Gauranga, and no one is to be compared with him. This is the conclusion of Srila Kaviraja Goswami about Sri Gadadhar. He is *gaura-prema-maya*, the embodiment of Sri Gaura’s love.

Gadadhar Das represents the halo of Radharani, but Gadadhar Pandit represents Her mood, Her nature – Her heart. (In the Sri Chaitanya-caritamṛta purports by Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (*Adi-lila*, 10.15) it is stated that Srila Gadadhar Pandit, the fourth branch of the Chaitanya tree, is the combination of Srimati Radharani and Lalita-sakhi. In the Panca-Tattva, Srila Gadadhar Pandit represents the internal potency or pleasure potency of the Lord.)

In *Adi-lila* 10.53, it is explained that Srila Gadadhar Das, the twenty-third branch of the Chaitanya tree, is considered to be a united form of Candrakanti, who is the effulgence of Srimati Radharani, and Purnananda, who is the foremost of Lord Balarama’s very dear girlfriends. Thus Srila Gadadhar Das was one of the associates of both Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu.)

It is as if Mahaprabhu has taken away Gadadhar Pandit’s soul, and the body is still standing! That is the position of Gadadhar Pandit; he is quite empty, and following Mahaprabhu. He is not full in himself. Something, the most important thing, his heart, has been taken by Mahaprabhu, so he has no other alternative but to follow Him. He is wholly given to Mahaprabhu. Gadadhar Pandit’s position, the part he played, was something like that of Radharani, Her heart stolen by Krishna, the empty body still standing. *Radha-bhava-dyuti-subalitam naumi Krsna-svarupam*: He was fully engrossed in the conception of Sri Gauranga. Gauranga had taken everything from him, so he had no other alternative; he was fully engrossed, captured completely by Him.

We find his activity throughout his whole life was like this. Of the other devotees, some were ordered to go to Vrndavan, and some were allowed to go to Vrndavan, and some were allowed to go there, but though Gadadhar Pandit wanted to visit Vrndavan with Mahaprabhu Himself, he was denied: “No, you won’t go.” When Jagadananda Pandit asked to go there, Mahaprabhu, with hesitation, granted him permission, “Yes, go there, but move always under the guidance of Rupa and Sanatana.” He also gave him some special instructions: “Do this, and this, and don’t do that.” But Gadadhar Pandit was not allowed to go there.

He was the representation of Srimati Radharani Herself, yet his peculiar position was such: the Queen of Vrndavan, but now transferred to Nabadwip. His position had become just the opposite; he could not enter Vrndavan! He prayed for permission, but Mahaprabhu did not give it. He said, “No, stay and live here.” And he had to do so. Sri Gadadhar Pandit represents the predominated moiety of the Whole. The Whole consists of predominating and predominated moieties, and he represents the predominated half. He is one half of the Absolute Truth.

In the teachings of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, whose preaching was inspired by Sri Gadadhar Pandit and Sriman Mahaprabhu, we also find all the substance that is present in that plane of vibration. These two personalities, Sri Gadadhar Pandit and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, are our great gurus, our guides, and by offering our worship to them we can sow the seed of our highest benefit. By the grace of that great Guru Maharaj Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, we have been able to understand this.

And Bhaktivinoda Thakura, though generally he has his own position, as understood from the consideration of the disciple, Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura has seen Srimad Radharani in him: a ‘relative’ vision. He once said that Radharani represents the full play of *astanayika*, the eight characteristics of the heroine; we see that they are all perfectly represented in Her.

In other places we may find partial representations of them, but we find them fully manifest only in Her.

He said, “I see my gurudeva as *Guna-manjari*, and in that *manjari* form he has some partial representation of Radharani. But if I attempt to look more deeply, I find him identified fully with Her; the eight kinds of qualities displayed in the service of Krishna (*asta-nayika*) are to be found there. If I look at him with my head a little more erect, I can see that he is one with Radharani. *Acaryam mam vijaniyat*: know the Acarya as Myself. If I give more attention to this *sastric* rule and try to search out the meaning, I find that Radharani comes to take Her place there, in the position of my *gurudeva*.” In this way he has seen in Bhaktivinoda Thakura the fullest representation of the cult of Sri Gauranga.

This realization is expressed in his poem where he says that he saw Svarupa Damodara Goswami in Gaura-kisor Dasa Babaji, and Sri Gadadhar Pandita in Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. In one place he has written: *gadadhara-din dhari' paiyacche gaura-hari*, that he has accepted the day of the disappearance of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura to be identified with that of Sri Gadadhar Pandit.. In another place, in his poem at the conclusion of his *Sri Chaitanya-caritamrta* commentary, he has written: “Here, in Nabadwip-*dhama*, the eternal pastimes are going on continuously; only those who have got that deep vision can perceive it.

*gadadhara mitra-vara, sri svarupa damodara,
sada kala gaura-krsna yaje
jagatera dekhi' klesa, dhariya bhiksuka-vesa,
aharahah krsna-nama bhaje*

*sri gaura icchaya dui, mahima ki kava mui,
aprakrta parisada-katha
prakata haiya seve, krsna-gaurabhinna-deve,
aprakasya katha yatha tatha*

He says; “It is very difficult to perceive the sweet will of Sri Gauranga, but if we can lift ourselves to that level, we see that Svarupa Damodar Goswami and Sri Gadadhar Pandit are always engaged in their service here in Nabadwip. Sometimes it is suppressed and sometimes it is appearing on the surface. In that plane all is going on by the sweet will of Sri Gauranga, without any restriction. But now I find that those two have appeared on the surface as Srila Gaura-kisora Dasa Babaji and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. I have seen it with my own eye of divine service but this is not to be advertised, not to be given publicity anywhere and everywhere; people will laugh at it. But this is my heartfelt conclusion.” He has written this in his poem concluding *Sri Chaitanya-caritamrta*.

So Gadadhar Pandit was identified with Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. That was the vision of our Gurudeva, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura. He could see in them the same identity. He considered *siksa-guru parampara* to be the most substantial thing. Eliminating the *sahajiya-vada* which gives much importance to the outer cover, try to look within, and see things more deeply. Try to understand the deeper vibrations of the outside environment, and see within yourself also. Dive deep, and you will find the plane of the finest vibration which will carry that news to you, and you will see that truth.