All Glories to Sri Guru and Gauranga

The Search For Sri Krsna

Reality The Beautiful

Sri Sri Radha Krsna

by
Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Deva Goswami Maharaja

Foreword

by
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Nineteenth Century Founder of the
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We love to read a book which we have never read before. We are anxious to gather whatever information is contained in it, and with such acquirement our curiosity stops. This mode of study prevails amongst a great number of readers who are great men in their own estimation as well as in the estimation of those who are of their own stamp. In fact, most readers are mere repositories of facts and statements made by other people. But this is not study. The student is to read the facts with a view to create, and not with the object of fruitless retention. Students, like satellites, should reflect whatever light they receive from authors, and not imprison the facts and thoughts just as the magistrates imprison the convicts in the jail!

Thought is progressive. The author's thought must have progress in the reader in the shape of correction or development. He is the best critic who can show the further development of an old thought; but a mere denouncer is the enemy of progress and consequently of nature. Progress certainly is the law of nature, and there must be corrections and developments with the progress of time. But progress means going further or rising higher. The shallow critic and the fruitless reader are the two great enemies of progress. We must shun them.

The true critic, on the other hand, advises us to preserve what we have already obtained, and to adjust our race from that point where we have arrived in the heat of our progress. He will never advise us to go back to the point whence we started, as he fully knows that in that case there will be a fruitless loss of our valuable time and labor. He will direct the adjustment of the angle of our race at the point where we are.
This is also the characteristic of the useful student. He will read an old author and will find out his exact position in the progress of thought. He will never propose to burn a book on the ground that it contains thoughts which are useless. No thought is useless. Thoughts are means by which we attain our objects. The reader who denounces a bad thought does not know that a bad road is even capable of improvement and conversion into a good one. One thought is a road leading to another. Thus, the reader will find that one thought, which is the object today, will be the means of a further object tomorrow. Thoughts will necessarily continue to be an endless series of means and objects in the progress of humanity.
The great reformers will always assert that they have come out not to destroy the old law, but to fulfill it. Valmiki, Vyasa, Plato, Jesus, Mohammed, Confucius, and Caitanya Mahaprabhu assert the fact either expressly or by their conduct.

Our critic, however, may nobly tell us that a reformer like Vyasa, unless purely explained, may lead thousands of men into great trouble in time to come. But dear critic! Study the history of ages and countries! Where have you found the philosopher and reformer fully understood by the people? The popular religion is fear of God, and not the pure spiritual love which Plato, Vyasa, Jesus, and Caitanya taught to their respective peoples! Whether you give the absolute religion in figures or simple expressions, or teach them by means of books or oral speeches, the ignorant and the thoughtless must degrade it.

It is indeed very easy to tell, and swift to hear, that Absolute Truth has such an affinity with the human soul that it comes through as if intuitively, and that no exertion is necessary to teach the precepts of true religion, but this is a deceptive idea. It may be true of ethics and of the alphabet of religion, but not of the highest form of faith, which requires an exalted soul to understand. All higher truths, though intuitive, require previouseducation in the simpler ones. That religion is the purest which gives us the purest idea of God. How then is it possible that the ignorant will ever obtain the absolute religion, as long as they are ignorant?

So we are not to scandalize the Savior of Jerusalem or the Savior of Nadia for these subsequent evils. Luthers, instead of critics, are what we want for the correction of those evils by the true interpretation of the original precepts.
God gives us truth as He gave it to Vyasa, when we earnestly seek for it. Truth is eternal and inexhaustable. The soul receives a revelation when it is anxious for it. The souls of the great thinkers of the bygone ages, who now live spiritually, often approach our inquiring spirit and assist it in its development. Thus, Vyasa was assisted by Narada and Brahma. Our sastras, or in other words, books of thought, do not contain all that we could get from the infinite Father. No book is without its errors. God's revelation is Absolute Truth, but it is scarcely received and preserved in its natural purity. We have been advised in the SrimadBhagavatam (11.14.3) to believe that truth when revealed is absolute, but it gets the tincture of the nature of the receiver in course of time, and is converted into error by continual exchange of hands from age to age. New revelations, therefore, are continually necessary in order to keep truth in its original purity. We are thus warned to be careful in our studies of old authors, however wise they are reputed to be. Here, we have full liberty to reject the wrong idea, which is not sanctioned by the peace of conscience.

Vyasa was not satisfied with what he collected in the Vedas, arranged in the Puranas, and composed in the Mahabharata. The peace of his conscience did not sanction his labors. It told him from inside, "No, Vyasa! You can't rest contented with the erroneous picture of truth which was necessarily presented to you by the sages of bygone days! You must yourself knock at the door of the inexhaustible store of truth from which the former sages drew their wealth. Go! Go up to the fountainhead of truth, where no pilgrimmeets with disappointment of any kind. Vyasa did it and obtained what he wanted. We have all been advised to do so.

Liberty then, is the principle which we must consider as the most valuable gift of God. We must not allow ourselves to be led by those who lived and thought before us. We must think for ourselves and try to get further truths, which are still undiscovered. In the Srimad Bhagavatam (11.21.23) we have been advised to take the spirit of the Sastras, and not the words. The Bhagavata is therefore a religion of liberty, unmixed truth, and absolute love.

The other characteristic is progress. Liberty certainly is the father of all progress. Holy liberty is the cause of progress upwards and upwards in eternity and endless activity of love. Liberty misused causes degradation, and the Vaisnava must always carefully use this high and beautiful gift of God.

The spirit of this text goes far to honor all great reformers and teachers who lived and will live in other countries. The Vaisnava is ready to honor all men without distinction of caste, because they are filled with the energy of God. See how universal is the religion of the Bhagavata. It is not intended for a certain class of Hindus alone, but it is a gift to man at large, in whatever country he is born, and in whatever society he is bred. In short, Vaisnavism is the Absolute Love binding all men together into the infinite unconditioned and absolute God. May peace reign forever in the whole universe in the continual development of its purity by the exertion of the future heroes,

who will be blessed according to the promise of the Bhagavata with powers from the Almighty Father, the Creator, Preserver, and the Annihilator of all things in Heaven and Earth.

From an English lecture delivered in 1869, at Dinajpur, West Bengal.

Preface

by **Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada**
Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krsna Consciousness

We are very fortunate to hear His Divine Grace, Om Visnupada Paramahamsa Parivrajakacarya Bhakti Raksaka Sridhara Maharaja. By age and by experience, in both ways, he is senior to me. I was fortunate to have his association since a long time, since perhaps 1930. At that time he had not accepted sannyasa, but had just left home. He went to preach in Allahabad, and on that auspicious occasion we were connected.
Sridhara Maharaja lived in my house for many years, so naturally we had very intimate talks. He has such high realizations of Krsna that one would faint to hear them. He was always my good advisor, and I took his advice very seriously because from the very beginning I knew that he was a pure devotee of Krsna. So, I wanted to associate with him. Krsna and Prabhupada, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, liked him to prepare me. Our relationship is very intimate.

After the breakdown of our spiritual master's institution I wanted to organize another institution making Sridhara Maharaja the head. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura told me that Sridhara Maharaja is one of the finest preachers of Krsna consciousness in the world, so I wanted to take him everywhere. This was my earnest desire. But since he could not go around the world and preach, at least the people of the world should come to hear from him.
For spiritual advancement of life we must go to someone who is actually practicing spiritual life. So if one is actually serious to take instructions from a siksa guru, or B.R. Sridhara Maharaja. I consider Sridhara Maharaja to be even my siksa guru, so what to speak of the benefit that others can have from his association.

Introduction

by Srila Sridhara Maharaja

Everyone is searching for rasa, pleasure. The status of rasa is the highest. As persons we have our subjective existence, but rasa, pleasure, has His supersubjective existence. He is a person. He is ahkila rasamrta murtih: the reservoir of all pleasure. He is Krsna. Rasa is Krsna. There cannot be rasa in any other place but Krsna. He is the fountainhead of all different types of rasa. So, by the nature of our constitution we have to search after Krsna.

In the Brahma-sutra it is said, "Inquire after the supreme cause of this world. Search!" From where has everything come? How is everything maintaining its existence? By whom? And ultimately, where does everything enter after death? That is brahma, spirit, the most fundamental plane from where everything springs up, remains, and ultimately enters. Where is brahma? The Brahma-sutra advises us to inquire after the prime cause, the biggest, the all-accommodating.

But Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu replaced that, Srimad-Bhagavatam replaced that with krsnanusandhana: the search for Sri Krsna.

Brahma-jijnasa, the search for spirit, is a dry thing. That is only the exercise of your thinking faculty, a jugglery of reason. Leave that behind. Begin the search for Sri Krsna and quench the thirst of your heart. Rasa jijnasa, raso vai sah. The things acquired by your reason won't satisfy you. Jnana, knowledge, cannot really quench your thirst, so instead of brahma-jijnasa accept krsnanusandhana and begin the search for Sri Krsna.

Where is Krsna? Our real want will be satisfied only by getting the service of Krsna; not by anything else. We want to satisfy the innermost demands of our hearts. We don't care to know where we are or what is controlling everything, but we really want to quench our thirst for rasa, for madhurya, for sweetness. We must search neither for knowledge nor for the controller of this world; we must search after rasa, anandam, after beauty and charm.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Srimad-Bhagavatam have taught us what to beg for, what to pray for, what to want. They have taught us, "If you beg, beg for Krsna, not for anything else." So, the fate of the Vaisnavas, the students of the Bhagavata and the followers of Mahaprabhu, is sealed in the search for Sri Krsna. We want nothing else but Krsna.

The Vedas say, srnvantu visve amrtasya putrah: "O, you sons of nectar, sons of the nectarine ocean sea: please listen to me. You were born in nectar; you were born to taste nectar, and you must not allow yourselves to be satisfied by anything but nectar. So, however misguided you may be for the time being, awake! Arise! Search for that nectar, that satisfaction." The Vedas tell us, "Om!" Om means a big "Yes!" "What you are searching for - that is! Don't be disappointed." The Vedas say that the object of our inner search exists. The common search of all your hearts is existing, and your thirst will be quenched. By your constitution you are meant for that and you deserve that, so don't be afraid; don't be cowed down. It is already given in your being. And you can never be satisfied with anything else. So prepare yourself, after your long search, to receive that long missing nectar in its full form and quality. Awake! Arise! Search for your fortune and you cannot but have that. It is your birthright. It is the wealth of your own soul. It cannot but be within you. You have no other business, no other engagement but krsnanusandhana, the Search for Sri Krsna: Reality the Beautiful.

FIRST CHAPTER

Krsna Consciousness Love and Beauty

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Bengali poet Hemachandra wrote, "There are so many countries rising in prominence: this land, that land - Japan is a very small country, but it is rising like the sun. Only India is under eternal slumber." When he mentioned the other part of the world, he said, "America is rising forcefully, as if he is coming to swallow the whole world. Sometimes he is shouting as if with a war cry, and the whole world is shivering. His enthusiasm is so intense and great that he wants to snatch the world from the solar system, and give it a new shape, a new molding." America has been mentioned in this way by Hemachandra. In the same way, Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja came to give the world a new shape through Krsna con-

sciousness. He once said, "We must go there and build it in a new way - with Krsna consciousness."

What is Krsna consciousness? Krsna consciousness means real love and beauty. Real love and beauty must predominate; not selfishness, or exploitation. Generally, whenever we see beauty, we think that beauty is to be exploited, but actually, beauty is the exploiter, beauty is the master, and beauty is the controlling principle.
And what is love? Love means sacrifice for others. We should not think that sacrifice is to be exploited by us. Who is to be the recipient of sacrifice? Is it our party? No. We are in the group of those who sacrifice themselves: the predominated negative party, Mahabhava's party. The underlying principle of love is sacrifice, but sacrifice for whom? And who is the beneficiary? Love is the beneficiary. Everyone should contribute to the center, but no one should draw energy from there. "Die to live." With this spirit we should combine and work for real love and beauty.

Banner of Love

And beauty will be victorious in the world. Love will be victorious in the world. We will sacrifice everything to see that the banner of divine love will flutter all over the world, for a particle of that divine love will be able to keep peace and distribute peace in all directions. Just as fighting soldiers dedicate everything, and give their lives so their countrymen will benefit in the future, we should sacrifice our lives and work to bring real peace for everyone.

In Vrndavana, the land of Krsna, the standard of sacrifice is unlimited. Devotees there are willing to risk everything for Krsna. If that principle of sacrifice is enthroned, then peace will automatically follow.
Krsna consciousness should be enthroned above all other conceptions. All other conceptions are meant to be subservient to Krsna consciousness. The ideal of Vrndavana, Krsna's abode, is above all other ideals. In theistic comparison, the conception of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's lila is above all other conceptions. There, theism reaches its zenith. That is our highest goal, and step by step, that should be explained, thought out, accepted, and preached.

Atomic Death

Without this, what sort of benefit are you expecting from your present engagement? Only death is awaiting you. You are so proud of this scientific civilization and are boasting so much, but death is awaiting you whether it is atomic death or natural death. You can't cross death. One English poet has written:

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave
Awaits alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave
- Thomas Gray Elegy in a Country Churchyard

You do not care to solve the greatest danger. You say that you are big thinkers, that you are great men, and that you should command the respect of society, but the general inevitable problem for every atom here is death. What is your contribution for solving the greatest danger which is wai-

ting to devour everyone scientist, insect, or virus? What is your solution to death? Have you taken any steps to solve that universal danger? What you are doing at present is exploitation, and you are encouraging a lower life as a reaction. You are exploiting nature, and everyone who is deriving the benefits will have to pay to the farthing with interest.

"For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." This is your statement, but what have you done to solve that? You are endangering the fate of the world by your fascinating proposals of apparent comfort. What is this? You are avoiding the greatest inevitable danger, so your life is a useless malengagement. In one sense, you are traitors to society. Come with courage to face and solve the real problem, the common problem, and the most dangerous problem; otherwise you should leave the field and go away. Leave it to us. We shall prove that the world is an abode of perfect happiness: (visvam purna sukhayate).

Dive Deep into Reality

But to understand this, you will have to dive deep, not into the plane of body and mind, but into the plane of soul You will have to dive deep into the reality that is within us. It is not a foreign thing to be acquired by loan, but the soul is within everyone, even the insects and the trees. So, we have to rise to the plane of soul. Eliminate both your physical and mental encasements and find out your own self. There you will find the key, the clue to the proper world where life is worth living.
The solution is there; a hint is given by many mahajanas, by great saints in every religious sect to some extent, but our claim is that India has given the highest conception of the spiritual world in the Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam. So, we challenge all of you: we are not imaginationists; we are most practical thinkers. We don't avoid any great problem by saying, "Oh, it can't be solved." We do not belong to the party that wants to easily take prestige and fame. We don't want to classify ourselves with those hoaxing people. Come and see whether the plane of reality can be found. You are not required to spend any less energy in your campaign, so take our program; try it and see. Where are you? Who are you? What is the real nature of the world? In the Koran, in the Bible, and in the Vedas, and in every other scripture, a hope and hint has been given about the life of reality. Is this all a hoax? What charm have the materialists given? That charm is only for the self-deceivers, and that is dragging them into the country of loan and debt, the land where "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction." So, a divine civilization should be drawn out into this plane. We have to try the path that has been suggested by the great saints and scriptures. It is not unreasonable. It is not madness. Come, reason can also be applied there.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gave a solution to all our problems with an allegorical example. He said, "We see that you are poor, but there is a happy solution. Your wealth is underground in your own room: just try to unearth it. Don't approach it from the southern side, the give-and-take method of karma, for then whatever you do will bring some reaction that will capture and disturb you, and you will have no time to reach the proper solution. If you approach that hidden wealth from the western side, through the yoga system, by manipulating the subtle forces of nature to attain supernatural mystic power, that will enchant you and take your attention away from the desired goal. Your own activity in the wrong direction will create obstacles to your achievement.

The Samadhi Phantom

"If you approach the treasure from the north, the side of that grand brahmasmi, the impersonal conception, with the help of misinterpreted Vedantic logic, then you will enter into eternal samadhi, that great phantom will swallow you up, your existence will be nowhere, and who will come to enjoy the peace of getting the wealth? Only if you approach from the eastern side, with the help of devotion, will you get the wealth easily. That is the direction of the sunrise, the light giving direction. And that light is not prepared by our own hand; that light is from the source of all light: the revealed truth. It is extended from the quarter which is unknown to us. That light is revealed knowledge, bhakti, the path of devotion.

Adopt that path in your search for the real wealth within you, and easily you will find your own self, which is most wonderful (ascaryavat pasyati kascid enam). Discovering that your own self is so wonderful, you will be ashamed, thinking, "How could I have been carried away by the charm of this mundane world? I am the soul. How was it possible for maya to have such enchanting power over me that my own self, which is so wonderful and so valuable, was drawn into illusion? The peace which is within me has been greatly admired by the spiritual stalwarts, but I have come in connection with mortal and nasty, rotten things. How? It is most wonderful, but I was deceived." Then from atma to Paramatma, from soul to Supersoul, then from Vasudeva to Narayana, and then from Narayana to Krsna, the progressive understanding in God realization is not unscientific; it is really scientific. This is vijnana, scientific knowledge:

jnanam te' ham sa-vijnanam
idam vaksyamy aesatah
yaj jnatva neha bhuyo 'nyaj
jnatavyam avasisyate

In the Bhagavad-gita (7.2) Krsna says, "Arjuna, now I shall explain to you scientific knowledge not only about the soul, but also about its potency. The mind, the senses, and the modes of nature are all non-atma, or material. There is a direct and indirect approach towards reality which I shall now explain to you. Please listen attentively to Me: jnanam te 'ham sa vijnanam. What is this? There is Myself and My potency, and the jiva, the living entity, is the marginal potency which is filling up all these material worlds." If the jiva-sakti, the spiritual potency, were withdrawn, then everything would be stone, and who would care for exploitation? All this fighting tendency, this tendency for exploitation would stop if the marginal potency, the jiva, were withdrawn from matter. Everything would be dead. The soul has entered into this material consciousness and has made it a moving thing. You should understand this properly, in a scientific way. We are not lacking in our ability to give you a scientific explanation.

Plane of Self-Deception

A higher conception of the finer world is here. It is real, and where you are trying your utmost to make a stand, the place that you consider real is unreal.

ya nisa sarva-bhutanam
tasyam jagarti samyami
yasyam jagrati bhutani
sa nisa pasyato muneh

"You are asleep to your real self-interest and the real truth, while you are awake in the plane of self-deception." We must establish ourselves in the plane of reality, and try our best to extend it to others.
And to preach means this: "I sincerely have faith in Krsna consciousness and relish it to the utmost. I find that my future prospect is also here. Because I feel that it is very tasteful, useful, and wholesome, I have come to distribute it to you, my friends. We should guide our lives according to the principles of Krsna consciousness as taught by the spiritual master. Take it, and you will be successful in fulfilling the goal of your life."

Rasa, Happiness, Ecstasy

In this way, we have to approach everyone with God consciousness, Krsna consciousness. We must show how God consciousness ultimately merges in Krsna consciousness. We have to prove dexterously, step by step, that Krsna is the reservoir of all pleasure (akhila rasamrta murtih). What is Krsna consciousness? Rupa Goswami has given a scientific definition. Rasa, pleasure, cannot be avoided. We are all after rasa. Everyone, every unit, even the smallest unit of the world is always hankering after rasa, happiness, ecstasy, and all possible phases of rasa are personified in Krsna. Try to understand how it is. What is rasa? What is its nature? How can a comparison in rasa be drawn? In this way, step by step, you will have to come to the Krsna conception of Godhead. It is not a tale from the ancient Indian scriptures. Krsna is not the object of a tale, but fact. You have to come out and face that living fact, that reality. We shall try our best to show you how it can be a fact. Krsna is a fact. He is a reality, and reality is for itself.

You have to pay for the goal. You must "Die to live," and in this way you will feel that it is not a hoax. When you progress on the path, you will feel it (bhakti pare sanubhavo viraktir anyatra ca). With every step forward, you will feel these three things: satisfaction, nourishment, and the eradication of your hunger. Your hankering in general will be diminished. Generally, we feel, "I want this, I want that, I want everything; still I have not satisfied my hunger." But you will feel that your hunger is being appeased as you progress in Krsna consciousness, and what you previously thought would give you relief will take leave from you automatically. Their trade won't continue; they will all withdraw, your natural inclination for spiritual advancement will automatically increase, and you will find acceleration in your progress. "You will practically feel these three things, so come and take what we say." In this way, you have to approach one and all, leaving the result to the Lord.

Fruits of Energy

We are only agents, and we are working because He has ordered us, so we must remember what is bhakti, what is devotion proper. Whatever I do, the wage I earn must not come to me; I am only an agent. The benefit should go to the proprietor, to my master, Krsna. We should move with this idea, and that will be bhakti proper. Otherwise, we will be engaged in karma-kanda: fruit-hunting. I want to enjoy the result of karma for myself, but the result should go to my master. I am His servant, and I am working under His order. I am His slave; I am not the proprietor. I am not the proper person to be the recipient of the fruits of energy. The master of energy is the Supreme Lord, and all the products of energy should go to Him. It must not be tampered with on the way. This should be the attitude of every worker. Then it will be bhakti proper. We are not the

recipients; He is the recipient. We must always be conscious that the only beneficiary is He. Only then are we devotees. We are not the beneficiaries, but selfless workers. It is said in the Bhagavad-gita (2.47):

karmany eva-dhikaras te
ma-phalesu kadacana
ma karma-phala-hetur bhur
ma te sango 'stv akarmani

"You have a right to perform your duty, but you have no right to enjoy the fruits of your work." This is a great warning. Krsna says, "Do not think that because you are not the beneficiary of the fruits of your action, you have no reason to take so much trouble to work - never." That is the most heinous curse, to think that because I am not the beneficiary, I am not going to work. Even selfless activity is also of a lower order. Rather we must perform godly activity for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. That is bhakti, or devotion. And there is also a gradation in bhakti: there is a big division between vidhi-bhakti and raga-bhakti, calculative devotion and spontaneous devotion.

Autocrat, Despot, and Liar

God is not a constitutional king, but He is an autocrat. To work for an autocrat is the highest conception of sacrifice. What degree of selflessness and courage is required to work for an autocrat, a despot, a liar who is up to anything? Not only that, His normal position is such. It is not a temporary temperament, but His eternal inner nature. Krsna is an autocrat because law emanates from Him. An autocrat is above law. When there are many, there is a need for law; when there is only one, there is no need for law. Krsna is a despot, but He is absolute good. If there is any check in His despotism, the world will be the loser. Goodness must have its full flow. Is that bad? Can there be any objection to this? Goodness must have its freedom to flow anywhere and everywhere. If we say that God is absolute good, then what do we lose by giving Him autocracy? Should autocracy be with the ignorant and the fools? No. The absolute good must have full autocracy. Not that law will go to bind His hands. Then we will be losers. And Krsna is a liar, to entice us, because we cannot understand the whole truth. So to entice us to gradually come to the truth, He has become a liar.

The first thing to understand is that He is all goodness, so everything emanating from Him cannot but be good. Any defect is on our side. We are encroachers. He is not an encroacher. But He shows this as His play, lila. Everything belongs to Him, so there is no lying. When He says, "Let there be light," there was light: "Let there be water," there was water. If He has such potential power, can there be any lying there?

We have to sacrifice ourselves for Krsna, because He is the absolute good, beauty, and love. Faith and selflessness are required to such a high degree. If we accept Krsna consciousness as our highest ideal, then so much sacrifice is necessary, but sacrifice means life: "Die to live." There is no loss by sacrifice. We can only gain by giving ourselves.
So, kirtana, or preaching has been accepted as the means to the end. There are so many ways by which we can approach the souls of this world with kirtana: by direct approach, through books, and by performing sankirtana, chanting the holy name congregationally. By helping others, we help ourselves: we help our own fortune and our own faith. Not only will others benefit by our performance of kirtana, but we will also benefit eternally.

Eternal Vacuum

Krsna says in Bhagavad-gita (2.47), "Never be attached to not doing your duty (ma te sango 'stv akarmani). Because you are required to work for Me, will you stop work? Don't subject yourself to that painful reaction, for then you will be doomed. Don't be attached to stop-work and strike. No. That is a dangerous vacuum. Don't jump there in that eternal vacuum, but work for Me, and you will thrive." Krsna says, "Abandon all varieties of duty, and just surrender unto Me (sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja). My position is such: I am your guardian, your friend, your everything. Your goal of life is to be found in Me. Believe it Arjuna. At least I must not deceive you. You are my friend - You can take it for certain."

man mana bhava mad bhakto
mad-yaji mam namaskuru
mam evaisyasi satyam te
pratijane priyo 'si me

"Think of Me always, and become My devotee. Worship Me, and bow down before Me. In this way you will certainly come to Me. My dear friend, I promise you on oath, I am speaking the truth. I am everything. Try to come to Me. I am the goal, the fulfillment of life not only for you, but for everyone. From the absolute consideration My position is such. At least you are my friend. I won't deceive you. You can believe Me. I promise that I am so."

How shamelessly Krsna is expressing Himself here. He has come to plead for Himself so much, for our benefit. And a record is kept in the Bhagavad-gita for our guidance. And Lord Krsna came as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to preach about Himself. He came as His own canvasser with His eternal associates. He even brought Srimati Radharani, devotion personified, along with Him, saying, "I will show how charming your position in My service is, how beautiful and dignified the devotion of My other half can be. So, come along with Me." And Baladeva has come as Nityananda to canvass, and Vrndavana has come to canvass itself in Navadwipa. So we are most indebted to the canvasser, especially when Krsna Himself has come to canvass and to show how beautiful, how magnanimous, and how sacrificing divine love is.

SECOND CHAPTER

Saints Scriptures and Gurus

The purpose of pilgrimage is to hear from the saintly persons residing in a holy place. The following is a conversation with Srila Sridhara Maharaja and three European students searching India for truth.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Why have you come to India?

Student: For pilgrimage. We came to visit the holy places like Navadwipa, Vrndavana, and Jagannatha Puri. That was the main reason we came to India.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: How have you come to know all these things? By books?

Student: Yes, by the books of Srila Prabhupada.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: What book?

Student: Bhagavad-gita.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Oh. The Bhagavad-gita As It Is by Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja.

Student: Yes.

Bhagavad-gita: "Cure Thyself"

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Many years ago, a German scholar expressed his opinion that Bhagavad-gita is the highest spiritual literature. His point was that Bhagavad-gita clearly advises us not to try to correct our environment, but to correct ourselves, to adjust with the environment. That is the key to the advice of Bhagavad-gita: "Cure thyself." We have no power to bring about changes in the environment. That is arranged by the divine will. Our environment, the sum total of all the forces acting outside us, is irremovable. We have no ability to interfere with our environment; that will only be a useless loss of energy. Rather, we must try to correct ourselves so that we can adjust with the circumstances outside us: this is the key to our success in life (tat te 'nukampam susamiksamano). We have our duty to perform, but we must not aspire after the results of our activities; the results depend on Krsna (karmany evadhikaras te ma phalesu kadacana). We make our contribution; at the same time, thousands of millions of others are contributing, creating the environment. So, we must do our duty, but we will have to accept the ultimate result as best, because it is arranged by the Absolute. There are so many results to our individual activities, but we must see how the absolute will harmonizes everything and adjust ourselves accordingly.
Our responsibility lies only in discharging our duty. We must never aspire after any definite environment; the environment will go on in its own way. We have no power to change it. Rather, we must try our best to change our own self so that we may come in harmony with the environment.

Our responsibility is never in enjoying the results of our actions. Because we work for a particular result and don't obtain it, should we be discouraged? No. We should go on doing our own duty. Whatever we contribute should be offered to the infinite, and the infinite will mold the results in His own way. Krsna says, "Never aspire after any particular result for your action. At the same time, don't be idle. Don't be worthless. Go on discharging your duty without depending on any outside consequence."

Student: Will we have to remember Krsna while we are doing this?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes. Then we will be able to come in connection with Krsna and gradually we will come to realize that our environment is friendly to us. When the reactions of our previous actions disappear, we will find that every wave is carrying good news to us. When our egoistic attitude vanishes, we will find ourself in the midst of sweet waves all around. We

should try to do away with whatever wrong we have done hitherto. We must do our duty and never expect any definite result, but cast it towards the infinite.

Dissolving Ego

And then one day will come when our egoistic feeling will dissolve and from within, our real self, a member of the infinite world, will spring up and awaken, and we will find ourselves in the sweet waves of that environment. There, everything is sweet. The breeze is sweet, the water is sweet, the trees are sweet, whatever we come in contact with is sweet, sweet, sweet.

Our internal ego is our enemy, and to dissolve that ego, we must do our duty as we think fit, but never expect any response according to our will. If we adopt this karma-yoga then in no time we will find that the wrong ego, which was always expecting something crooked for its selfish purpose, has vanished; the broad, wide ego within has come out, and we are in harmony with the whole universe. The harmonious world will appear before us, and the cover of selfish desires will disappear.

The cause of our disease is not outside us, but within us. A paramahamsa Vaisnava, a saint of the highest platform, sees that everything is all right. He finds nothing to complain about. When one can see that everything is good and sweet to the furthest extreme, he comes to live in the plane of divinity. Our false ego creates only disturbance, and that ego should be dissolved. We should not think that the environment is our enemy. We must try hard to detect God's grace in whatever comes to us, even if it comes as an apparent enemy. Everything is the grace of the Lord, but we can't see it; rather, we see the opposite. The dirt is in our eyes.
Actually, everything is divine. It is all the grace of the Lord. The disease is in our eyes. We are diseased, and if the disease is cured, we shall find that we are in the midst of a gracious world. Only the coverings of desire deceive us from having a real estimation of the world. A bonafide student of the devotional school will accept such an attitude towards the environment and towards the Lord. We have to think that God's will is everywhere. Even a blade of grass cannot move without the sanction of the Supreme Authority. Every detail is detected and controlled by Him. We have to look upon the environment with optimism. The pessimism is within us. Our ego is responsible for all sorts of evil.

Infinite Blissfulness

This is Vaisnavism. If we can do this, then in no time, our disease will be cured, and we'll be in the midst of infinite blissfulness. Our tendency at present is to cure what we see on the outside. We think, "I want everything to follow my control, my sweet will. When everything obeys me, then I will be happy." But we must take just the opposite attitude. As Mahaprabhu has said:

trinad api sunicena
taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena
kirtaniyah sada harih

We should create no resistance against our environment. Still, if some undesirable things come towards us, we should tolerate that with our utmost patience. And even if someone attacks us we

won't become violent; we must practice forbearance to the extreme. We shall honor everyone; we will seek no honor.

In this way, with the least amount of energy and time we can attain the highest goal: the plane where Krsna Himself is living. That is the most fundamental plane of existence. At that time, all the encasements covering the soul will vanish and die, and the inner soul will awaken and find that he is playing in a sweet wave, dancing and merry-making in Vrndavana, with Krsna and his devotees. And what is Vrndavana? It is neither a fable, nor a concocted story. The broadest and widest plane of the whole universe is beauty, sweetness, and blissfulness, and that is present in Vrndavana in all its fullness. We have to dive deep into that plane of reality.
Our ego has floated us on the surface of trouble in maya, illusion. Concoction, and the search for selfish satisfaction have taken us here, and these must be dissolved once and for all. And then from within, our golden selves will come out, and we will find that we are in the plane of a happy dancing mood, with Krsna in Vrndavana.

Hegel's "Self-Determination"

In Hegelian language, this is called "self-determination." Self-determination means we must die to live. We must leave our material life and all our material habits; we have to die as we are if we want to have a real life. We must give up our false ego. Our material habits from different births are collected in the ego in subtle forms, not only from the experience of human birth, but even from animal births, tree births, and so many other births. Krsna consciousness means the wholesale dissolution of the false ego. That concocted, selfish figure within us is our enemy. The real self is hopelessly buried beneath the false ego. So great is the depth of our forgetfulness that we do not even know who we are. So, as the German philosopher Hegel said, we have to "die to live."

Reality is for itself and by itself. The world is not created for our selfish end; it has a universal end, and we are part and parcel of that. We must come to an understanding with the whole. The complete whole is Krsna and he is dancing, playing, and singing in his own way. We must enter into that harmonious dance.
Being infinitesimal, should we think that the infinite must be controlled by us? That by our whim everything will go on? This is the most crooked, heinous object ever conceived, and we are suffering from such a disease. This is the real problem in society. Our inquiry should be aimed at solving this.

Student: Does this mean we have to give up material life completely?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Not at once. Everyone must progress gradually, according to his own particular case. If one who has much affinity towards worldly life suddenly leaves that, he may not keep up his vows; he may go down again. So, according to personal capacity we must make gradual progress. That is to be taken into consideration, but still, we should always be eager to give up everything and devote ourselves exclusively to the highest duty. Those who have enough courage will jump into the unknown, thinking, "Krsna will protect me, I am jumping in the name of God. He is everywhere; He will take me on His lap." With this idea, one who has real eagerness for the truth may leap forward.

Student: I have a problem. For ten years I've tried to take up this process. For ten years, I have kept from eating meat, fish, and eggs. I avoid material things - I have no attraction for them. I

have left all this behind. But there is one thing I want to give up and also I don't want to give up. This is ganja (marijuana).

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: That is a small thing. There are three real difficulties: the first is women, the second is money, and the third, good name and fame. These three are our enemies. Marijuana intoxication is a small thing. Anyone can give it up easily. But these three things are the fundamental aspiration of every animal, tree, bird, man, or god. These three are everywhere. But intoxication and other fleeting habits are very negligible things and can be conquered very easily.

As we have gradually come into the habit of intoxication, we have to come out; gradually, and not suddenly. Just after World War Two, we read in the newspaper that Goering, Hitler's air general, was habituated to taking much intoxication. But when he was put into jail, no intoxication was supplied to him. He became sick, but treatment went on and he was cured. His disease was cured by the medicine. We also have seen so many opium-eaters who came here, joined the temple, and gradually left their habit.

Many so-called "sadhus" smoke marijuana. It helps concentration, but that is the material mind. It disturbs faith. It is an enemy to faith. No material intoxication, but only faith can take us to our desired goal. The misguided souls think that marijuana, hashish, and so many other things can help us in our meditation. It may do something, but that is mundane and that will frustrate us in our time of need. These things cannot help us rise up very high.

Sex, Dope, and Gold (Money)

Srimad Bhagavatam (1.17.38) advises that these five things should be rejected: dyutam: gambling, or diplomacy; panam: intoxication, including tea, coffee, betel, and everything else; striyah: unlawful, illegal womanlove; suna: butchering, and the transaction of gold. Trade in gold makes one very apathetic towards progress in the line of faith. These five are very tempting.

What to speak of the mania that intoxication will help us in our meditation upon the transcendental, Devarsi Narada says, yamadibir yoga-pathaih kama- lobha hato muhuh: even what we acquire by meditation is temporary and has no permanent effect. Only real faith in the line of pure devotion can help us.

Saints: Living Scriptures

Student: So, how can we develop our faith in Krsna consciousness?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: How have you come to conceive of Krsna consciousness?

Student: By reading Bhagavad-gita.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Bhagavad-gita. From the scriptures. And the scriptures are written by whom? Some saint. So, the association of saints and the advice of scriptures are both necessary. The saint is the living scripture, and the scripture advises us in a passive way. A saint can actively approach us, and passively we may receive benefit from the scriptures. The association

of the scriptures and the saints can help us achieve the ultimate realization: sadhu sastra krpaya haya. The saints are more powerful. Those who are living the life of the scriptural advice are scripture personified. In their association, and by their grace, we can imbibe such higher, subtle knowledge and faith.

All our experiences are futile in the attempt to attain the ultimate destination; only faith can lead us there. The spiritual world is far, far beyond the jurisdiction of our limited visual, aural, and mental experience. The experience of the eye, ear, and mind is very meager and limited, but faith can rise up and pierce through this area, and enter the transcendental realm.

Faith should be developed with the help of scriptures and saints. They will help us understand that the spiritual world is real and this world is unreal. At that time, this material world will be night to us, and that will be day. Presently, the eternal world is darkness to us, and we are awake in this mortal world. What is night to one is day to another. A saint is awake in some matter, and a dacoit is working in another plane. They are living in two separate worlds. A scientist is living in one world; a rowdy is living in another. One's day is night to another. The ordinary persons cannot see what Einstein and Newton have seen, and what the ordinary man sees is ignored by a great man. So, we have to awaken our interest in that plane, and ignore the interests of this plane.

World War III: Let It Be

Student: Many people are worried about nuclear war. They think it may come very soon.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: That is a point on a line, a line on a plane, a plane in a solid. So many times wars are coming and going; so many times the sun, the Earth, and the solar systems disappear, and again spring up. We are in the midst of such thought in eternity. This nuclear war is a tiny point; what of that? Individuals are dying at every moment; the Earth will die, the whole human section will disappear. Let it be.

We must try to live in eternity; not any particular span of time or space. We must prepare ourselves for our eternal benefit, not for any temporary remedy. The sun, the moon, and all the planets appear and vanish: they die, and then again, they are created. Within such an eternity we have to live. Religion covers that aspect of our existence. We are told to view things from this standpoint: not only this body, but the human race, the animals, the trees, the entire Earth, and even the sun, will all vanish, and again spring up. Creation, dissolution, creation, dissolution - it will continue forever in the domain of misconception. At the same time, there is another world which is eternal; we are requested to enter there, to make our home in that plane which neither enters into the jaws of death, nor suffers any change.
In the Bhagavad-gita (8.16) it is stated:

abrahma-bhuvanal lokah
punar avartino 'rjuna
mam upetya tu kaunteya
punar janma na vidyate

"Even Lord Brahma, the creator himself, has to die. Up to Brahmaloka, the highest planet in the material world, the whole material energy undergoes such changes."
But if we can cross the area of misunderstanding and enter the area of proper understanding, then there is no creation or dissolution. That is eternal, and we are children of that soil. Our bodies

and minds are children of this soil which comes and goes, which is created and then dies. We have to get out of this world of death.

Zone of Nectar

We are in such an area. What is to be done? Try to get out. Try your best to get out of this mortal area. The saints inform us, "Come home dear friend, let us go home. Why, are you suffering so much trouble unnecessarily in a foreign land? The spiritual world is real; this material world is unreal: springing and vanishing, coming and going, it is a farce! From the world of farce we must come to reality. Here in this material world there will be not only one war, but wars after wars, wars after wars.

There is a zone of nectar, and we are actually children of that nectar that does not die (srnvantu visve amrtasya putrah). Somehow, we are misguided here, but really we are children of that soil which is eternal, where there is no birth or death. With a wide and broad heart, we have to approach there. This is declared by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and the Bhagavad-gita, the Upanisads, and the Srimad-Bhagavatam all confirm the same thing. That is our very sweet, sweet home, and we must try our best to go back to God, back to home, and take others with us.

THIRD CHAPTER

Fossilism vs. Subjective Evolution

The following chapter is an excerpt from a conversation between Srila Sridhara Maharaja and neurophysiologist Dr. Daniel Murphey, Ph.D.

Darwin has given the theory of evolution - Fossilism. Vedanta has given subjective evolution. In Darwin's theory of objective evolution, matter evolves consciousness. The object exists first, and by its development, life is coming, consciousness is coming - from stone. That is objective evolution. But an object is a relative term; without the subject, an object cannot stand. The subject is the primary substance. Whatever is to be felt is only an idea in the subjective ocean. So, the subject, consciousness is first. The object, the gross, proceeds from the subtle.
When a particular potency is handled by Krsna, in His form as Maha-Visnu, then the material energy begins to move and produce something (mayadhyaksena prakrtih sayate sa-caracaram). The first product is a general ego. Then, gradually so many plural individual egos emanate from the general ego. The experience of this world develops from ego. When ego contacts the mode of ignorance, form is produced. When it contacts the mode of goodness, the sun and light are produced. When false ego comes in connection with these three modes of nature, a bifurcation takes place, generating the objects of the senses, the material senses, and the power of sense perception. So, from the subtle, the gross is coming.

The Ghost of Darwin

That is Vedantic evolution. But the Darwin theory says that from the gross, the subtle is coming. At present, people are fond of the Darwin theory that stone produces consciousness. Darwin's objective evolution has swallowed us. Although externally, we reject it, we hate it, still, the ghost of Darwin's theory has devoured everyone. Therefore, it is difficult to make them understand that consciousness is more valuable than stone. It's easy for consciousness to produce stone; it is difficult for stone to produce consciousness. Consciousness is more valuable; stone is less valuable. So, a more valuable thing can produce a less valuable thing, but it is difficult to explain how a less valuable thing can produce something more valuable.

Fossil Fathers

The material scientists think that the subtle proceeds from the gross. This is upside-down. It is just the opposite. Not "fossil-fatherism," but "God-fatherism." Their theory is "fossil-fatherism,": the fossil is the father of everyone. The scientists believe that everything moves upward. This is incorrect. It is coming down. This is described in the Bhagavad-gita (15.1):

urdhva-mulam adhah-sakham
asvattham prahur avyayam
chandamsi yasya parnani
yas tam veda sa veda-vit

"The tree of this material world has its roots upward, while its branches extend downward. The leaves of this tree are the Vedic hymns. One who understands this tree, and its origin, is a true knower of the Vedas." So, according to Vedic knowledge, everything moves from up to down, not from down to up.

Matter does not produce the soul; rather the soul contains in its one negligible portion the conception of matter. Like an eczema, it is a disease. The world exists like an eczema in a wholesome body. This is the Vedantic understanding. It would certainly be a wonderful miracle if stone could produce the soul, but it is easier and more reasonable for us to think that the soul has produced the conception of stone. In the soul, there are many conceptions, and one conception is that of stone. It is all in the plane of consciousness. But that stone can produce soul, or consciousness, is difficult, ridiculous, inconceivable, and unreasonable. Rather, it is the opposite, something like the Berkeley theory that the world is in the mind, and not that the mind is in the world. It is only our deviation from the truth that brings us into this mundane world. How and where that deviation begins is to be thought out. But deviation from the truth has brought us to this false area.

So, consciousness is producing everything. Consciousness is eternal; this world is not eternal. This is a temporary production, and the temporary stone cannot produce eternal consciousness. Pure consciousness is an eternal subject (nitya sanatana). It is not a product, it is productive. Ether can produce fire, and earth, but the earth cannot produce ether. The subtle is more efficient than the gross. The gross is of secondary importance. The soul, atma, is of principle importance. The origin of everything must be conscious; the starting point must begin with the interested party. The soul is endowed with interest, but a stone has no interest, plan, or project, nothing of the kind. But there is a plan and a purpose pervading everything, and that is the important thing.

According to that consideration, the characteristic of the Absolute, the original substance should be calculated. An object of limited attributes and capacity cannot be the ultimate cause. Only a thing of unlimited quality and capacity should be taken as the cause of the whole. That is a more reasonable idea. Science should realize this. So, there are some who think that science is gradually trying to meet philosophy.

Karmic Boomerang

Material science is only increasing the circumference of the mortal world. But increasing the tendency of exploitation cannot help us. Science is only borrowing, extorting power from nature. According to Newton: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." We must be conscious of this fact. All our acquisition here is nothing: like a boomerang, it will come back to zero again. So scientific progress is no progress. It is "progress" in the wrong direction. Actually, the first principle of any living body is to save himself. That is the first principle, and that should be our starting point.

In the Upanisads it is said, asato ma sad gamayo tamaso ma jyoti gamayo mrtyor ma amrta gamayo: "I am mortal; make me eternal. I am ignorant, filled with nescience; take me to science, knowledge. And I am threatened with misery; guide me towards bliss. We should begin our research work in these three phases: how to save one's own self and save the world, how to remove darkness and attain light, and how to remove misery and taste nectar, the sweet life of eternity, knowledge, and bliss (sac-cid-anandam, satyam, sivam, sundaram).

Science Devours Itself

This should be the line of our search; all other inquiries are false. This so-called scientific research is a wild goose chase. It is suicidal. The atomic researchers will soon prove that this kind of science devours itself; it sucks its own blood. It will live, feeding on its own flesh and the flesh of its friends. Material scientific knowledge is no knowledge. We must acquaint ourselves with a vital understanding of pure, real knowledge. We must absorb ourselves and others in that knowledge, remove darkness and bring light, remove misery and establish eternal peace.
Science means not to extend the jurisdiction of exploitation, knowing full well there will be a reaction. By extending the space of exploitation, we will also surely be exploited. If one knowingly commits an offense, then he is charged with more punishment. So, so-called scientific advancement is suicidal. And it is clearly proven: presently the leading countries of the world are threatening each other with atomic weapons, the highest product of the scientists.

Neutron Bomb: Death Ray

What is the difference between the atomic bomb and the neutron bomb? The neutron bomb is something like a death-ray that will kill the people, but will not destroy the buildings. The neutron bomb: man will be killed, the houses, the buildings and everything else will be left behind. The bed will be there, the furniture, everything else will be there, but only the life will be gone, and the bodies will become rotten. That is the effect of the neutron bomb.

And those who emerge victorious will come to enjoy all these things. They will have to remove the dead bodies, and fill the place up with their own men. This is action and reaction in the plane of exploitation.

So, this is a suicidal civilization. The whole civilization is rotten to the bottom. They are exploiting nature for the apparent good of human society, but it is incurring a loan from nature that must be paid to the farthing with interest. Because they do not believe this, they will have no relief. They will be forced to clear the debt; nature won't forgive them. Nature is there like a computer, calculating. So, this civilization is anti-civilization. The whole thing is rotten, a camouflage, a treachery to the soul world. But our policy is different: plain living and high thinking.
Our policy should be to make the best use of a bad bargain. Somehow or other, we have already come here, so now we have to utilize our time and energy in such a way that with the least exploitation we can get out of this world.

Editor's note: shortly after this meeting, Dr. Murphey became an initiated disciple of Srila Sridhara Maharaja.

FOURTH CHAPTER

Origin Of The Soul

Since time immemorial, man has inquired about the origin of the soul. In this brief chapter, Sridhara Maharaja answers this most vital of all questions: "Who am 1? Where have I come from?"

"How does the soul first appear in this world? From what stage of spiritual existence does he fall into the material world?" This is a broad question, which requires some background information.

There are two classes of souls, jivas, who come into this world. One class comes from the spiritual Vaikuntha planets by the necessity of nitya-lila, the eternal pastimes of Krsna. Another comes by constitutional necessity.
The brahmajyoti, the nondifferentiated marginal plane, is the source of infinite jiva souls, atomic spiritual particles of nondifferentiated character. The rays of the Lord's transcendental body are known as the brahmajyoti, and a pencil of a ray of the brahmajyoti is the jiva. The jiva soul is an atom in that effulgence, and the brahmajyoti is a product of an infinite number of jiva atoms.

Generally, souls emanate from the brahmajyoti which is living and growing. Within the brahmajyoti, their equilibrium is somehow disturbed and movement begins. From nondifferentiation, differentiation begins. From a plain sheet of uniform consciousness, individual conscious units grow. And because the jiva is conscious it is endowed with free will. So, from the marginal position they choose either the side of exploitation or the side of dedication.
Krsna bhuli sei jiva anadi bahirmukha. Anadi means that which has no beginning. When we enter the land of exploitation, we come within the factor of time, space, and thought. And when we come to exploit, action and reaction begins in the negative land of loan. Although we strive to become masters, really we become losers.

Goloka and Vaikuntha servitors are also seen to be within the jurisdiction of the brahmanda, the material universe, but that is only a play, lila. They come from that higher plane only to take part in the Lord's pastimes and then return. The fallen souls come from the marginal position within the brahmajyoti, and not from Vaikuntha. The first position of a soul in the material world will be like that of Brahma, the creator. Then his karma may take him to the body of a beast like a tiger, where he is surrounded with a tigerish mentality, or to the body of a tree or creeper, where different impressions may surround him. In this way, one is involved in action and reaction. The case is complex; to analyze the details of the history of a particular atom is unnecessary. We are concerned with the general thing: how the transformation of the material conception springs from pure consciousness.

Electrons of Consciousness

Matter is not independent of spirit. In the brahmajyoti we are equipoised in the marginal potency as an infinite number of pinpoints of spiritual rays, electrons of consciousness. Consciousness means endowed with free will, for without free will no consciousness can be conceived. An atomic pinpoint of consciousness has very meager free will, and by misuse of their free will some jivas have taken their chance in the material world. They refused to submit to the supreme authority; they wanted to dominate. So, with this germinal idea of domination, the jiva enters into the world of exploitation. In the Bhagavad-gita (7.27) it is stated:

iccha-dvesa samutthena
dvandva-mohena bharata
sarva-bhutani sammoham
sarge yanti parantapa

"Two principles in a crude form awaken in the jiva: hatred and desire. Then, gradually the soul comes down to mingle with the mundane world." At first, sympathy and apathy develop in a crude form, just as when a sprout springs up with two leaves. And gradually these two things help us to dive deep into this mundane world.
Upon retiring from the world of exploitation, the soul may return to his former position in the brahmajyoti as spirit. But, if the soul has gathered the tendency of dedication through his previous devotional activities, he does not stop there; he pierces through the brahmajyoti and goes towards Vaikuntha.

Why has the soul come to the world of exploitation, and not the world of dedication? That should be attributed to his innate nature, which is endowed with free will. It is a free choice. This is substantiated in the Bhagavad-gita (5. 14):

na kartrtvam na karmani
lokasya srjati prabhuh
na karma-phala-samyogam
svabhavas tu pravartate

"The soul is responsible for his entrance into the land of exploitation." The responsibility is with the soul, otherwise, the Lord would be responsible for his distressed condition. But Krsna says that the soul's innate free will is responsible for his entanglement in the material world. The soul is conscious, and consciousness means endowed with freedom. Because the soul is atomic, his free will is imperfect and vulnerable. The result of that free choice is that some are coming into

the material world, and some are going to the spiritual world. So, the responsibility is with the individual soul.

The Right to Wrong

Once, an Indian political leader, Syamasundara Cakravarti, asked our spiritual master, Prabhupada, "Why has the Lord granted such freedom to the jiva?" Prabhupada told him, "You are fighting for freedom. Don't you know the value of freedom? Devoid of freedom, the soul is only matter." Freedom offers us the alternative to do right or wrong. Once, Gandhi told the British authorities, "We want freedom." They replied, "You are not fit to have self-government. When you are fit, we shall give it to you." But finally, he told them, "We want the freedom to do wrong." So, freedom does not guarantee only acting in the right way; freedom has its value independent of right and wrong.

Free will is only absolute with the Absolute Truth. Because we are finite, our free will is infinitesimal. The possibility of committing a mistake is there. Our first choice was to dominate, and so, gradually we have entered the world of domination. As a result of this first action, everything else has developed. So, in different ranks, the species have been divided, from the demigods down to the trees and stones. And watery bodies, gaseous bodies, anything that we find here has evolved in that way. The activating principle in any form of embryological development is the soul, and from the soul, everything has evolved.

FIFTH CHAPTER

Knowledge Above Mortality

Knowledge above mortality is knowledge proper. Mundane knowledge has no value, for it does not endure. We must inquire elsewhere for permanent knowledge. Real knowledge is stable; it has a firm foundation, and Vedic education deals with how to acquire that knowledge. The meaning of the word veda is "Know." No rhyme or reason is shown why you should know, and no explanation is given: simply "Know."

Because doubt is absent in the spiritual plane, no cheating is possible. It is a simple, direct transaction - "Know." In that transcendental plane, everyone is a confidential friend, and they are stainless in their conduct. No cheating tendency is possible there, so there is no suspicion. Here, we are in the plane of misunderstanding and doubt, so we want to examine everything. We are living in a vulnerable and vitiated plane, where people cheat one another. We cannot rely on others, for they may deceive us. But where cheating is unknown, transactions are very simple and straightforward. So, no reason is given for suggestions that come down from that plane. Now, the question arises how to attain that sort of true, comprehensive, and non-deceptive knowledge? In the Bhagavad-gita (4.34) Krsna says:

tad viddhi pranipatena
pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam
jnaninas tattva darsinah

"To learn knowledge above mortality you must approach a self-realized soul, accept him as your spiritual master and take initiation from him. Inquire submissively, and render service unto him. Self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you, for they have seen the truth."

Superknowledge

We have to approach the domain of knowledge with self-surrender, honest inquiry, and a serving attitude. We have to approach that plane with the mentality of slavery. Higher knowledge will not serve a person of lower status. If we want perfect knowledge at all, we will have to serve the Supreme Lord. He will use us for His own purpose; not that we will use Him. We may be subjects in this mundane world, but we will have to become objects to be handled by the superknowledge of that plane. If we want to connect with that higher knowledge, we must approach with this attitude.

Pranipata means that I have finished my experience here; I have no charm or aspiration for anything in this world. Then there is pariprasna, or honest, submissive, and humble inquiry with sincere eagerness, and not with a challenging mood; otherwise perfect knowledge won't care to descend to us. Krsna is already full in Himself, so we have to enter His domain only to fulfill His purpose. He can't be subservient to us, for we are tiny persons with meager experience and a conception of mean fulfillment. We cannot handle Him; we can approach Him only if we like to be handled by Him. So, such a favorable environment should be created where real knowledge is to be cultivated. That knowledge is supreme, and cannot be subservient to the mundane conception, the world of mortality. It is sac-cid-ananda. Sat means unassailable existence, cit means consciousness, and ananda means beauty and pleasure.

"I must try to relieve myself of my present material miseries and inquire after a proper land where I can live happily." Having come to this conclusion, we will have to search for a person who is a bonafide agent of the higher world and consult with him about how we can be relieved from this present undesirable environment. In the Srimad-Bhagavatam (11.3.21) it is said:

tasmad gurum prapadyeta
jijnasuh sreyah uttamam
sabde pare ca nisnatam
brahmany upasamasrayam

"What is the conception of real good, and who is considered to be a bonafide agent of the truth? One who has knowledge of the scripture that has descended from the upper domain, who has theoretic-al as well as practical knowledge of higher truth, must be approached by a bonafide inquirer, for such a qualified spiritual master can impart proper knowledge to the sincere student." In the Mundaka Upanisad (1.2.12) it is also stated:

tad-vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet
samit panih srotriyam brahma nistham

"In order to learn transcendental knowledge, one must approach a genuine spiritual master coming in disciplic succession, who is fixed in the Absolute Truth."
In this verse, the word tata means "after this." When one's calculation is finished, he thinks, "Life is not worth living here in this world of birth, death, old age, and disease. I must have a better

world in which to live, where I can live as a gentleman. At every moment death is devouring everything. Birth, death, old age, and disease all these troubles prevent me from fulfilling my ambitions here. I want something categorically different." At that time, taking the responsibility on his own shoulders, without giving any trouble to the guru, and at the risk of poverty, ill-feeding, and so many other hardships, he will approach the guru. It is a free transaction. Not that he will give something to gurudeva, but he will collect what is necessary for sacrifice, for education, and at his own risk he will approach the spiritual master.

Knowledge through Sound

And what will be the position of the guru? He will be well-versed in the scriptures, the sruti-sastra, or that knowledge which can only be acquired through the medium of sound, by attentive earnest hearing (srotriyam brahma nistham).
Brahma nistham means, "One who is established in brahman, spirit, and who is acquainted with the causal position of the universe." That is described in the Upanisads: yato va imani bhutani jayante yena jatani jivanti yat prayanty abhisamvisanti tad brahma tad vijijnasa (Taittiriya Upanisad 3.1). "The Supreme Brahman is the origin and shelter of all living beings. When there is a creation, He brings them forth from their original state, and at the time of annihilation, He devours them. After creation, everything rests in His omnipotence, and after annihilation, everything again returns to rest in Him." These are the confirmations of the Vedic hymns.

yasmin vijnate sarvam evam vijnatam bhavati
yasmin prapte sarvam idam praptam bhavati

"By knowing Him, everything is known - by getting Him, everything is gained." We have come to inquire about Brahman, the biggest, the all-accommodating principle by knowing which we can know anything and everything. And it is possible; it is not impossible. The Upanisads say, "If you want to know anything, then know the whole. And what is the nature of the whole? Everything is coming from Him, everything is being maintained by Him, and again everything enters into Him. That is Brahman; so try to know that. If you can know that, everything will be known to you."
This is also explained in the Srimad-Bhagavatam (4.31.14):

yatha taror mula nisecanena
trpyanti tat-skandha bhujopasakhah
pranopaharac ca yathendriyanam
tathaiva sarvarhanam acyutejya

"Just as if you pour water onto the root of a tree, the whole tree is fed, and just as when you supply food to the stomach, the whole body is fed, so if you can gain knowledge of the prime cause, Brahman, then you can know anything and everything." Faith in this is called sraddha.
The Vedanta-sutra, the very gist of the Vedas, says athato brahma jijnasa: "Now that you have finished with the fruitive activities recommended in the karma-kanda section of the Vedas by Jaimini, we ask you to inquire about Brahman."

That is described in the Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.1.1) *janmady asya yato 'nvayad itarathas carthesv abhijnah svarat:* "Friends, let us inquire into the prime cause, whose nature is such that whatever we can see, and whatever we can conceive of springs from Him. He is the ultimate cause of everything, both directly and indirectly." Only He knows the purpose for which all

things are created and maintained. Only He knows where all things will go. Only He is aware of that fact - no one else.
Arthesv abhijnah svarat, means that He knows the meaning of every incident in existence and that He is above giving any explanation to others. He is not responsible to any law or to anyone else. He is absolute and independent.

Vedic Revelation

And how do we know that? He has extended knowledge of Himself through the Vedas. Brahma means Veda. So, by the line of inspiration, or revelation, Vedic knowledge was transmitted to the first living being, the creator of the world, Lord Brahma (tene brahma hrdaya adi kavaye). The scholars of the world fail to understand the strategy and nature of that sort of knowledge. They cannot follow the vital and fundamental points of Vedic knowledge, such as the transformation of one thing into another (muhyanti yat surayah). Water may be transformed into gas, gas may be transformed into ether, earth may be transformed into heat: by such a process, we can understand the existence of this world (tejo vari mrdam yatha vinimayo yatra tri-sargo mrsa), for by the transformation of the Lord's energy, this world comes into being. This transformation involves the three mode; of nature, tamas, rajas, and sattva. Tama means hard, static matter. Raja means energy, and sattva means spirit, light, knowledge. So, by transformation this world has been created.
In His abode, which is illumined by the ray of His own knowledge, there is no possibility of deception or misunderstanding. (dhamna svena sada nirasta-kuhakam satyam param dhimahi). Here, we are being deceived through misunderstanding. We have entered a plane of existence where the whole world is full of misconception, falsity, and miscalculation. We are presently living in the world of maya. Maya means ma-ye: "What is not." I am seeing something which is really something else.

Reality: by Itself and for Itself

Isavasyam everything is meant for God. That is the Hegelian theory: reality is by itself and for itself. Hegel is the founder of Ideal Realism, so he says, "Reality is by itself and for itself." "By itself," means that he is His own cause; no one has created Him. Otherwise, whoever had created Him would have primary importance. "For itself," means that God exists only to fulfill His own purpose. This is the universal truth: everything is for Him, and nothing is for anyone else. So, when we think that the things around us are meant for us, or for our nation, or for the human beings, this is all a false calculation, and knowledge based on such a miscalculation has its reaction.

"To every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." I am eating something; it is entitled to eat me. In the Manu Samhita, the word mamsah is used to indicate meat. Mam means "Me," sah means "he." Mamsah means "me-he." What is the meaning? I am eating him; and he will eat me afterwards as a reaction. He is entitled to devour me, as I am at present devouring him. This is the underlying meaning every action, whatever it is, has its reaction. This is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita (3.9):

yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra
loko 'yam karma-bandhanah

tad-artham karma kaunteya
mukta-sangah samacara

"Unless work is done as a sacrifice for Visnu, one's own work will be the cause of bondage; therefore work on My behalf, and free yourself from the chain of action and reaction." Bhagavad-gita says that any work, no matter what it is, causes a reaction. For example, you may nurse a patient. Apparently, it is a good thing, but you are giving the patient medicine that comes from killing so many insects, trees, creepers, and animals. You may think that your nursing is a very pure duty, but you are causing a disturbance in the environment, and you will have to pay for that. In this way, whatever we do here cannot be perfectly good. The German philosopher Kant has said, "Without good will, no action can be perfectly good." But we are of the opinion that even good will is impossible here in this mundane plane. According to Kant, good will is a pure thing, whereas no action here can be perfect, but we say that even good will is impossible in the relative calculation of me world, because we are plodding in the mud of misunderstanding.

Pure knowledge comes only from above, and we have to learn to accept that. When that sort of understanding comes within us, it is known as sraddha, or faith. Faith is also a great thing. We should have faith that if we do our duty towards the absolute, then all our duties to the environment in all directions are automatically done (krsna bhakti kaile sarva karma krta haya). By satisfying Krsna, the whole universe becomes satisfied, for one who is dear to Krsna is dear to the whole universe (yasmin tuste jagat tustam prinite prinito jagat). Just as by watering the root of the tree all the leaves and branches are automatically nourished, by fulfilling one's duty towards Lord Krsna all one's duties are automatically fulfilled.

Krsna's Transcendental Abode

Everything is meant for Krsna. We are also meant for Him (isavasyam idam sarvam). This is true knowledge, and this is the true situation of the world. Exploitation is an incomplete and reactionary idea for which we incur a debt that we shall later have to pay. We may go to Satyaloka, the highest planet in the material universe, but by exploiting nature, we incur a debt, become heavy, and go down. And when we go down, others come to exploit and extort us until our debts are paid. Then the heaviness goes, and we become light and go upward to the higher planetary systems again. And when we go up, we exploit those who are in a lower position. In this way, there is continual exploitation and clearance of debt. This is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita (8.16):

abrahma-bhuvanal Iokah
punar avartino 'rjuna
mam upetya tu kaunteya
punar janma na vidyate

"All planetary systems within this world of matter are places of repeated birth and death, but one who attains My abode, O son of Kunti, never takes birth again." Upon going there, one never returns to this material world (yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama). Krsna's abode is nirguna, or transcendental to any material quality.

We must firmly establish the conception of isavasyam: everything, including ourselves, is meant for the Supreme Lord. We are all His servants, and we are meant to utilize everything in His service. Any work we perform will bind us in this environment of matter, unless we perform yajna, sacrifice (yajnarthat karmano 'nyatra loko 'yam karma-bandhanah). And the Vedas enjoin, yajno

vai visnu: "Sacrifice is meant exclusively for Visnu, or Krsna." This is confirmed in the Bhagavad-gita (9.24), where Krsna says, "I am the only enjoyer of every sacrifice." (aham hi sarva-yajnanam bhokta ca prabhur eva ca). Sacrifice is not meant for the country, or for the society, or for anything else. Sacrifice is meant only for the Supreme Lord. No one less than He is worthy of sacrifice. So, only by connecting our activities with the infinite can we be freed from the present environment of action and reaction.
When knowledge comes in connection with the absolute, it loses its fifty characteristic. Then we can have full knowledge, which will lead us to prema-bhakti, love of God. Everything is meant for Krsna. He is the only enjoyer of everything. He is the absolute autocrat, and He is the absolute good. We are all His servants, and everything is meant for His satisfaction. We must come to this understanding. The guru-kula system of Vedic education should be conceived in this line.

Guru - Heavier than the Himalayas

Guru means "heavy." Guru means "one who dispels the darkness," and "who is heavy; who cannot be moved by any proposal." He is so well-established in the truth that no offer of alternative knowledge, or any other proposal, can move him from his position. He is firm there. He can help the laghu, the people who are very light; those whom anyone can handle like dolls of play. But the guru can never be moved from his position. He will sit tight there, heavier than the Himalayas, and face all fleeting conceptions of knowledge, breaking them right and left, and establishing the universal characteristic of absolute knowledge. He will impart knowledge of the Absolute Truth, Brahman, the supreme whole, dispelling all misconceptions and establishing knowledge of the absolute upon the throne of the heart. This is the conception of guru-kula, the Vedic system of education of ancient India.

The Vedic system of education deals with knowledge proper; not half-knowledge, but knowledge of the whole, which can deliver us from all troubles and guide us to the most desirable position. Nowadays, we can sell knowledge, but this knowledge cannot be sold. Intellectual knowledge can be taken into the market, but this knowledge cannot be taken into the market, for this is absolute knowledge. Vedic knowledge gives us our fulfillment of life, attaining which, we will no longer feel the necessity to run here and there for any greater knowledge.

Previously, that knowledge was taught within the guru-kula, the ancient Vedic school. Vedic knowledge means knowledge which comes from outside the area of misunderstanding, miscalculation, and false historiography. The books recorded here are filled with temporary truths and misconceptions. Such things may be useful now, but after some time, it won't work; mundane law will have no position, and everything will be dissolved. The Earth will be dissolved. Matter will be dissolved, and we won't be able to trace any quality of matter when everything is reduced to ether. No trace of air, or heat, or anything else will remain in any way. With the dissolution of this mundane world, nothing will remain but transcendental knowledge.

The Land of Dedication

In the Bhagavad-gita (15.6) Krsna says, "One who reaches My abode never returns to this material world (yad gatva- na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama). The dissolution will go on in the plane of the material world, but if you can secure a visa for that land, if you can enter into that soil, you will never be mishandled. When the sun, moon, and stars are all dissolved, your

eternal self, your devotional ego, will be quite safe in My plane." The material world is the land of exploitation; the spiritual world is the opposite the land of dedication. In the middle there is the brahmajyoti: the line of demarcation between exploitation and dedication.

Here in this material world, every unit is of an exploiting nature; there it is just the opposite. Everything there is wholly dedicated to the service of Krsna, and there is no want of anything, rather whatever is necessary to make service to Krsna possible comes automatically. Here, everything is based on kama, desire, so real service is not possible in this plane.

There is no possibility of exploitation existing in the land of dedication, for every unit there is a dedicating one. In the lower portion of the land of dedication there is some calculation, some awe and reverence. But in the higher sphere, it is all automatic spontaneous love: a labor of love, with increased intensity and earnestness. And we are only charmed by the beauty and love that is found in Goloka Vrndavana, the supreme abode of Krsna. In a nutshell, this is what we understand by the grace of our spiritual masters. We are very much attracted by this conception which has been given to us by our gurudeva as he has received it from the Vedic scriptures, especially the Srimad-Bhagavatam. This has been explained by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself, by His teachings and practices, and this conception has been expounded by His followers, the Six Goswamis of Vrndavana.

SIXTH CHAPTER

Six Philosophies of India

There are six ancient philosophical systems of India. The first is the Vaisesika philosophy of Kanada Rsi: the atomic theory. According to him, everything is made of atoms. So many different atoms combine and produce this world. Kana means atomic particle. So many atomic particles have combined and produced this world by chance, with no necessity of any reason, rhyme, consciousness, nothing of the kind. And the outcome of these combinations has produced what we find here. That is the opinion of Kanada: it is an atomic world.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura, the nineteenth century founder of the Krsna consciousness movement, sings in one song: kesava! taya jagata bicitra. "O my Lord Krsna, I see that everything is available in Your world, which has an infinite, variegated nature. Separated from You, however, we are always feeling miseries. A continuous flow of suffering has swallowed us from birth to death, and we cannot tolerate the pain of such misery. And so many relief agents: Kapila, Patanjali, Gautama, Kanada, Jaimini, Buddha, are running towards us, offering their solutions."

Analysis, Yoga, and Logic

Kapila has come with the Sankhya philosophical system of analysis saying, "Analyze matter, and you will be free from all this pain." Patanjali has come with yoga, "Hey, jivatma! Come to meet Paramatma! Then all the problems of this world will go away from you. Come in connection with Paramatma, the Supersoul." This is his recommendation.

Gautama comes with logic, nyaya sastra: "There is one Maker, one Creator, but He is indifferent. He has created this world, finished, and left it. And you must try to live with the help of your reason. Develop your reasoning faculty, and be reasonable in all your conduct. Then only can you help yourself in this world. There is no other remedy. Be a good logician, and then you will be able to control the environment with the power of reason, and you will be happy." And Kanada: "By chance atoms have been combined, and with the dissolution of atoms, nothing will remain. Why do you bother? Don't care. What is fate? It is nothing; ignore it. And when the body is dissolved, nothing will remain. Why lament?"

Atomic Theory and Karma

Then, with the philosophy of karma-mimamsa, Jaimini says, "There may be One who has connected us with this world and our karma, but karma is all in all. He is an indifferent inspector. He has got no hold on us any longer. According to our karma we shall thrive or we shall go down. So, these activities are recommended to you. If you go on with your karma you will be happy. Of course, it cannot be denied; karma phala, the result of karma, diminishes and is ended. But stick to karma, good karma; don't go to bad karma. The result of good karma will be finished, but that does not matter; again go on doing good karma, and the good result will await you in heaven, and you will have a happy life. If anything is friendly to you, it is your karma. There is God, but He is indifferent. He is bound to serve you either good or bad, according to your karma. He has no independence."

"Dissolve Your Mind" - Buddha

Then another class of philosophy is that of Buddha: "Only the combination of different things has created your mental system. With the dissolution of the mental system, nothing remains. So, somehow, we must dissolve the mental system. Practice ahimsa, nonviolence, satya, truthfulness, and so on."

It is seen that all these philosophers are talking either of renunciation or of exploitation (bhukti, mukti). And by setting different types of enchanting traps, they arrange to capture the jiva soul. Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, "But I have come to realize that these fellows are all cheaters. And they all have this common stand: they have no touch of Your devotion, Your service. There, they are one. They cannot deliver any real good. They are common to oppose Your devotional service and supremacy. And ultimately they leave us in chaos.

"But from the ultimate standpoint, I see that they are agents engaged by You to segregate the seriously diseased persons to another ward, for the good of the less seriously diseased patients. It is Your arrangement to segregate the hopeless persons to another side for the benefit of the good side. That is Your design, and they are playing at Your hand like so many dolls. They are Your agents and they are also serving You in some way, because nothing is outside You." Bhaktivinoda Thakura concludes saying, "I bid good-bye to them all. I feel in my heart that I shall show respect to all these so-called good agents from a distance, however my only real capital is the dust of the holy feet of Your devotees. I rely on that dust as the source of all my prospects. I seek to put all my energy into taking the dust of their holy lotus feet upon my head. This is everything for me."

SEVENTH CHAPTER

Beyond Christianity

In the following conversation, Srila Sridhara Maharaja compares theistic beliefs with some Christian students from America.

Christian: Can you explain the Vaisnava viewpoint of Christianity?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Christianity is incomplete Vaisnavism; not full-fledged, but the basis of devotional theism. We find the principle of "Die to live" there to a certain extent, at least physically. The Christians say that the ideal shown by Jesus is self-sacrifice. In our consideration, however, that is not full-fledged theism, but only the basis.It is an unclear, vague conception of Godhead: "We are for Him." But how much? And in what shape, in what attitude? All these things are unexplained and unclear in Christianity. Everything is hazy, as if seen from far off. It does not take any proper shape. The cover is not fully removed, allowing us to come face to face with the object of our service. The conception of service to God is there, and a strong impetus to attain that, so the foundation is good, but the structure over the foundation is unclear, vague, and imperfect.

Christian: Christians like the ideas of surrender, service, and giving everything to God.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, that is common. But surrender to whom?

Christian: Christians say that Jesus is the only way.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, and his way is "Die to live," but what for? What is our positive attainment? What is our positive engagement in the Lord's service? We must not only submit in gratefulness to the highest authority, but we must have a direct connection with Him, and cent percent engagement in His service. Simply going on in our own way, praying, "Oh God, give us our bread," going to the church once a week is not sufficient. Twenty-four hour engagement is possible in full-fledged theism. God can engage us twenty-four hours a day - we must attain that position: full engagement with Him. Everything else is subordinate to that position.

Adam and Eve: Forced to Labor

Christian: There are some Christian traditions that are very similar to Krsna consciousness.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: They are very akin in their foundation. We agree that we must sacrifice everything for God. But who is He? And who am I? And what is our relationship? Christianity gives us only a hazy conception.

In the Christian conception, when Adam and Eve were surrendered, they had no problems in life. But then they tasted the fruit of the tree of knowledge, calculation of self-interest, and they fell, and were forced to live a life of labor. Only a general idea of our relationship with God is given

there, but when we have to define in detail the characteristics of God, and in which relationships to approach Him, Christianity gives us only a hazy idea.

Once some Christian priests told our guru maharaja that madhurya rasa (conjugal relationship with God) is also found within Christianity. In the middle ages, there was a fashion amongst the Christians to consider Christ as a bridegroom, and some parable is also given where Lord Jesus Christ is considered as a bridegroom. So, they said that madhurya rasa, the consort relationship, is also found within Christianity. Prabhupada told them, "That is with His Son, with His devotee; not with God." Son means guru, the deliverer.

Father, Son, and Ghost

Their conception of God is the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Ghost. The Ghost is perhaps considered to have the highest position. If it is so, then Christianity ends in brahmavada nirvisesa. Do you follow?

Christian: Yes. I think you explained before that Brahman means the impersonal aspect of God's existence.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: God the Father means God the creator. God the Son is guru. And God as Ghost perhaps holds the supreme position in Christianity: over the Father conception, and over the Son conception. If that is the case, then their understanding goes to impersonal Brahman.

I was told that once in a drama in Germany, they had to show the figure of God, so in some high position in a balcony they put a figure of grave nature with a gray beard, commanding from there. God the Father was shown like that. That is their idea: the Fatherhood of Godhead, a gray-bearded, old man as God. But from the consideration of rasa and ananda, ecstasy, God should be the center of all different relationships, including sonhood, and consorthood.
To conceive of God as our Father is an incomplete understanding, for parents are also servitors. He must be in the center; not in any extremity of the whole. He is not simply watching over the whole; the conception of Krsna is that of God in the center. Of all approaches to God, the approach for a loving relationship is supreme. The intensity of that relationship is to be considered, and God must be at the center of all loving relationships. Anandam brahmano vidvan. Ananda is the most precious thing ever discovered. And the full representation of the highest ananda should be considered as the highest absolute which can attract everyone: not by power, not by force, but by charm. The center of all attraction is Krsna. His attraction is by beauty, by charm, and by love; and not by coercion and force. That is the Krsna conception of Godhead.

Christian: Christians are afraid to go beyond Jesus, because Jesus has warned us about cheaters.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: I am not speaking about the Christians; I am speaking about Jesus, who has given the ideals of Christianity. I am speaking about the principles of Jesus. He has given some understanding by installments, but not full knowledge. We agree about the strong foundation of theism. Jesus was crucified because he said, "Everything belongs to my Father. Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and render unto God that which is His." So, the foundation is very good; it is laudable, but that is only the first installment of the theistic conception.
Who is my Lord? What is His nature? Who am I? What is my inner self, and what is my connection with Him? How can l live continuously in His memory and service? The conception that we

are meant for Him, designed and destined for Him, is laudable, but it must be clarified. We must attain the highest position. All these things are absent in Christianity. Only sacrifice for the Lord is given, and that is all right, it is the basic necessity of the soul. But after that, what is to be achieved? They are silent.

Beyond Jesus

Christian: They are afraid to go beyond Jesus.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, but there is so much grace, so much love in divinity that God can sit on our lap and embrace us. A much more intimate connection is unfolded in Vaisnavism. But if we are afraid to cross the fundamental advice of Jesus, then we become sahajiyas (imitationists). We must risk everything for our Lord and make our position firm in His service. We must die to live. And what is living? We have to analyze what real life is. And if without dying, we want to drag God in our fleshy play, then we become sahajiyas, imitationists.
We must cross the threshold given by Jesus. He has declared, "Die to live." The Lord's company is so valuable to us that we must risk everything for Him. This material achievement is nothing; it is all poison. We must have no attraction for it. We must be ready to leave everything, all our material prospects and aspirations, including our body, for Him. God is great. But what is His greatness? What is my position? How can I engage myself in His service twenty-four hours a day? Here, Jesus is silent.

We receive no specific program from the Christians at this stage, so Vaisnavism comes to our heart's relief, to satisfy our inner necessity, whatever it may be. Our inner thirst will be quenched there. You may be conscious or unconscious of the many demands within you, but they will reach full satisfaction in its most beautiful form there alone. It is not only that from far off we shall show God some reverential salute, but we can have Him in a very intimate way. The ideal of an intimate loving connection with God has beengiven by Vaisnavism, especially by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, by Srimad Bhagavatam, and in Vrndavana, the land of Krsna.
The feeling of possessing anything here in the material world cannot be real; it is a perverted reflection, but that feeling must be present in the original world, otherwise what is its origin? From where do the different feelings of necessity within us come? They must be present in the causal world, for everything is emanating from Krsna. So, the hankering of every atom of our body, mind, and soul will receive its greatest fulfillment there. This understanding is given by Vaisnavism, by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, by Srimad Bhagavatam, and by Krsna in the Bhagavad-gita.

Bhagavad-gita: its History and Teachings

Christian: I've heard of the Bhagavad-gita. What is the history of its origin?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: In the Bhagavad-gita-, Krsna tells Arjuna, "What I am saying to you now is not a new thing: I have already told this to Surya, the sun-god, and he delivered it to Manu, the father of man. In this way, this knowledge descended in disciplic succession, and by the influence of time it was finished. Again, I am repeating that ancient knowledge to you."
This refers to karma-yoga: "Don't care about the result, good or bad; go on with your duty. Then you can have general peace of mind."

Christian: What is the message of the Bhagavad-gita?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: There are different stages of education imparted in Bhagavad-gita: bhakti-yoga, karma-yoga, jnana-yoga, astanga-yoga, so many different layers of theism, but pure devotional theism begins where Krsna says, sarva dharman parityajya: "Give up your affinity to all other activities, whether religious or nonreligious, and wholly surrender to Me. Don't try to push your demands on Me, but ask Me what will be most beneficial for you. And what shall I do on your behalf? Fully surrender to Me, and I will give Myself to you."

"All these other methods and their prospects are more or less effective and valuable, but don't aspire after anything but Me. That will be your highest prospect: to want Me, to have Me, to live in Me, to do what I say, to enter into My own personal family in my private life. That will be your highest attainment. Don't aspire for anything else from Me. The comparative study of all religious aspirations will show that the highest inner necessity may be satisfied by entrance into My personal private dealings."

Christian: Christians think that if we are to be sincere, we should follow the Bible. We take very literally the word of Christ.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, according to one's capacity he may be enlisted in a particular class. Some will go to Christianity, and after finishing that, if their hankering is still unsatisfied, they will seek somewhere else, thinking, "What is God? I want to know more perfectly."

In this regard, I can give one example: there was a Professor Nixon in England. He went to fight against Germany in the First World War, on the French side. As he was flying over the German lines, his airplane was hit, and began to fall. He saw that the plane would fall on the German lines. When I met him here in India, he told me, "At that time, I prayed, 'If there is any God, let him save me, and I promise that if I do not die in this plane crash, I will go to search after Him. I will devote my whole life in search of Him."'

The plane crashed, and when Professor Nixon regained consciousness, he found that he was behind the French lines, in a hospital in France. At that time, He thought to himself, "There is God! He has heard my last prayer." When his wounds were healed, he went straight to England to see some churchmen. He told them, "I want to search after God, and engage myself twenty-four hours a day in the cause of His service. I want to see Him face to face."

Bishops: "Go to India"

He saw many clergymen and even some bishops, and they ultimately advised him, "If you want to see God face to face, then go to India. We cannot recommend such a process to you. But we have heard that in India there are yogis who internally connect with the Lord in the heart. You may try your fortune there." So, he came here to India, where he met the Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow University. In talking with him, Professor Nixon met the Vice-Chancellor's wife, who was a Gaudiya Vaisnava, a devotee of Mahaprabhu. He was so much charmed by her advice that he accepted her as his guru. Finally he took sannyasa (the renounced order of life), and his name became Swami Krsna Prema. He established a temple here in India, and preached about Bhagavata-dharma, and Mahaprabhu.

He made a comparative study of all religions, beginning from Christianity, and gradually came to Vaisnavism, attracted by Mahaprabhu's gift. One German scholar also said, "In all the religious conceptions of the world, the conception of twenty-four hour engagement with God (astakaliya-lila) has never been given. I have studied all religious theologies, but none could even conceive of twenty-four hour service to the Supreme Lord. It is only given in Srimad-Bhagavatam."
Rupa Goswami has given the scientific representation of Krsna: akhila-rasamrta-murtih. He is the reservoir of all possible pleasures. All possible tendencies for satisfaction that we may feel, and even those that we may not feel are present in Krsna and have their ideal, purest satisfaction with Him alone. He is all-accommodating and all-comprehensive. Whatever satisfaction our inner heart demands can be fulfilled only by Him.

Christian: Some Christians are so much afraid to go beyond the Bible that they will not make a study of other theistic beliefs.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: According to one's capacity, he will purchase in the market (sve sve 'dhikare ya nistha sa gunah parikirtitah). In the market, there may be valuable things, but the buyer must have some capacity to purchase them. The rsis, the tradesmen of knowledge have also gone so far as to say, "This is the highest. Go no further." Similarly, Krsna says in the Bhagavad-gita (3.35), svadharme nidhanam sreyah para-dharmo bhayavahah: "Don't go ahead - you'll be doomed. Take your stand here; go no further."

Why is such a great warning given to us? Generally our teachers advise us, "Pay full attention here. Only then will you understand everything completely, and your march to the end-point will be sincere and satisfactory. Otherwise, sahajiyaism, imitationism will enter your heart. Do you think that in one leap you can capture the summit of a hill? Impossible. You must march, but your march must be sincere. You must make real progress, not imitative progress." This warning is given at every stage of life. "This is the highest for you. Give your whole attention to this. Don't be absentminded and haphazard in your study. Engage yourself fully in this lesson, and the next higher stage will come to you automatically."

As a matter of policy, we are told that our present stage of instruction is the highest. When a professor comes to teach a child, he will accept the mentality of the child. He will say, "Only go so far, and no further. This is the final stage; give your whole attention to understanding this point, and when that is finished, then go further." In this way, by gradual installments, knowledge is revealed.

Christian: So, there are different stages for different persons?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Bhaktivinoda Thakura has given his decision, in his Tattva-sutra, that although when Bhagavad-gita was spoken to Arjuna, he engaged himself in fighting, had it been Uddhava in place of Arjuna, after hearing the conclusion of Bhagavad-gita where Krsna says, "Give up everything and surrender to Me," Uddhava would have accepted this and gone away from the warfield. Upon hearing the same advice, Arjuna acted in one way, but Uddhava would have acted in another. After hearing the first installment of Krsna's instructions Arjuna tells Krsna in the Bhagavad-gita (3.1 - 2):

jyayasi cet karmanas te mata buddhir janardana
tat kim karmani ghore mam niyojayasi kesava
vyamisreneva vakyena buddhim mohayasiva me
tad ekam vada niscitya yena sreyo 'ham apnuyam

"You say that jnana, knowledge, is better than karma, work. Why then do you want to engage me in this dreadful karma of fighting?" Then Krsna said, "You have your capacity in karma: finish your career, and then you can aspire to come to the level of jnana, inquiry into knowledge. It is not a cheap thing to transcend all activity and attain naiskarmya, freedom from karma. First finish the course of your karma; then you will become free from karma, and gradually you will develop transcendental knowledge and devotion. So, I say, 'Engage yourself in this present fight.' Fighting is not recommended for everyone, but for you, and men of your section."

Christian: In your opinion, what stage of God realization should people be advised to follow?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Krsna consciousness should be preached in a general way; and people will come according to their inner response. Some may even come to attack us. The communists will say, "No religious preaching is allowed here. It is all theoretical; you neglect the concrete world, and take the abstract to be everything. By hearing this, the people will suffer, so we won't allow it." That is one stage. Beginning from there, there are so many stages. If you preach to a crowd, those who find a response within their inner hearts will come to you according to the degree of their realization. Their inner demand will bring them in contact with an agent of truth.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja went to the West and preached, and so many converted to Krsna consciousness. How was it possible? They were not Gaudiya Vaisnavas, but they felt some inner affinity. While wandering in this world, everyone is gathering some new experience, some new taste. According to the degree of his awakenment, one will respond to a preacher in his own layer. He will find, "Oh! After so long, I see that there is the possibility of an outlet for the urge I found in my heart. There is a plane that can satisfy that aspiration of mine. I must connect with him and inquire of that land of my dreams." In this way, they will come to seek the association of devotees. "Birds of a feather flock together." According to their inner taste, they will come together and go on with their duties in that plane, at that pace, until from there they can go further, to a higher position. Sometimes in the same life one may change his creed and go higher, and sometimes one may wait until his next birth.

Christian: If the quality of preaching is too high, people may be discouraged.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: It may be too high for one and too near for another. It is not too high for all, for if it was, then how would conversion be possible? So many people are becoming Mohammedans, Christians, and Hindus. All Christians were not born Christians. How were people first attracted to become Christians? There arose in their hearts the hankering for Christianity.
When Acyutananda Swami, the first disciple of Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, went to my birthplace here in Bengal, a headmaster asked him, "We are so near and we cannot appreciate the teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu; how is it that from such a far off country, you have come to sacrifice your life for the service of Sri Caitanyadeva?"

Acyutananda Swami answered, "*Brahmanda brahmite kona bhagyavan jiva:* We have to acquire this capacity during the course of our wanderings in different positions throughout the creation." We are wandering from this land to that land, from this species to that species, and in the course of that, we gather some sukrti, pious credits. Ajnata sukrti means that unknowingly and unconsciously our energy is spent in the service of theLord, and the reaction comes in the form of some pious credits. And when sukrti is more developed, it becomes jnata sukrti, or pious activities knowingly performed. Then, sraddha, faith, our inner attraction for the universal truth comes to the surface. In this way it may develop from any stage. Even a beast may feel the tendency to serve Krsna. In Vrndavana, so many living beings: trees, beasts, and even the water have acqui-

red their position by consciously desiring it. Although they have accepted an apparently material pose, they eternally hold that position in the service of Krsna.

Way of the Pilgrim

Christian: There is one book called The Way of The Pilgrim, about a Christian who chants the name of Jesus on beads.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Yes, the Catholics also use beads. Some Christians may chant the name of Christ.

Christian: This man was chanting the name of Jesus, his heart was growing soft, and he was feeling ecstasy, great love for Jesus.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Then he may attain the position of Jesus, at most. It may be that in his attempt for perfection, his growth is finished there, in the eternal paraphernalia of Jesus. He may remain there. If he has found his fullest satisfaction, he is fated to be there.
By the will of God, and by the powerful will of an exalted devotee, even from the impersonal Brahman effulgence one may be roused from his slumber and moved to action in devotional service. Generally, they pass long ages there in the nondifferentiated plane, satisfied with their spiritual attainment; however, in the consideration of infinite time, nothing is very great or spacious. They may remain holding that position for a long time, so many dissolutions and creations may come and go, but the possibility remains that their slumber may be broken at any time. Since time immemorial, this created world has been in existence, and so many souls are ascending to the Brahman effulgence and again descending. So, even in the midst of the infinite Brahman effulgence, some souls are coming out. It is a question of infinity, so the position of Jesus may be considered as eternal, and the time may come when Jesus himself may be converted into Vaisnavism. Itis not impossible.

Jesus: Dynamic or Static?

Christian: Do you think that Jesus had awareness of Krsna as the Personality of Godhead?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: When his inner attainment is most closely detected, then we are bound to say that in the course of his eternal life, there is some possibility of his achieving Krsna.

Christian: I don't understand.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Is Jesus stagnant or progressive? Where he has reached, is that finished forever, or is he dynamic?

Christian: Christians will say that he has full knowledge.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: So, is he stagnant there, finally fixed? Is that Jesus' position? Do the bishops say that his position is final? Does he have a progressive life? Or is Jesus alone barred from making further progress? Is he a member of the dynamic world? Or the stagnant world? So,

this is the nature of the infinite. Being finite, we are going to deal with the infinite? That is our ludicrous tendency. It is ludicrous for us to deal with the infinite. Why is Krsna considered to be the Absolute Truth? This you should inquire about in a scientific way, step by step. As I have recommended, you should go on reading about that in the Sri Krsna Samhita, and the Brhad Bhagavatamrta. You should try to follow very minutely the dynamic development of theism as it is presented there.

Reincarnation - Transmigration

Christian: As I understand it, reincarnation means that a soul may regress into a lower species by performing sinful acts. But how does it benefit a soul to be punished by taking birth in the animal species if later he has no recollection of this?

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Sometimes it is necessary for doctors to make a patient unconscious. Sometimes a dacoit is imprisoned and put under chains. When his movements will be detrimental to society, he is confined in a cell and chained. So, sometimes it is necessary to take away one's independence, his voluntary action. By suffering the reactions to his previous karma, one may be relieved; then again he may be given voluntary action. When by his voluntary will a soul has done so many misdeeds and acquired so many reactions, it is necessary that his free will be stopped temporarily. He will be allowed to suffer the reactions of his previous sins, and then again some freedom will be given to him so that he may take the proper course which is useful for him. As long as a drunkard is a drunkard, when he is expected to do some mischief to the environment, he should be confined. And when the madness of drinking is gone, then he will be released and allowed to move freely.

"Do Unto Others" Includes Animals

Christian: Christians generally don't accept that animals have souls.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Jesus did not care to bring his followers within that conception. He saw that they were accustomed to eating animals and fishes, so he did not want to embarrass them with all these questions. He thought they should begin theistic life, and when again they are able to consider these points, at that time they may be given this installment.

Life is also present within the nonhuman species, and it is no less qualified than the human position, but in the course of the evolutionary movement of the soul, it is thrown into such a condition as the result of karma. Wherever life is present, the soul is there within. It is a common thing, but Jesus thought it would be impossible for them to adjust their understanding of the environment to such a degree. He thought to let them begin with the culture of theism, and then gradually such instruction could be given.

He told them, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." That is also good. But not only is the soul present there; God is also there, and everywhere. The lower species are also feeling pain and pleasure. In animals it is quite clear that when they are killed, they feel pain. So, there is life. The vibration of pain is there, consciousness is there, and the soul is a unit of pure consciousness. But the persons to whom Jesus preached were not so qualified as to extend their knowledge that far. They are not prepared for such a great amount of sacrifice in their practices.

So, for those who are not prepared to sacrifice themselves to such an extent, Christianity has been given by Jesus.

Still, everything has been ordained from the same common center. Christianity has its necessity, Islam also has its necessity. There is room for such creeds in the universe. They are not unnecessary, but they hold a relative position.
Then what is the position of the Absolute Truth? When we have to inquire deeply about this, then we come to India. There it has been dealt with very extensively, with all possible conceptions of religion. So many variegated theological conceptions are found in India that a fraction of that cannot be found anywhere else in the world. But ultimately, Srimad Bhagavatam was given as the highest conception. How? That we have to understand and follow very minutely. You should study the Brhad Bhagavatamrta and its more modern form, Sri Krsna Samhita by Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

Christian: I have read that.

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: But you must read it more closely, and more scrutinizingly. You must read that again and again, until you find satisfaction, and answers to all your inquiries. There, the gradation of our relationship with God is shown, explaining how from a particular stage of theism, one is forced to progress to a higher level of attainment.

EIGHTH CHAPTER

Levels of God Realization

The gradation of transcendental realization has been explained by Srila Sanatana Goswami in his book Brhad Bhagavatamrta. There we find that in the course of the realization of suddha-bhakti, pure devotional service, the great sage Narada Muni is visiting different places. First, he encounters karma-misra bhakti, or devotional service mixed with fruitive activities.

Once there was a brahmana in Allahabad. He was a wealthy man, and on the occasion of the Kumbha-mela, when millions of sages and devotees gather for a religious festival, he arranged for services to the different types of saintly persons who were present there. He conducted a sacrifice and finally finished the function with the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. The brahmana was mainly engaged in karma-kanda, or fruitive work, but he was also rendering service to the saintly persons. Ultimately he ended everything with nama sankirtana, the chanting of the holy names of the Lord.

Narada Muni approached the brahmana saying, "You are very fortunate that you are doing these things. This is the proper utilization of your money and caste. By engaging in such holy activities, you are certainly most fortunate." The brahmana told him, "What am I doing? This is nothing. You should go to see the fortune of King Indradyumna. He is distributing the prasada remnants of Lord Jagannatha in a grand style. How grandiose is the worship of Narayana there! Go there, and you will appreciate his devotional service.
So, Narada Muni went to see Indradyumna Maharaja, and there he also found the king extensively engaging all his resources in the worship of Lord Jagannatha. Narada approached him, saying, "You are so fortunate in this world." The king told him, "What can I do Narada? This is

nothing. If you want to see how devotional service should be practiced, you should go to Lord Indra, the king of heaven.

Narada Muni went to Indradeva and praised him by saying, "O Indra, you are very fortunate. Vamanadeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared as your younger brother. And here in Indraloka, there are always religious festivals worshiping Krsna." Indra said, "Oh, what do you say? What love have I for Krsna? Everything belongs to Him, but in my foolishness, I tried to prevent Him from taking the parijata tree from heaven. Not only that, but I am always being attacked by the demons, and my wife is also sometimes disturbed; what fortune do you find in me?"

From Indra, Narada went to Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe. There he found the personified Vedas singing praise to Lord Brahma. Narada, who was also his son and disciple, approached Lord Brahma saying, "How greatly fortunate you are! You are entrusted by Lord Narayana Himself with the management of the whole universe, and sometimes you visit Him for guidance in the administration of the universe. We also find that some portions of the Vedas are engaged in singing your glories. You are so fortunate!"

Lord Brahma felt a little disturbed. He said, "What are you saying Narada? You are praising me and increasing my false pride, but did I not tell you that I am nothing but a small creature in the hand of Narayana? I am engaged in external activity. I have no time to give in the interest of my devotional life. My Lord has rather deceived me by engaging me in such a busy matter as managing the universe. I am most unfortunate. Rather, you should go to Mahadeva, Lord Siva. He does not care for anything in this world. He is aloof and indifferent, and has his aim toward Lord Narayana. He is devoted to Lord Ramacandra, and he is very fond of the holy name of Lord Rama. His wife, Parvati-devi, is also helping him in his devotional life, and she is very happy.
Narada Muni went to Sivaloka and began to chant in praise of Lord Siva, "You are the master of the world. The Vedas sing your glories. You hold the highest position." In this way, Narada began to glorify him, but Lord Siva became very excited and a little angry at this: "What are you saying Narada? I have so much indifference towards this world that I am mainly interested in knowledge and penance; This holds the better portion of my interest. Whatever little inclination I have for devotional service to Narayana is very negligible. Sometimes I have such an apathetic spirit towards Narayana that I even fight with Him in favor of one of my disciples! I am disgusted with my position. Penance, power, mystic yoga perfection, and indifference to the world; that is my business."

This is jnana-misra bhakti, or devotional service mixed with empiric speculative knowledge. Lord Brahma is the ideal of karma-misra bhakti, or devotional service mixed with fruitive activity, and Lord Siva is the ideal of jnana-misra bhakti. He still maintains some affinity for an independent position, and not for cent percent acceptance of service to the Supreme Lord, Narayana.

Lord Siva said, "If you really want to experience suddha-bhakti, go to Prahlada Maharaja. There you will find pure devotional service." In this way, we have been directed to trace the development of suddha-bhakti, pure devotional service, beginning with Prahlada Maharaja, because Prahlada does not want anything in exchange for his devotional service.
In Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.10.4.) he says:

nanyatha te 'khila-guro
ghateta karunatmanah
yas ta asisa asaste

na sa bhrtyah sa vai vanik

"Whoever is doing something for the satisfaction of Narayana and wants something in return, is not a servant, but a merchant. He wants to give something to the Lord and then take some price in exchange for that." So, Prahlada Maharaja is a pure devotee, and only through a pure devotee of Narayana can one attain pure devotion.

Neutral Love of God

All these peculiar achievements in the devotional world begin with Prahlada Maharaja. The nature of his devotional service is that of santa rasa, neutrality, where there is no actual service, but only perfect adherence to Narayana under all circumstances. Whatever may be the unfavorable condition in the environment, he stands true to the faith that Narayana is all in all, and that He is our master. So, Prahlada Maharaja, and the four Kumaras, the sons of Lord Brahma, are in the position of santa rasa bhakti, or neutral love of God.
Prahlada Maharaja is Narada Muni's disciple. Still, for our benefit, Narada Muni was approaching him to measure the standard of his devotion in a comparative study of the devotional world. Approaching Prahlada Maharaja, Narada said, "I have come to see you, Prahlada, because Lord Siva also appreciates your position. You are really a devotee of Lord Krsna. You are so fortunate! I have come to see how you are."

Prahlada Maharaja told him, "Gurudeva, you are all in all. Have you come to test me? Whatever fortune I may have, I have received by your grace. I was born in a family of demons, so the demonic qualities have not exclusively left me. Don't you know that in Naimisaranya, I went to fight with Lord Visnu? I repent for that, but what can I do? He has given me such a position. I cannot have the privilege of direct service to Him, but only mentally I think of Him. I think that He is everything, but I do not have the great fortune of rendering service to Him. Hanuman is really a devotee. How fortunate he is! What grace he has received! He gave everything to Lord Ramacandra. I envy his situation, but what can I do? God's dispensation is absolute. We must accept that. Hanuman's position is really enviable. How attached to his master he is, and what a great magnitude of service he has done for Lord Rama."

Hanuman: Servant of Rama

From there, Narada Muni went to visit Hanuman. He approached Hanuman's residence, playing on his vina the mantram: Rama Rama Rama Rama Rama. When Hanuman suddenly heard the name of his master, Lord Rama, he jumped towards that direction, and even in the sky, embraced Narada Muni. Hanuman said, "Oh, who is helping me to hear the sound of Lord Rama's holy name? After such a long time, the sound of Rama nama is enlivening me. I was dying without hearing the name of Rama." Ecstatic tears were running down the eyes of both of them. Then Narada Muni went to Hanuman's quarters, and began to praise his fortune, saying, "How fortunate you are! Oh, Hanuman,You serve Lord Ramacandra so intimately; you do not know anything but your master, Lord Rama. You rendered such great service to Him that your service has become the ideal for the whole of human society."

Hanuman told Narada, "Yes, by His grace I was able to do something, but it is all His grace; I am nothing, I am worthless. But I hear that now Lord Ramacandra has come as Lord Krsna. Alt-

hough I don't like any incarnation other than Lord Rama, I have heard from a distance how Krsna, who is Ramacandra Himself, is showing His favor to the Pandavas. The Pandavas are very fortunate because the Lord is dealing with them like an intimate friend. So, I have great appreciation for the fortune of the Pandavas. "In this way, Hanuman began to praise the Pandavas for their fortune.

Krsna's Friends, the Pandavas

Then, Narada Muni, leaving Hanuman, went to the Pandavas. There he found Yudhisthira Maharaja seated on a throne and began to sing the glories of the Pandavas. He told Yudhisthira Maharaja, "How friendly you are in your relationship with Krsna! How fortunate you are!" Yudhisthira Maharaja said, "What are you saying Devarsi? Of course Krsna favors us, we can't deny that, but what is our position? We have no position at all. On the other hand, I feel now and then, that by seeing our example the people in general won't want to serve Krsna, because they will calculate that being such intimate friends of Lord Krsna, the Pandavas had to pass through difficult troubles and dangers their whole lives. They will think that to be a devotee of Krsna means that one must suffer troubles throughout his whole life. So, I am afraid that by thinking of us, people will not venture to approach Krsna."
Devarsi Narada said, "No, no, I don't see it from that angle of vision. What is danger or affliction to the Pandavas? What is the meaning of that? That is the message that Krsna is coming. When the Pandavas are in danger that is nothing but the message that Krsna is coming to save you. So, your mother also prayed:

vipadah santu tah sasvat
tatra tatra jagad-guro
bhavato darsanam yat syad
apunar bhava-darsanam

'Let dangers come: may they visit me always. I don't care for that, because that brings Krsna much closer to us. We rather like the dangers that bring Krsna into our intimate connection.' That famous statement of your mother, Kuntidevi, stands there."
The Pandavas, headed by Maharaja Yudhisthira said, "Yes, Krsna visits us now and then, in the time of our dire need, but how fortunate are the Yadus! Lord Krsna is always with them. They are so proud of their master, Lord Krsna, that they do not care for any other power in the world. They are so fortunate that Lord Krsna is always closely connected with them." So, Narada Muni went to the Yadus and began chanting in praise of them. They said, "What do you say, Devarsi Narada? Krsna is with us, of course, and in any time of great danger He comes to help us, but how much do we care for Him? We are living independently, careless about His existence. But among us, Uddhava is really His favorite. Whatever Krsna does, He always consults with Uddhava, and in all His confidential matters, Uddhava is present there, and in every case, He is always very thick with Uddhava. Even we envy the fortune of Uddhava."

Uddhava: More dear than Krsna

Then Narada went to Uddhava and told him, "Uddhava, you are the most favorite devotee of Krsna. Krsna says:

na tatha me priyatama
atma-yonir na sankarah
na ca sankarsano na srir
naivatma ca yatha bhavan

'O Uddhava! What to speak of other devotees like Brahma, Siva, Sankarsana, or Laksmi; you are more dear to Me than My own life.' You are such an intimate associate that Krsna values you more than His own life." Uddhava said, "Yes, of course, out of His causeless benevolence, He might have said something like that, but I don't think that I am His real devotee, especially after visiting Vrndavana. All my pride has been melted by seeing those devotees. The spirit of service and the intensity of love towards Krsna that I found in the devotees in Vrndavana is unparalleled. O Devarsi, I am nowhere. Do you know that statement of mine? It is recorded in the Srimad Bhagavatam (10.47.61):

asam aho carana-renu jusam aham syam
vrndavane kim api gulma-latausadhinam
ya dustyajam svajanam arya-patham ca hitva
bhejur mukunda-padavim srutibhir vimrgyam

"The gopis of Vrndavana gave up their husbands, children, and families who are difficult to renounce, and sacrificed even their religious principles to take shelter of the lotus feet of Krsna, which are sought after even by the Vedas themselves. O! Grant me the fortune to take birth as a blade of grass in Vrndavana, so that I may take the dust of the lotus feet of those great souls upon my head."
"There I have disclosed my heart fully. The quality of love for Krsna that I found in the damsels of Vrndavana is so exalted that I could not but aspire to be born in Vrndavana as a piece of grass, so that the foot-dust of those divine damsels might touch my head. So, what are you saying Devarsi? If you would like to see real devotion, real divine love, you should go to Vrndavana. Don't put us in an awkward position, saying that we possess devotion to Krsna; this is rather a mockery, a foundationless utterance. I found real devotees of the Lord in Vrndavana."

In this way, Sanatana Goswami tries his best to take us through the path, by showing us the gradual development of devotion to Krsna. Prahlada Maharaja has been accepted as the basis of suddha-bhakti, the beginning of pure devotional service, because he is situated in santa rasa, or devotional service in neutrality. Above that there is dasya rasa, love of God in servitude, as shown by Hanuman, and above that there is sakhya rasa, or the mood of friendship. That is exemplified by the Pandavas. Uddhava is somewhat sakhya, connecting with vatsalya, parental love, and madhurya conjugal love. In this way we can trace the progressive development of devotion.

Our close adherence to Krsna develops in this way to Vrndavana. The acme of devotional service is found there. In the conversation between Ramananda Raya and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu we find it mentioned that Radharani's devotional service is categorically higher than that of the gopis (tebhyas tah pasu-pala-pankaja-drsas tabhyo 'pi sa radhika). The kind of serving spirit we find there is unaccountable and inconceivable.
Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came with that quality of adherence to the truth: unconditional surrender. He came seeking that fortune of serving the truth. If we can seek such a higher type of existence, we may consider ourselves most fortunate.

Self-surrender is the very basis of our highest fortune. We cannot but surrender ourselves to whatever beautiful and valuable thing we have come across. Our appreciation for any higher

thing is shown by the degree of our surrender to that. So, we can measure the quality of the truth we are connected with only by the intensity of our surrender.

NINTH CHAPTER

The Krsna Conception

Surrender is not a lip transaction. Surrender means not only to surrender one's possessions, but to realize that the possessions themselves are false. I am not a master of anything. I am not even master of myself. Surrender means to give everything to the guru, and rid ourselves of the unholy connection of so many possessions, so that they may not disturb us by always suggesting, "You are my master," and in this way misleading us.

We should think, "Everything belongs to the Lord and His delegation, the guru. I am not the master of anything." That sort of knowledge we should imbibe, and that will be helpful to our real spiritual progress. This is reality. We have to realize that fact. We want the truth, and we want to free ourselves from false notions. So, proper diksa, spiritual initiation, imparts the divine knowledge that nothing belongs to us; not only that, but everything belongs to God, including ourselves. That is the conception of diksa: "I belong to Him; everything belongs to Him. I am His servant, and these are the objects of His service."

Fool's Paradise

This is reality, and we are suffering under non-reality in an imaginary world. We are living in a fool's paradise. We should do away with the fool's paradise and try to enter into real paradise. When we have a peep into the characteristic of the absolute environment of reality, and even a little regard for the truth, we can no longer relish the paraphernalia of this world as we did previously. Because we have had a real taste of the higher truth, we will have no charm for this material world. We will no longer feel encouragement to meet with the duties that are relating to this world of enjoyment. We will be indifferent.

We know that the connection with the present enjoying mood brings a painful reaction. We can realize that, but we cannot leave it behind. We cannot cut off the connection completely in the stage of sadhana, spiritual practice. Still, we have no other alternative. Our affinity for the positive truth should be increased more and more, and gradually our affinity for our paraphernalia and obligations will all disappear. Although repeatedly we may not be successful, still we will be unable to give up the idea. We will attempt again and again to make progress towards the truth, and when we are unsuccessful, our heart will ache to think that we are repeatedly being defeated by the enemies who are all around us.

Mental Mushrooms

But the fire of Krsna consciousness is there, and that fire is not to be quenched. It is a spark of eternal truth. So, the fire will continue, and the day will come when the enemies that are surrounding us will have to retire once and for all. One day we will find that Krsna has gradually captured our whole heart, and the others have retired forever; they are no longer present to trouble us in our mental circle. We will find that those unwanted things were like mushrooms: they came out from our mental soil, and now they have all gone and died. They have all gone away, and Krsna alone is in the heart. At that time, the heart is only full of Krsna, full of the Krsna conception.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura once instructed a disciple at the time of initiation into the Hare Krsna mantra that Krsna should be allowed to land in our hearts, just as an army is landed by the navy. An army is carried by a ship, and when they have landed, the fight begins, and they capture the country, just as Julius Caesar said, "Veni vidi vici, I came, I saw, I conquered." So, we have to allow Krsna to land in our hearts. Then the fight will begin.

What is the proposal of Krsna consciousness, and what is the proposal of so many other conceptions? They are all giving us their assurances from time immemorial, saying, "I shall give you this, I shall give you that," but the Krsna conception will enter and say, "My claim is this: the whole thing is Mine, and you are all trespassers." The fight will begin; the unwanted things are sure to withdraw, and Krsna consciousness will capture the whole heart. This is the process. Krsna consciousness has only to land within our hearts. Somehow or other, from a pure devotee, a bit of real Krsna consciousness should enter through our ears into our hearts, and Krsna will supply whatever is required. One who has imbibed even a slight regard for Krsna consciousness is assured of success in spiritual life, today or tomorrow.

Krsna is a Thief

We may have erected high walls on all sides to protect ourselves so that Krsna consciousness may not enter, but Krsna is a thief, and a thief requires no invitation. No preparation is necessary for His welcome. He will enter for His own interest, and that is our consolation. Our solace is that Krsna is a thief. Maya has erected her high walls on all sides, but nothing is sufficient to stop Krsna consciousness. Krsna is a thief, and stealthily He will enter one day.

A devotee may become hopeless, thinking, "The enemy is within my own house; my own kinsmen are my enemies. I am hopeless." We may become disappointed, but Krsna consciousness will not leave us in any way. Krsna will persevere, and in due course of time, He will conquer. And other things, no matter how closely related they may be in private and well-protected rooms in our hearts, will have to go. They must take leave from every corner of our hearts. Krsna will conquer. Krsna will capture the whole thing. The unwanted lusty desires of our hearts are foreign things. They are only mushrooms. Like mushrooms, they come out; they have no permanent stability or root. They are not rooted to the soil. We may think that what we have stored in our hearts is very near and dear, and that is already mixed with us as a part of our existence, but when Krsna consciousness enters, they will all float like mushrooms.

After all, they are mushrooms; they have no footing, no connection with the soil. They are only floating. All material interests are only floating on the surface. They are not deeply rooted within and without the whole of our existence. Only Krsna consciousness has its existence everywhere, within all parts of our existence. So, the mushrooms will have to vanish one day. This is confirmed in Srimad-Bhagavatam (2.8.5):

pravistah karna-randhrena
svanam bhava-saroruham
dhunoti samalam krsnah
salilasya yatha sarat

When Krsna enters the heart through the ear, He captures the lotus of the heart and then gradually makes all the dirt in the heart disappear. Just as when the autumn season comes, all the water everywhere becomes pure, so also, when Krsna enters our hearts, all the impurities within will gradually vanish, and only Krsna will remain forever.

TENTH CHAPTER

The Hare Krsna Mantra

Before chanting the holy name of Krsna, we must first chant the Panca-tattva mantra:

Sri Krsna Caitanya, Prabhu Nityananda
Sri Advaita, Gadadhara, Srivasadi Gaura-bhakta-vrnda

The Panca-tattva, or five features of the Absolute Truth, came to give the Hare Krsna maha-mantra to the fallen devotees of this age, so they are the general representation of guru for us. They help us to enter into the domain of Krsna and also the plane of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.
After chanting the Panca-tattva mantra, we should count on the beads of the japa-mala and chant the maha-mantra:

Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

While counting beads and chanting the holy name, the beads should be placed inside a cloth bag, and the index finger, which is generally considered inauspicious, should not touch the beads, but should remain outside the bag. Generally we use the thumb and middle finger to count. One should chant sixteen rounds, as recommended by Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, but if there is any emergency, he must chant at least four rounds; the mala should not be kept fasting.

In the process of counting, we begin from the bigger beads and go towards the smaller, and again return in the same line. The giant bead in the center is called Mount Sumeru. We must not cross over that.

This harinama maha-mantra is found in the Upanisads, as well as in the Agni Purana and the Brahmanda Purana. In the Kalisantarana Upanisad, it is recommended as the highest mantra, and scholars have mentioned this mantra as a means of address only; no appeal should be attached to that. This Hare Krsna maha-mantra is the yuga dharma nama, or the process of God realization especially meant for the present age: Kali-yuga. We find the maha-mantra mentioned everywhere in the Puranas. This mantra can be chanted silently, mentally, and aloud. It has been given to us by Mahaprabhu as the general recommendation for the fallen souls. He has given it for all, whether they are qualified or unqualified. The only condition for receiving it is sraddha, faith.

It is mentioned in the Padma Purana that there are ten kinds of offenses we must try to avoid in the chanting of the Hare Krsna maha-mantra. There are also four kinds of namabhasa, or apathetic chanting, which will not give us entrance into the domain of mercy. Mere liberation will be effected by that kind of invocation.

These two improper kinds of chanting stem from our tendencies for exploitation and renunciation. We must chant the name with the spirit of service and avoid the ten offenses.

Abusing Saints

The first offense is to abuse the devotees who are the agents of spreading the greatness and nobility of the Supreme Lord, Krsna. If we abuse and dishonor His agents, then the name is dissatisfied. Only the devotees of Krsna are real saints, because they are after eternal life. Those persons who worship demigods for temporary gain are not considered saints. They may be neglected, for they are not devotees. Saint means Vaisnava, or devotee. All others, such as the worshipers of demigods, are not considered saints. We avoid them. A saint is one who has no ambition in his life but to have a connection of loving service with the Supreme Lord. Only those who are agents of eternal truth, absolute good, are to be considered saintly. We should not abuse such saintly persons.

Demigod Worship

The second offense concerns how we should treat the demigods, including Siva, Sakti, the Sun-god, and others. They are not to be considered equal to or greater than Visnu, or Krsna. They are under Him, and they are all inferior to Him. They are given engagements by the Supreme Lord, Krsna, and they have to discharge their duties according to His order. They are never equal or superior to Krsna.

Guru: Good as God

The third offense is to consider the guru a human being. Although so many human symptoms may be found in him, still, according to our sincerity to meet Godhead, the Lord descends and represents Himself in the guru to satisfy our hunger for the truth. We must see him as the agent of the Lord. It has been advised to us in a general way not to think of the guru as a mortal being, because if our attempt to attain the Absolute is sincere, then He will also come to us to deliver us. God is omniscient, so through a particular agent who acts as His representative, He comes here to accept us and take us up to the higher plane. We are ordered by the advice of the scriptures to see the guru as the representative of the Absolute, because none can give us Krsna but He Himself.
God's presence should be perceived in our gurudeva. We should see that God has come to give Himself to us. Generally we find mortal signs in the body of the spiritual master, but we must transcend that. The Ganges water may be filthy in external appearance, but still the dirty Ganges water can purify us by its touch. To our material senses the Deity seems to be wood, stone, or earth, but that is our polluted vision. Krsna is there, and sometimes He is seen to walk and to talk

with devotees of a higher order. We must not think that He is made of material stuff. When we go and stand before the Deity, we should not think that we can see Him, but that He is seeing us. He is in the subjective plane; I am His object.

He is mercifully seeing us to purify us. In this way our vision must be adjusted. Krsna was killed by a hunter; the atheists will interpret that it was an ordinary incident, but it is not so. Sita was stolen by Ravana. This is all external, all illusory. The real truth is above, in the transcendental realm. So, we are requested by the expert transcendentalists and by the sastra to see that our gurudeva is above these mortal signs. Krsna says:

acaryam mam vijaniyan
navamanyeta karhichit
na martya-buddhyasuyeta
sarva-devamayo guruh

"I Myself am the acarya. Do not think that the guru is an ordinary man. I myself reside within the heart of gurudeva with all My parts and parcels, for the benefit of the disciple."

Blaspheming the Scriptures

The fourth offense is sastra ninda; blaspheming the sastra, the scriptures. Of course this means those scriptures which are concerned with praising the greatness and nobility of Krsna; not others. We must not abuse those scriptures that instruct us about God and His devotees, and teach us the eternal good.

Holy Name: God in Sound

The fifth offense is to interpret the holy name of Krsna with the help of the dictionary and grammar, to find diverse meanings in the words of the name. The sound is transcendental. The dictionary, grammar, and any other books of mundane knowledge cannot limit or qualify the holy name. Above the material sound of the name is the transcendental sound within (sabda brahma). The name itself is the Supreme Person incarnate by His own free will. He is inseparable from His name and fully present in His sound form.

The vaikuntha sabda, transcendental sound, is different from the mundane sound that can be produced by the tongue and lips. In homeopathic medicine, all the globules are apparently the same, but the potency within is all-important. It is something like that. The ordinary sound of the name, and the sound vibrated by a pure devotee come from different planes. The difference is in the potency within. The holy name descends from the spiritual world and comes to express itself by dancing on the tongue. The transcendental sound of the holy name is inseparably connected with the person whom it represents.
The sixth offense is to consider the glories of the holy name of Krsna to be a concoction.

To Sin and Chant is Suicidal

The seventh offense is to sin on the strength of the holy name. The scriptures declare that one name is sufficient to clear all the sins one can commit, so if we go on indulging, committing many sins with the idea that we will chant one name to cleanse the sin, it will be an offense to the name, and not the name proper. We cannot try to utilize Him for our service; He is above all this maya. The real name will not appear there. We must not think, "I can do anything and everything, and the name will purify me." It is written in the scriptures that if you go on with this spirit it will be suicidal.

Hare Krsna: The Supreme Purification

The eighth offense is to think that chanting the holy name is another pious activity like penance, pilgrimage, giving in charity, service to the country, and so on. If we think lightly of the holy name in this way, then we commit an offense, because the holy name is absolute and these other processes have only a partial, relative position. Other processes are partial; they award some success in this mundane world, but the name can give the Lord Himself. So, no other process of purification can hold the same position as chanting the holy name of Krsna. It is supreme and none can come close to it.

Forbidden for Faithless

The ninth offense is to give the name to those who do not deserve it, who have no faith in chanting the name. If you press them to chant the holy name, a bad reaction will come to you. Also, without getting any inspiration, we should not make disciples and give harinama initiation. We will commit offense against the name if we make a business or trade with name-giving. If we give the name to anyone and everyone, out of greed for becoming a guru, then it will be an offense. Without sanction from above, if one runs to become a guru to get name and fame with some mundane purpose, then it is a great offense.

Back to Godhead

The tenth offense is to be too much addicted to a particular thing, or to have too much affinity towards the body and bodily wealth. When a boat is anchored, rowing will simply move the boat around the anchor. The anchor must be taken up, and then the boat can move forward. So, we must not anchor ourselves down with a particular thing. We must be open. The name will create some transformation within the mental system, and we must be open and unprejudiced enough to go where the name will send us. If we carefully try to avoid that transformation and stick to our present life, that is an offense against the name: to invite Him, and then ignore Him.
We must not accept the name as a foreign thing: He is our friend. We should be quite at home with Him. We are going to attain a very soothing and friendly connection by the realization of the holy name of Krsna, which is all-good, all-beautiful, and all-charming. By chanting the holy name we will attain our most desirable end of life and go back to God, back to home, and not to any foreign country.

We must take the name in a friendly, affectionate way. The name is the only object of our love. He is our friend, and not any anti-party. So, the name will take us home; not to any foreign land. That is our sweet home, and He is our sweet guardian. With this spirit, we shall go on chanting the holy name of Krsna.
These are the ten offenses to be avoided in chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra:

Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

Namabhasa: the Twilight Name

In chanting the holy name, there are also four kinds of namabhasa. Namabhasa means a faint connection with the holy name. Namabhasa is neither offense nor service mood, but between the two. Its basis is renunciation, but we must also cast away this indifference and become earnest for serving the name, who is our friend and master. Namabhasa may be classified into four categories. The first is sanketyam: chanting indirectly, to indicate something else, as in the case of Ajamila.
Ajamila was a brahmana's son. Somehow, he connected with a low-class woman and entered into a degraded life as a dacoit, drinking and doing many other nasty things. After many years, the time came for his death. As he lay in a coma, suddenly he saw three messengers with a horrible appearance come and put a rope around his neck and begin to drag him away. He was horrified.
Just before this, he had seen his son Narayana playing nearby, so he sought the help of the child and called "Narayana!" But in the course of calling his name, Ajamila thought within himself, "What can this boy Narayana do? How will he deal with these three furious figures? He is nothing." So, by the connection of the holy name of Narayana, Lord Narayana came to his mind.
When in his apprehension his call for Lord Narayana was sincere, four agents from Vaikuntha descended. They were sober and mild, and addressed the Yamadutas, the messengers of death saying: "Who are you? Why have you come?"
"We have come because it is the last day of Ajamila. He was a great sinner, and we have been sent by our king, Yamaraja, the Lord of death, to drag him away for punishment."
"Don't you know what is dharma, duty?" "Oh yes, we know."
"Then why are you here?"
"He committed immense sin."
"Didn't you hear him take the name of Narayana?"
"Yes we have heard. What of that? His whole life he has committed so many sinful acts, and only one name of Narayana will do away with that? It is not possible."
"Oh, you have not been properly directed by your master. Now that Ajamila has taken the name of Narayana, his jurisdiction has at once changed. He is no longer under the jurisdiction of your master. Has he not given such instructions to you?"
"No, no, we do not know all these things."
"Then, go back, and ask him."
Ajamila was released. Frightened by the posture and grandeur of the messengers of Visnu, the Yamadutas fled. Ajamila thought, "What is the instruction to be learned here?"
This is namabhasa. It is a faint connection with the holy name. It was neither out of faith, nor by the order of his guru, that he chanted the name of Narayana. It was not that he purposely went to take the name, but by accident it flashed in his mind. Still, as a result of his previous pious activity, namabhasa gave him salvation.

Ajamila at once awoke; he remembered all his past sinful activities and began to repent. He began his journey towards Hardwar without speaking a single word to family or friend. There, he chanted the name of Narayana for a long time. At the proper time, those four Visnudutas descended with a divine chariot and took him to the conscious spiritual domain of Vaikuntha.

To Joke and Chant

Parihasya is another kind of namabhasa. Parihasya means jokingly. Sometimes in sport we may say, "Oh, you are chanting the name of Krsna?" If one is cutting jokes, ridiculing the Hare Krsna devotees in the street, and says "Hare Krsna," that may be namabhasa if it is connected with his previous pious credits. Mukti, or liberation, may be effected by that kind of chanting, but not the opportunity for divine service.

Krsna as Code Name

Another form of namabhasa is stobha: to use the name with some other intention. Sometimes these words, Narayana, or Krsna may be used for some technical meaning, or for a code word. Jiva Goswami has taken advantage of this in his book of Sanskrit grammar, the Harinamamrta-vyakarana. When one is playing the mrdanga drum, using the names gaura nitai, gaura nitai to represent different drumbeats, it may be namabhasa.

Indirect Chanting

Hela is another kind of namabhasa: neglectfully chanting the name. When we are rising from bed in the morning sometimes, we may negligently say "Hare Krsna". In this way we may cast off our indolence. Even there it may be namabhasa. It may liberate us from our present position, but may not give us entrance into Vaikuntha. That is possible only through devotional service.

One Mohammedan, who was being killed by the tusk of a boar, shouted "Ha ram!" meaning, "This is abominable!" but because of his previous sukrti, or pious credits, it became namabhasa, and he achieved liberation by chanting the name of Lord Rama.

Namabhasa may come, and mukti, liberation, may be effected, but we cannot get the opportunity of service there. Only if our mind is surcharged with a serving attitude will it elevate us to the subtle and higher plane, otherwise not. If the tendencies for renunciation and exploitation are mixed with our chanting, it won't yield the desired result.

The chanting must be done with a service attitude (sevonmukhe hi jihvadau). What is our aim? We want the service of the Lord: "Die to live." We want a life of purity which is full of self-giving; we want a generous life. We want to live the life of those who want not to extract, but to give. We want a civilized life in the domain of higher civilization, where everyone is a giving unit, an emanating unit, and not an absorbing unit. There, everyone is especially God-centered and harmonious. They are all of the nature of divinity. And divinity means dedication towards the center of all harmony, the absolute good. So with that spirit, we are to chant the holy name, and every action should be done with devotion for Krsna. We should try to take the positive line of serving Visnu and Vaisnava, Krsna and His devotees, and with this sort of attitude we should chant the holy name of Krsna.

ELEVENTH CHAPTER

Service of the Holy Name

Student: I have one question about chanting the Hare Krsna mantra on beads (japa-mala). My spiritual master has given me many preaching duties, so sometimes when I am trying to concentrate on my japa-mala, instead of hearing the holy name, I think of all these different duties I have to do.
Srila Sridhara Maharaja: Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura emphasized that kirtana means not only loudly singing the holy name, but preaching. Jiva Goswami has given a definition of sankirtana, bahubhir militva yat kirtanam tad eva sankirtanam: "When many people come together and glorify the Supreme Lord, Krsna, it is known as sankirtana." Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came and introduced sankirtana. In this age of Kali, if the holy name is chanted congregationally, the combined efforts will be fruitful (sango sakti kalau yuge). There is the difference between the preaching mission of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, and the so-called bhajana of the sahajiyas, or imitationists.
Once, one of our Godbrothers was the subject of our guru maharaja's stern remark. He was a man of good character, but his tendency was generally towards nama bhajana. He did not like to do any other service, but was only inclined to chant the name of Krsna on his beads. I was in charge of the Delhi temple at the time, and was intimate with him, so I wrote to Prabhupada: "If you permit, I would like to engage my Godbrother in some preaching work here in the Delhi temple." The letter that Prabhupada wrote is still here. He wrote me in his letter, "If you can bring him there and make him help you in the work of preaching, then you will be doing the service of a real friend to him. I don't recognize that sitting in the jungle of Balihati only chanting, counting beads, is krsnanusilanam, the proper cultivation of Krsna consciousness."

Preaching Means a Fight

So, kirtana means preaching, sravanam, kirtanam. Kirtana does not simply mean loudly chanting, but preaching. And preaching means there must be a fight with the opposition party. Kirtana means a fight. Kirtana creates the divine vibration which will fight with all the ordinary vibrations that are floating in this world in subtle and gross waves. So, Prabhupada told us that our tulasi beads should not fast. His minimum advice was that we must do some service in the form of chanting Hare Krsna while counting on beads, at least once daily. His exact words were, malika upabasa na: "The beads should not fast." And his general instruction was to preach as much as possible.

Once I had a talk with one of the big spiritual leaders of the Udipi temple in Madras. He told me, "Sometimes I preach about Madhvacarya and the bhakti cult, but I have no time for sadhana, (regulated spiritual practices such as japa, gayatri mantra, scriptural study, and so on). I supported him. Our guru maharaja said that hari-katha, preaching about Krsna, is no less important than sadhana. Rather, it is a more living thing. Preaching is more vital. When we are preaching, automatically we must have the maximum concentration. On the other hand, while chanting on our japa beads, we may be absentminded. When we are speaking about Krsna to another person, we must be all-attentive. Otherwise we cannot speak accurately. All our attention will automatically

be concentrated when we talk about Krsna. And in writing about Krsna, accuracy is even more necessary than in speaking about Krsna. So, writing is also kirtana. The cultivation of Krsna consciousness may even be more intense when we are engaged in writing about Krsna.

Gaudiya Math: War Against Maya

So, the preaching mission of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, the Gaudiya Matha, has declared totalitarian war against maya, illusion, and even all other existing conceptions of religion. And our authority is Srimad Bhagavatam and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Divine love is the supreme most goal of every soul. Beauty and love is the summum bonum, our highest attainment; that is the ultimate controlling principle, and not power. And beauty and love are found at their highest position in Krsna in Vrndavana. The ultimate conception of the Absolute Truth is that of reality the beautiful and divine love. At the same time, the difference between lust and love should be clearly realized. That should not be misconceived. The acme of dedication is demonstrated in the love of the inhabitants of Vraja.

So, preaching (sankirtana), and not counting beads (japa), is the real service of Krsna. But because we have taken a vow, and it is ordered by Mahaprabhu and our gurudeva, we must chant the holy name while counting beads; it is our duty. Our guru maharaja told us, "The japa beads must not fast." So, if we engage ourselves in preaching work, there should be no doubt that we are really obeying the order of Mahaprabhu. Although he , has advised us to chant one hundred thousand names, or sixty-four rounds daily, that is a provincial saying. What is really all-important is the spirit of service. We are not told that the gopis always count the name on tulasi beads, yet they possess the highest position in the service of Krsna in Vrndavana.

Vrndavana Express Train

So, krsna nama will help us greatly to go towards Vrndavana. Its importance is there. Like an express train, the holy name of Krsna carries us to the goal without stopping at any other station. If we are chanting the name without any formal petition, without asking, "Give me this, give me that," it acts like a special train that will go to Vrndavana non-stop. There, the impurities of karma and jnana are absent. The devotees of Vrndavana simply think, "I want Krsna. I do not know what is good or bad. I simply want Krsna."
Student: How many rounds did your guru maharaja ask his initiated disciples to chant each day? Did he prescribe any set number?
Srila Sridhara Maharaja: His general recommendation was to chant twenty-five thousand names, sixteen rounds, daily, or at least four rounds minimum. When someone had no work, he could chant one hundred thousand names, or sixty-four rounds.
Student: Would Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura give harinama initiation to someone who could only chant four rounds daily?

Quality not Quantity

Srila Sridhara Maharaja: There was no such consideration. Formally, one had to do some counting, but there was no rigid limitation. What he wanted from us was intense engagement in

the service of the Lord, under the guidance of a Vaisnava, because the all-important point is service. Our attainment of the goal is not insured simply by increasing the number of times we repeat the name; only by increasing the quality will we reach success.
There are so many sayings in the scriptures to encourage our realization of the holy name in different ways, but Srila Rupa Goswami has given us a central thought. He quotes the Padma Purana: atah sri krsna namadi na bhaved grahyam indriyaih. Our senses, physical or mental, are ineligible to come in touch with the transcendental. The name is nonmaterial (aprakrta), without mundane limitation (vaikuntha). It belongs to another plane. So, nothing about Krsna, His name, form, qualities, or pastimes can be touched by our physical or mental senses. But when we have a serving attitude, He comes down to us of His own accord. Only then can our tongue really pronounce the name of Krsna. Otherwise, only the physical sound of the letters of the name can be produced. Our tongue, our hands, physical sound, all these mundane things cannot come in touch with Krsna. Some intervening medium is necessary to connect this body with the supramundane. And that connection is our earnest desire to serve Krsna, to satisfy Him. A bulb won't light if there is no electricity. Only when the electrical current is there will the bulb be illumined. So, the name may appear on the tongue and in the ear, in the mind, or in writing, but we must have the connection from Vaikuntha to this mundane world. And that connection is devotional service, a functional serving attitude. That alone can connect the physical realm with Vaikuntha and Vrndavana.

Firing Blank Mantras

Krsna will appear of His own accord. He will descend upon your tongue, and then your tongue will be able to chant the name of Krsna. A gun that has no bullet, but only a blank, may make some sound, but no bullet is actually fired. Similarly, chanting the name of Krsna without an attitude of service produces sound, but that is only tongue deep. It is like firing a gun with blanks instead of bullets. Our chanting of the holy name of Krsna must be surcharged with a serving temperament, the tendency to satisfy Krsna.

Otherwise the sound we produce is bogus. It is only an imitation, or a permutation. The holy name cannot be experienced by our senses. It is supramental and transcendental. An ordinary sound of this mundane world cannot be the name of Krsna. Our ear cannot even hear the name if that mediator, the serving attitude, is not there. The earnestness to satisfy Krsna's will must mediate between Krsna and the ear, through the mind. Then only will Krsna's name enter our ear and reveal to us His form, qualities, and pastimes. The holy name is not physical, it is aprakrta, transcendental, supramundane. Only through our service attitude will it come down to this mundane world.

Our guru maharaja laid the highest stress on developing a serving attitude. Otherwise it is all bogus, all imitation. And people will say, "Oh, there is no Krsna there. These men are hypocrites. They are only dancing and making noise, they are not surcharged with a serving spirit." Only through service can we directly come in contact with Krsna. The real point is to practice how to attain the spirit of service, vaisnava seva. The Vaisnava is doing service, and we must imbibe from him the methods of attaining this serving attitude.

Under the order of a devotee we must practice to give ourselves. Self-abnegation and self-dedication are necessary. And that positive thing we will receive from a devotee. If children are given pen and paper in the beginning, it will not be fruitful, so a stone is given, and on the earth they

practice writing. So, in the beginning, we must try to practice how we can develop a serving attitude, dedicating habit. It is our innate wealth, and that is our solace.

If we try to develop a serving attitude, the pure devotee will help us. It is said that if one is miserly, he should at least give some trash in charity to anyone. One says to a miser, "At least give some trash to others and practice your hand to give." So, the serving spirit is a high thing. We must practice to give ourselves in the service of Krsna.

We must not be afraid that we are not attaining the highest form of service in namabhajan, the worship of the holy name. We should not think, "Why have I been asked to sweep the temple? Any ordinary man can do this." We must not be afraid of that. It is necessary for us to acquire a service attitude. Self-giving, selflessness, and self-forgetfulness are required. It is said that Socrates is an example of self-forgetfulness and Jesus Christ is an example of self-sacrifice. And for what purpose? For the cause of the Supreme. And for that we must have a positive connection with a devotee. Under his order we will connect with the plane of service. Our energy may go to the transcendental plane only by his grace or mediation. So, our guru maharaja, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura, laid ninety percent stress on developing a service attitude for preaching, and that should be our aim, whatever our position may be.

TWELFTH CHAPTER

Nectar of the Holy Name

Not only the sound of the holy name of Krsna is necessary, but also the proper meaning, the substance, the spirit of the sound. Only the physical aspect of the holy name is represented in nama-aparadha, offensive chanting, not the real name. The real name is all spiritual. Namaksara bahiraya batu nama kabu naya: the sound of the letters of the name alone is never the real name. This is explained in the Prema-vivarta of Jagadananda Pandita, a book which is full of the philosophical conclusions of Krsna consciousness. It was published and edited by Bhaktivinoda Thakura. There you will find this passage: namaksara bahiraya batu nama kabu naya: merely the sound of the holy name of Krsna should never be thought of as the actual name.
Even in namabhasa, the twilight dawning of the holy name which occurs before pure offenseless chanting, the sound of the name is there, but the inner substance of the name is not there. Namabhasa can give us mukti, or emancipation from the negative side, the material world. But there we cannot trace participation in the positive side, the spiritual world. The name is absent there. The holy name of Krsna is a positive thing, and if we really want a touch of the holy name, we must gain admission into the positive world. When we are in the negative side, how can we get the touch of the name? Namabhasa may give us liberation, but not participation in the devotional realm. So, the real name is not to be found in namabhasa either.

Jewels of the Vedas

Only a particular group of liberated souls worship the holy name; not everyone. Srila Rupa Goswami has written in his Namastakam (1):

nikhila-sruti-mauli ratna mala
dyuti nirajita-pada-pankajanta
ayi mukta-kulair upasyamanam
paritas tvam hari-nam samsrayami

"O Holy Name! The tips of the toes of Your lotus feet are eternally worshiped by the glowing effulgence radiating from the gemmed chapters of the Upanisads, the crest jewels of the Vedas. You are eternally adored and chanted by great liberated souls like Narada and Sukadeva Goswami. O Hari Nama! Clearing myself of all offenses, I take complete shelter of You."
Rupa Goswami says that so many liberated souls worship the holy name of Krsna, offering their respects from all sides. He explains that the greatness of the holy name may not be found in the ordinary scriptures, but if you study all of them as a whole, you will find the very spirit of the holy name. Ordinary people may not find this in their study, but there are those who can collect the real substance, the real purpose from those vast writings, and detect the greatness of the holy name as the whole purpose of all the main Vedic scriptures.

Jungle of Sounds

The principle codes in the sruti, the Vedas, are giving hints about the holy name of Krsna. Sruti means sabda: that which can be grasped by the ear, the sound form of the revealed truth which has descended from above. The Vedas naturally tell us that we can approach the supreme reality only through sound. Otherwise they would be suicidal. If they do not say that by sound only we will attain the truth, then what is the necessity of the Vedas which are only embodied sounds? So, if we can trace their real characteristic we shall find that the principle Vedas say that by the cultivation of sound we can attain the Lord. So, we can come to understand this only through sound (sabda pramanam). Sound alone can deliver reality. The Vedas must say so, otherwise they will only be an ineffective jungle of sounds.

Sruti means that which can be received through the ear, and that sound is absolute. The srutis have come to declare to us that through sound alone we can attain the highest end. The main codes (sutras) of the sruti inform us: nikhila sruti mauli ratna mala. Mauli means the principle scriptures. They are like so many gems or jewels forming a necklace. By their luster, the lotus feet of the holy name are being revealed. Just as while performing arati, we offer a lamp to show the Deity form of the Lord more clearly to the ordinary people, the principle srutis are helping us to have this perception: by sound only we can have the Supreme Lord.

Rupa Goswami says that if we are more attentive to their meaning, we will find that the principle srutis are only trying to show us the lotus feet of the holy name, just as during arati the ghee lamp helps us to see the figure of the Lord. We may have a general view of the Deity, but with the help of the lamp, we can have a particular conception of the different parts of the body of the Lord. Similarly, we find that the principle srutis with their light are trying to show us the lower portion of the holy name of Krsna. They are leading us and helping us to have a conception of the remotest part of the holy name, a vague conception that the name is everything. Rupa Goswami says that those who are really liberated are all surrounding the holy name and offering praise and adoration. And he prays, "In this spirit, I take refuge in the holy name of Krsna."

The real meaning of the Vedas is difficult to understand. Some people will say, "Chanting Hare Krsna is not recommended in the Vedas. Rather, sometimes 'Krsna' is mentioned as the name of a

demon. Why should we chant the name of Krsna?" In the Vedas (Chandogya Upanisad 8. 13. 1), we find this verse:

syamac chavalam prapadye
savalac chyamam prapadye

"By the help of black (syama), we shall be introduced to the service of white (savala); by the help of white (savala), we shall be introduced to the service of black (syama)." What is the meaning of this verse? Our acaryas have explained that the absolute can be understood by the help of the energy and the energetic. Syama means Krsna, who is blackish, and savala, white, means Radharani. So, by the help of Radha, we can have the service of Krsna, and by the help of Krsna, we can have the service of Radharani.

God through Sound

So, Rupa Goswami says that only a superficial study of the Vedas will frustrate us. But if we search with a positive mind, by the grace of the sadhus, the acaryas, and the mahajanas we will find that the principle srutis are leading us towards the conception that the whole object of all the Vedic sounds is that central sound: the holy name of Krsna. There are so many sections of the Vedas that have come to distribute the tidings of the absolute realm, but there must be a center. So, the principle sounds are all emittinglight like a torch, to show us that they have a central sound which represents the supreme whole, and that is Krsna. So many liberated souls are all around, offering their respects to the name of Krsna, that central sound from which all Vedic mantras have come to give us some idea of the sound aspect of the absolute center. This is Rupa Goswami's argument.

The branches of the Vedas are all sounds, and so many sounds must come from a central position. They cannot but direct one who has a proper eye towards that fountainhead of sound, saying, "Go! Run towards that direction! In our source you will find everything. We are all partially representing so many things but we have a center, we have a fountainhead. Go in that direction and you will find the sound that can sufficiently satisfy you, and you may also be introduced to other aspects of that sound."

The holy name of Krsna is most important; it is no less than Krsna Himself. It fully represents the whole. Rupa Goswami says, "O Holy Name, I take refuge under Your lotus feet. You are the grand, central sound who has given cohesion to all the sounds in the revealed scriptures."
And Sanatana Goswami, who is the spiritual master of Rupa Goswami, says:

jayati jayati' namananda rupam murarer
viramita nija dharma dhyana pujyadhi yatna
katham api sakrdattam muktidam praninam yat
paramamrtam ekam jivanam bhusanam me

"Let ecstasy in the service of the divine name be victorious. If somehow we can come in contact with that sound, nama rupam murare,, then all our other activities will be paralyzed; we will have no necessity of performing any other activity. Our many variegated duties will have no importance to us at all if we can achieve the service of the divine name of Krsna."

Dharma means the business engagement of the karmis or fruitive workers. Dhyana means retiring from this physical world and performing meditation from within, trying to exploit the internal world. Both of these are stopped, paralyzed by the ecstasy of service to the divine name.

The Ramanuja sect worships Laksmi-Narayana in the mood of opulence and veneration in Vaikuntha. By the ecstasy of the holy name, that will also be stopped. One who gets the real grace of the divine name of Krsna will retire from all phases of these different kinds of worship, namely varnasrama dharma, or social duty, dhyana, the internal meditation of the jnanis (mental speculators) and yogis, and puja, the opulent worship of Vaikuntha, after liberation, which attracts the followers of the Ramanuja sampradaya. The holy name will take us to the perception of Goloka, Krsna's own abode, where we will have to completely retire from all these other phases of our divine life. We will have to retire from any work, even if it may be done for Krsna. We will have to give up internal meditation and calculation, and even puja, worship in awe and reverence. The holy name will stop all these tendencies, and we will find so much sweetness in chanting the name that we won't be able to give attention to anything else. When we really come in contact with the sound aspect of the absolute, then all our other enthusiastic endeavorsand functions will be paralyzed. We will be unable to attempt them. We will take to the name only. Then, when the name allows us to perform other services again, we will be able to do them. The name has such power, such a high degree of potency that it will stop all other branches of service, and charm you.

"I Want Millions of Ears!"

In the writings of Rupa Goswami we find this verse:

tunde tandavani ratim vitanute tundavali-labdhaye
karna-kroda kadambini ghatayate karnarbhudebhyah sprham
cetak prangana-sangini vijayate sarvendriyanam krtim
no jane janita kiyabdhir amrtaih krsneti varna-dvayi

When the holy name of Krsna descends and captures the tongue and lips, it controls them so strongly that it engages them in chanting the holy name as if the lips and tongue have gone mad. In this way, the power of the name descends in them, and one feels that only one tongue and one mouth are not enough; thousands of mouths are necessary to taste the name. Then the holy name of Krsna enters the ear with such a great force and current that the ears are captured, and one thinks that only two ears are insufficient; he wants millions of ears to attend to the sweet current entering the ears. Two ears are nothing to him; he wants millions of ears. The nectar of the holy name is coming like a flood through his ears, pushing its way within the heart.

It is so sweet that as it goes to capture the heart, the center of all senses, everything is paralyzed. Wherever that sweet aggressor touches, the whole thing is captured with such intensity that everything else is ignored. Rupa Goswami writes, "I don't know, I can't say, I fail to express how much nectar there is in the holy name of Krsna. These two syllables contain so much sweetness, and such a high quality of sweetness. And this sweetness is so aggressive that it captures everything." This verse is found in the Vidagdha Madhava written by Srila Rupa Goswami.

In his book, Saranagati, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has explained the Namastakam, eight prayers in glorification of the holy name, written by Rupa Goswami. The whole thing is described there very beautifully. He writes, "My heart is just like a desert, hot with the rays of the sun. This

is my internal mental condition. The desire for mortal things cannot satisfy me because by nature they are death-producing. And not one or two, but thousands of such death-producing desires have taken shelter in my mind. So, my subconscious region is always burning. This is my condition."

"But somehow, by the grace of the sadhu and guru, the holy name of Krsna with its infinite prospect has entered through the holes of my ears and reached the plane of my heart. And there, with some peculiar hope, with infinite, auspicious possibilities, it touched my heart with a new kind of nectar."

Ecstasy of the Name

"New hope is aroused by that sound. Then by force, it comes from the heart towards the tongue. Not that by the endeavor of my tongue I am producing that sound - no. What came from the heart of a saint through my ear, entered my heart, and that forcibly appeared upon my tongue, and began to dance. That is the holy name proper. It descends from above. It cannot be produced by the material form of this tongue. Its source is above.

"And through an agent of the absolute it comes through the ear to the heart. From the heart it gathers some sympathy, then the holy name of Krsna forcibly appears upon the tongue, and begins to dance. With great force it comes to the end of the tongue, and that sweet sound begins its dancing."

The real effects of the divine name have been described here. If it is a living and real name, the voice will be choked up, there will be shivering in the body, and the legs will be unable to stand. Sometimes tears will flow in a current on the body, and one's hairs will stand on end. Sometimes changes of color will be found in the body, and we will be unable to find any trace of the mind or consciousness. We may fall in a swoon, the whole body and mind will appear as if it is being attacked, shivering, and influenced in different ways. Apparently it may seem that so many troubles are created in the body and the mind, but the real heart is overflowing with a particular kind of strange, sweet juice.

Ocean of Nectar

Sometimes he thinks, "I am in an ocean of nectar. My whole existence is within an ocean of nectarine liquid. I am beside myself. I can't understand where I am. Where am I? What is this? What is all about me? It has almost made me mad. Am I a madman? Where is my past experience, my seriousness, my gravity, where are they? What am I? "I have been converted wholesale by a foreign thing. I am a doll in the hands of a great force, which is also so affectionate to me. I can't ascertain how it is possible that by my faith I have entered this great, unknown environment, unexperienced before.

"And at last I find that I am captivated. My entire being, within and without, has been captured by a particular sweet force. I can't help being prey to such a sweet power. I can't give any proper description of this. I came to take shelter under Him and accept Him as my guardian; now at His hand I am being dealt with in such a merciless and despotic way. Still, I feel that everything is very pleasing, beyond my experience. What is this?

"I can't resist anymore. I am fully captured. Let my fate go anywhere. I can't come out. I am a captive in the hand of a sweet friend; my whole independence is gone. There is no way left to me but to surrender. I am unable to describe my real position. I find that He's an autocrat. Whatever He likes to do, He will do. Since it is not possible for me to give any resistance, I must surrender. Let me also cooperate with whatever He is pleased to do. Otherwise, what can I do? I am helpless.

"Sometimes I find that the sweetness of the name is condensed like a blossoming flower, and very wonderful streams of sweet current are flowing from it. The holy name contains so many sweet variegated forms of current within Him, and He is wonderfully expressing Himself in different ways. Sometimes He emanates a peculiar type of color and figure, and disappears.
"So many charming aspects are shown as if to my eyes within, and He forcibly takes me to surrender at the foot of that altar. He shows Himself in His full-fledged form, in Vrndavana, in His Vraja lila, with Radharani, and He takes me there. I find that I am in the midst of His peculiar, very sweet and loving paraphernalia. And He says, 'You see! I have so many wonderful things. This is your home. I am not merely imagination, but concrete reality. You will find here that the environment is very favorable and sweet. You are to live here.'

"I see there that he is dealing in different ways with His associates, in different rasas. And I find that I have another body that has emerged from my previous one, and that has a permanent place here in His service. Such a new life I find here. And then I find ultimately that all consideration of my past life and experience has vanished. And it is true: my real life is here. This is proper, and that was a sham, that life has vanished.

"Then I find that chanting the holy name gives me new encouragement, a new prospect, and new hope. Whatever we want, whatever is our internal demand, it is supplied by the name. If we take the name, all our internal hankerings will be fulfilled. It is eternal, it is the purest of the pure, and it is full of ecstasy. Now I find I have been completely converted.

"Now, my innermost hankering is this: let whatever is against this sweet name vanish eternally from the world. If anything is in opposition to this sweet life, let it vanish, and if necessary, I will give my life to make it disappear from the world forever. Then others will be able to enjoy it at their free will. No hindrance should come to that fulfillment of life. It has no other second. So, everyone may come here, and if necessary, I will sacrifice myself to finish any opposition, so that all can smoothly, peacefully, and without any danger, enjoy this absolute, sweet, and blissful life." This is the statement of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, in the final song of his book, Saranagati (Surrender).

THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Reality the Beautiful

Ramananda Raya was a married man, but he was recognized by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu as a master of his senses to the extreme degree. Once a brahmana priest named Pradyumna Misra came to Mahaprabhu and told Him, "I would like to hear about Krsna from Your lips." Maha-

prabhu said, "I do not know anything about Krsna, but Ramananda Raya knows. Go to him and hear about Krsna. Take My name, and perhaps he will talk with you."

Pradyumna Misra was hesitant, but he went and observed Ramananda Raya for some time and then returned and reported to Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu asked him, "Have you heard about Krsna from Ramananda? "No." "Why?" "I saw him engaged in something objectionable. I watched for some time, and then returned here." "What did you see?" Pradyumna Misra said, "I saw Ramananda Raya training some young dancing girls!"

Girls who are generally devoted to the service of the Jagannatha Deity from a young age are known as deva-dasis. They do not marry, and sometimes their character is not very good. Pradyumna Misra saw Ramananda Raya training deva-dasis in a very objectionable way. He was showing them how to go before the Jagannatha Deity and dance and sing. He showed them how their posture should be, how they should gesture, and how their looks should be enticing. And for such training he would sometimes even touch their private parts. So Pradyumna Misra told Mahaprabhu, "Seeing Ramananda doing all these things, I had no regard for him, so for some time I saw him busily engaged in that matter, and then I went away."

Master of the Senses

Mahaprabhu told him, "Don't underestimate Ramananda Raya. He is the master of his senses. There is not a tinge of craft in him. Even I feel trouble from sense disturbance within Me, but Ramananda has no such trouble. We have no direct experience that a stage can be attained where it is possible to be above mundane sense pleasure, but we have only heard through the scriptures that there is a stage when a man may transcend all these gross attachments.
This is mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavatam (10.33.39):

vikriditam vraja-vadhubhir idam ca visnoh
sraddhanvito 'nusrnuyad atha varnayed yah
bhaktim param bhagavati pratilabhya kamam
hrd-rogam asv apahinoty acirena dhirah

"One who hears with firm faith the supramundane amorous affairs of Lord Krsna and the gopis, as described by a pure devotee of the Lord, soon becomes freed from mundane lust and achieves divine love of Krsna."
One may be engaged bodily in such activities, while his heart is elsewhere. And there is only one who is of that type: Ramananda Raya. There are not big numbers of Ramanandas; there is only one Ramananda, who has acquired such a stage because he is well-versed in the kind of sentiment and realization which is necessary for the service of Krsna and the gopis. His heart is completely dedicated to the cause of Krsna; He has no selfish interest. He is always in Krsna consciousness, and whatever he does is for Krsna's satisfaction, so don't think ill of him. Go there again."

Mad for Krsna

Then Pradyumna Misra again went to see Ramananda Raya, and Ramananda began their conversation by saying "Oh, on that day I could not oblige you. But again you have come to hear about

Krsna. How fortunate I am!" In the morning, Ramananda Raya began to speak, and when the afternoon came, still he was madly talking about Krsna. He completely forgot about eating, bathing, or anything else. He was mad, incessantly speaking of Krsna. Then, when it was late, his servants came twice, thrice, to ask him to take bath and eat his dinner, and finally, he had to leave the talk and go. Then Pradyumna Misra returned to Mahaprabhu and said, "Yes, I have heard from Ramananda Raya, and my heart is full from hearing about Krsna from him."

Mahaprabhu Himself had heard from Ramananda Raya, and He said, "Ramananda knows what is Krsna. What I taught to Rupa and Sanatana, I heard from Ramananda." It is mentioned that Mahaprabhu took diksa, initiation, from Isvara Puri; for preaching purposes he took sannyasa, the renounced order, from Kesava Bharati; and for entrance into the transcendental pastimes of Krsna in Vrndavana, He took raga marga initiation from Ramananda Raya. Of course, Isvara Puri, Kesava Bharati, and Ramananda Raya never thought of themselves as the guru of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. But it was seen that Mahaprabhu treated Ramananda with some respect. It is mentioned in the Caitanya-caritamrta (Madhya 8.204) that if one wants to enter into the spontaneous devotion of Krsna's pastimes in Vraja, it is required that he take shelter of a confidential maidservant in conjugal mellow, madhurya rasa (sakhi vina ei lilaya anyera nahi gati).They are masters of that situation. The whole storehouse of this madhurya lila is in the hands of those maidservants. Only they can give it to others. In madhurya rasa, the guru is seen in the form and spirit of a sakhi, a maidservant of Radharani (guru rupa sakhi). Ramananda Raya was Visakha-sakhi, the right-hand personal attendant of Srimati Radharani.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gives us a hint of the necessity of approaching a confidential associate of Srimati Radharani when he says to Ramananda kiba vipra, kiba nyasi sudra kene naya, yei krsna-tattva vetta sei 'guru' haya: "Why do you shrink away from instructing Me? I am learning so much from you. You are well-versed in the affairs of Krsna, so you are guru; therefore I am hearing from you. Whoever is the master of that storehouse of krsna-lila, and whoever can distribute it - he is guru; of this, there is no doubt."

The famous talks between Ramananda Raya and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu took place on the banks of the Godavari river. The name Godavari is significant, for it indicates that place where the highest fulfillment of our spiritual senses was given. The fullest engagement of all our senses was announced there on the banks of the Godavari: "Your senses are not to be rejected. If you can give up the spirit of exploitation and renunciation, then your senses will have their fulfillment with Krsna. Those tendencies bar your approach to Krsna; to properly approach Krsna, you will have to utilize your senses to the fullest extent." That was dealt with on the banks of the Godavari.

The Ultimate Goal of Life

There, in his famous conversations with Ramananda Raya, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu began the approach to pure devotional service in a general and comprehensive way. This is recorded in the Madhya-lila of Caitanyacaritamrta (8.51-313). He asked Ramananda Raya, prabhu kahe, - "pada sloka sadhyera nirnaya": "What is the ultimate goal of life? I not only want to hear your statements, but also evidence from the scriptures."

The answer came from Ramananda Raya: raya kahe, - "sva-dharmacarane visnu-bhakti haya." "Discharge your own duty, without expecting anything in return." Sva dharma means varnasrama dharma, Vedic social stratification. "You are posted in your present position by your previous

karma. According to your present position, you have to discharge your duties on one condition: you must do them without remuneration. If you go on with your duties in varnasrama dharma, without any mundane aim, you can achieve visnu-bhakti, devotion to God. This is confirmed in the Visnu Purana (3.8.9):

varnasramacaravata
purusena parah puman
visnur aradhyate pantha
nanyat tat-tosa-karanam

"The only way to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Visnu, is to worship Him by properly executing one's prescribed duties in the social system of varna and asrama." Here, Ramananda Raya says that visnu-bhakti, adherence to the Lord who is permeating everything, is the object and ultimate destination of our life. This is the Vasudeva conception: everything is in Him, and He is everywhere. Ramananda explained that from our local interests, we must come to embrace the general interest, and that must reach the level of Visnu consciousness: visnu-bhakti. Our submission to Visnu, the internal spirit who is everywhere, is the object of life. We must connect with Him and live accordingly; not a phenomenal life, but a spiritual life pertaining to a deeper, more subtle plane.

Devotion Mixed with Desires

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "This is superficial; go deeper." Of course, it may be thought that actual theistic life begins from here, giving up the special, local purpose, and acting for a universal purpose, as already ordered and programmed in the Vedas and Upanisads. But Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "This is superficial; go deeper."

Then, Ramananda Raya said, krsne karmarpana - sarvasadhya-sara: "To offer the results of one's activities to Krsna is the essence of all perfection." In varnasrama dharma, it is the fashion that people are generally engaged in external activities and do not care to give up the fruits of their action. Even if they do, they have no direct consciousness of Visnu or Krsna. They worship the goddess Durga, perform the sraddha funeral ceremony and execute so many other religious practices. Indirectly, it is ultimately connected with Visnu. They may or may not know how, but the link is there. That is the general conception of varnasrama, but here, Ramananda says that it will be better to have direct consciousness that Krsna is the authority. All the results of whatever we do within the varnasrama social system must be given to Krsna. If we perform all our physical, social, national and spiritual activities in Krsna consciousness, then we can approach the fulfillment of our goal in life.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said "This is superficial; go deeper." Then Ramananda Raya revealed new light, (quoting the Bhagavad-gita (18.66): sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja, "Give up all your duties, and just surrender to Me." We must be particular with the object of life; not the external activities of varnasrama. Less importance should be given to the form of our activity: whether I am a king, a brahmana intellectual, or a worker does not matter. We may think, "I have this sort of duty, I have that sort of duty," but that does not matter very much. We must have no attachment for that. The king may leave his kingdom and take to a brahmanic life of renunciation and austerity. A sudra may give up his labor, become a beggar, and chant the name of Krsna. A brahmana may give up his performance of sacrifice and become a mendicant. So,

we are to be particular about the aim of life; not the form of our duty. We must exclusively devote ourselves to the cause of the Lord, ignoring our present paraphernaliaand duty.

Knowledge and Devotion

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "This is also superficial; go ahead - deeper." Then, Ramananda Raya explained jnana-misra bhakti, devotional service mixed with knowledge, by quoting from the Bhagavad-gita (18.54) where Krsna says:

brahma-bhutah prasannatma
na socati na kanksati
samah sarvesu bhutesu
mad-bhaktim labhate param

One who has come to the stage of identifying himself with spirit above matter has nothing to do with this mundane world. Any loss or gain in this mundane world is of no use to him. He is spirit; his prospect is in the world of soul, and he has nothing to do with this material world, whether it is laudable or blamable. He is already settled in the consciousness that he is soul proper and has nothing to do with matter, so within himself he feels satisfaction. He is atmarama: self-content; he neither mourns, nor aspires for anything. If something is lost, does he mourn? No. He thinks, "This is nothing; it is only matter." And when something is gained, he is not overly cheerful, because it is only matter; it is unnecessary and unimportant. Now true devotional service can begin; his soul can begin living in the spiritual plane, with a pure serving attitude, unmixed with any mundane aspiration. When one attains the spiritual platform, he gets the opportunity to practice a higher type of service.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "This is also superficial. Such a person is only on the verge of devotional service; he has no substantial touch of devotion. He has not entered the domain of bhakti; he is just waiting in the marginal position, at the door. He may attain bhakti, but he has not yet achieved it. His negative forces are finished, but still, he is just at the door; he has not yet entered. He may enter; he may not enter. From there, if he gets anything, it will be pure, but he is still at the door.

Beyond Spirit "Go Deeper''

Ramananda Raya then said, jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva: "It is a very difficult thing to cross the charm of knowledge." We think, "I want to understand everything first, and then I shall act." Calculation and an underlying suspicion is there. Before we act, we want to know everything fully; only then will we risk our capital. The ego, the "I" is very strong, and he wants to have an account of his loss and gain. He thinks, "I am the master. The key is in my hand, I want to test everything, I want to know it all. I know what is good for me." So, we think ourselves masters, not servants, and from the position of a master we make our inquiry.

But this calculating mentality must be given up if we at all want to enter into the domain of the Lord, where everything is superior to us. No one there will care to come to us with an explanation, thinking that we are their master. They will not reassure us by saying, "Yes, there will be no loss; your gain will be big." We may think, "I am an independent separate entity, so in my ac-

count there must be no loss. I must stand here with my head erect," but that won't do. We are to go there as slaves, not masters. That sort of mentality is necessary: we must bow down our heads. Not that with our heads erect we will march over everything, but everything there is superior in quality to us.

Divine Slavery

So, we have to enter into that transcendental land, where even the earth, water, air, and whatever we will find, is made of higher materials than we ourselves are made of. They are all guru, and we are disciples. They are all masters, and we are servants; we have to enter the land where everything is our master. We will have to submit; that will be our real qualification. What we will be ordered to do, we will. have to do. We are not to exercise our brain so much there. The brain has no room there; they are all brainier than we. Our brain is unnecessary there; only our hands are necessary. Menial labor is necessary there. Brain there is enough. We are to enter that land if we like. It is a land of slavery for us. So, we are to hatefully dismiss our brains, and taking only out hearts, we must approach and enter that land.

We should think, "I am as insignificant as a mosquito," just as Lord Brahma did when he went to Dwaraka to visit Lord Krsna. And it is not only for the time being; not that one will accept a humble attitude, finish his work and then come back. No. We will have to accept such an insignificant position eternally. Of course, we may expect to be educated about Krsna consciousness: how it is good, how it is great, how it is useful to us. We will be allowed pariprasna: honest inquiry. In the transcendental realm, everyone is our friend. They will come to help us, to make us understand that devotional service is beautiful, and that Krsna consciousness is the best form of life. Our aspiration and purity of purpose is to be valued; not our external position. The recruiters from that side will consider our purity of purpose, not so much our present position and capacity.

And although apparently it seems that we are going to be slaves, the result is just the opposite. If you can accept such an attitude of surrender and slavery, then He who can never be conquered will be conquered. Friends will come and help you, the sadhus will come and make you understand that we should become slaves, that Krsna likes His slaves very much. He is the master of slaves, and sometimes He wants to become the slave of His slaves (gopi-bhartuh pada-kamalayor dasa-dasanudasah). This is the key to success, and we can achieve the highest gain through this attitude.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu told Ramananda Raya, "Yes, this is true. The unconquerable is conquered by surrender. We can capture Him. I accept this as the beginning plane of divine love: by giving we can get as much as we risk. As much as we risk to give ourselves, so much we can demand from that unconquerable infinite." Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "I accept this as the beginning of suddha-bhakti, pure devotional service. But go farther."

The Science of Rasa

Ramananda Raya explained that from there pure devotional service develops in a crude form, in a general way, and when it is more mature, it must take the shape of santa, neutrality, dasya, servitorship, sakhya, friendship, vatsalya, paternal affection, and madhurya rasa, conjugal love. In santa rasa, there is adherence, nistha: one thinks, "I cannot withdraw myself from this conscious-

ness of continuous submission to the truth. Neutrality develops into dasya rasa, the desire to do some service. When a devotee is not satisfied by only sitting, showing loyalty to the Supreme Authority, he wants to be utilized by Him. He awaits the Lord's order, praying that the Lord may give him some engagement. When a devotee has such deep penetration that he wants to be utilized in any way by the Lord, that is known as dasya rasa, or devotion in the mood of service. Then there is sakhya rasa: devotional service in friendship.

God the Friend

When, in dasya rasa, confidence is added to service, then it becomes a little superior. Generally old servants who are faithful become confidential servants, so when the confidential stage is added to service, it becomes sakhya rasa, or devotional service as a friend of the Lord. First there is nistha, adherence, submission, then the devotee wants to be utilized for His satisfaction, then there is confidential utilization, and then it comes to friendly service, sakhya rasa. In Vaikuntha, where Lord Narayana is served in calculative devotion, only santa rasa, dasya rasa, and half of sakhya rasa are seen. Full confidence is not possible there. Awe, reverence, splendor, grandeur, pomp, apprehension - all these vanish when we develop a more confidential relationship with the Supreme Lord. At that time, the object of our worship or love changes in another way. Then from Vaikuntha, we feel attraction for Ayodhya, the divine abode of Lord Ramacandra, where there is neutrality, servitorship, and friendship with Vibisana and Sugriva. There, we can also trace vatsalya rasa, parental love of Godhead.

God the Son

In vatsalya rasa, confidence has developed to the peculiar stage in which the servitors think themselves promoted to the post of protecting the object of their veneration. Filial affection is also service. Although it seems that the parents are masters of the situation, controlling the Lord as their son, sometimes chastising and punishing Him, this is a superficial view. If we can enter into the depth of their service, we shall find an incomparable love of a most peculiar type. On the surface, they are engaged in punishingand rebuking the Lord; underground, they are full of interest for the welfare of the object of their service. Vatsalya, or parental love of Godhead, is a peculiar type of divine love. We see a very light type of vatsalya in Ayodhya, so it is almost ignored.

Mathura: The Krsna Conception

Rupa Goswami leaped from Vaikuntha to Mathura in one stride. In his Upadesamrta (9), he writes: Vaikunthaj janito vara madhu-puri tatrapi rasotsavad. " Mathura is superior to Vaikuntha because Lord Sri Krsna appeared there." It is there that everything is shown in a clear and substantial way. In Mathura we find the Krsna conception of Godhead. In one stride he has come from Vaikuntha to the Krsna conception, but Sanatana Goswami has filled up the gap. In his book, Brhad-bhagavatamrta, he says that on the way to Mathura there is Ayodhya, the spiritual kingdom of Lord Rama, and there we find sakhya and vatsalya rasa.

But Rupa Goswami goes to Mathura at once. He says, "Come to Mathura; here you will find sakhya and vatsalya rasa clearly visible. He has shown how sakhya rasa service is present there. The devotees there are playing with Krsna, sometimes climbing on His shoulders, and perhaps sometimes even giving Him a slap. But, although they may mix with Him in this way, their heart is full of a peculiar type of service attitude. That is the criterion: they may give up their lives a thousand times to take a thorn out of His sole. They can sacrifice themselves a thousand times for the slightest satisfaction of their friend. They consider Him a thousand times more valuable than their own life. In vatsalya rasa also, the criterion is similar: for the slightest interest of the object of their veneration they can give their lives millions of times. Such affection is found there.

And then, from vatsalya, it progresses to conjugal love (madhurya rasa), the all-comprehensive rasa which includes adherence (santa-nistha), service (dasya), friendly confidence (sakhya), and parental love (vatsalya rasa). But the wholesale dedication of every atom of our existence for Krsna's satisfaction is found in madhurya rasa, which includes all other rasas.

Conjugal Mellow

And madhurya rasa is more enhanced when it is couched in the form of parakiya, or paramour relationship. In parakiya rasa, the gopis risk everything for the service of Krsna. Parakiya rasa takes two forms: in one, there is no obligation of anything; the union may happen or may not happen. So, because their meeting is very rare, it becomes even sweeter. There is another kind of parakiya rasa: we are told that ordinary food is not palatable to Krsna, but when He takes food by stealing, that is more tasteful to Him. If we can follow this art, that may also be applied in the case of parakiya rasa. "I am deceiving the party, getting what I want. I am stealing the property of someone else." That sort of posing becomes more tasteful to the subjective party.

And the dedicated party risks everything: their good name, society, future, and even the dictation of the religious scriptures. They take a wholesale risk, just as one time, when we were in Madras, the King of Jaipur gave some money for the construction of a temple. The money was sent to our head office in Calcutta. Out of 5,000 rupees, the first installment was 1,000 rupees, and the construction work was begun by sending a worker from our main center. Then, Madhava Maharaja and I were sent to Madras, where we heard that the king would soon come. In order to show him that some work had been done we raised the construction to some extent, so the king could be told, "Your money has been spent, and now the next installment is necessary." In order to do this, we incurred a debt. We took a loan for bricks and other things and raised the construction to a higher level.

When we wrote this to our guru maharaja, we had some apprehension that he would chastise us: "Why have you taken this loan?" Instead of that, he gave us his appreciation: "You have risked your future in the service of Krsna. You have taken a loan, and that means you have to pay off that loan, so you have engaged your future energy in the service of Krsna. You will have to collect money and pay off the loan, so there is service with risk of the future." The gopis consciously risked their future: "We have disobeyed our superior persons and the directions of the Vedas; what we do is neither approved by society, nor by the religious books. Our future is dark." Still, they could not but serve Krsna.

So, vaikunthaj janito vara madhu-puri tatrapi rasotsavad. Janito means vatsalya rasa and madhurya rasa in Vrndavana: radha-kundam ihapi gokula-pateh. In the madhurya rasa also, three

groups are shown: Vrndavana in general, selected groups in Govardhana, and the highest group in Radha-kunda. All these things have been shown in the conversation between Ramananda Raya and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Radha: Queen of the Gopis

After this, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Go further." Then, Ramananda Raya began to explain the kind of service rendered by Radharani in madhurya rasa . Her devotional service is categorically higher than that of all the other gopis. Radham adhaya hrdaye tatyaja vraja sundarih (Gitagovinda 3.1 Jayadeva Goswami). The whole group of gopis can be canceled only for one: Srimati Radharani. What peculiar type of service may come from Her? And Krsna, the Original Personality of Godhead (svayam rupa) is only by the side of Radharani. By the side of other gopis, that is prabhava prakasa, a plenary expansion; not svayam rupa, the original form. Such is the quality of Srimati Radharani. We should show our highest reverence to this highest ideal of devotional service.

Radha-Krsna: Union in Separation

Then the last question came from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu: "Can you think of anything more than this?" Then, Ramananda Raya said, "You asked me to quote scripture to support whatever I say, but here I won't be able to quote scripture from anywhere. Still, I have a new feeling within me, and if You would like to know that, I can explain it to You." In this way, one song was composed by Ramananda Raya. He introduced this song by saying, "Whether or not it will be pleasing to You, I do not know, but it seems to me that there is a stage which is even better than the meeting of Radha and Govinda." There is a stage where both of Them, the positive and negative are combined, no individual consciousness is clear, and one is searching another in self-forgetfulness. This searching of one party by the other is very strong and intense. This seems to be a more highly elevated love: union in separation. Radha and Govinda are so intense in Their search of one another that even They have no consciousness of whether They have each other. Radharani sometimes experiences that even while Krsna is present before Her, She fears losing Him; that feeling becomes as intense as if She has lost Him. They are together, but the apprehension that one may lose the other makes their meeting intolerably painful, just as a mother is always alert about the safety of her son (anistasankini bandhu-hrdayani bhavanti hi). A mother thinks, "Oh, my son is out - is he in an accident?" This fear of separation is the symptom of deep love.

Sri Caitanya Avatara

Ramananda Raya's composition gave a hint about the divine appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in which both Radha and Govinda are combined, and it is as if they are unconscious of Their separate existence. One is searching the other, Krsna Himself is overflowing with the feelings of Radharani, and They are so deeply embraced that one is lost in the other. Then, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu put His palm over the mouth of Ramananda Raya, and told him, "No further." Rasa-raja maha bhava - dui eka rupa. Lord Sri Krsna is the fountainhead of all pleasure, and

Srimati Radharani is the embodiment of ecstatic love of Godhead. These two forms are united as one in Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Rasaraja: Ecstasy Himself

Mahaprabhu replied, "Oh, because you are a cent percent devotee, wherever you cast your glance you see only Krsna; nothing else. The object of your interest is represented everywhere." Ramananda Raya said, "My Lord, don't deceive me in this way. You have come here so graciously to purify this mean person, and if You act diplomatically now, it will not look well for You. I won't hear what You say; come out with Your real position.Who are You?" Mahaprabhu said, "By dint of your loving devotion, you can know everything in this world; nothing can be concealed from your loving eye." *Premanjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena*.

Then, Mahaprabhu revealed Himself: "When you see Me to be externally of a golden color, it is not so. It is by the touch of the color of Radharani. And who can Radharani touch and closely embrace? She will never touch anyone except Krsna. So, now you know who I am: Rasaraja - ecstasy Himself, and Mahabhava - the one who can taste that highest rasa. See how They mingle together!

Ramananda Raya fainted and fell flat on the floor. He could not keep his senses. Then by the touch of His hand, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu again brought him to his senses. Ramananda returned to his previous stage of consciousness and saw a sannyasi sitting before him. After a short pause, Mahaprabhu said, "Remain here, I am going."

Afterwards, Ramananda Raya and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu had some other talks, and Mahaprabhu said, "Ramananda, as long as I live I want your company." Ramananda replied, "Yes, I must take shelter of Your Divine feet and live there for the rest of my life." Ramananda later made arrangements with the King of Orissa to retire from his post as Governor of Madras and came to Jagannatha Puri. For almost two years, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu wandered about the holy places of Southern and Western India and at last returned to Puri. There they again met.

Transcendental Madness

After this, Mahaprabhu went to Vrndavana through Bengal. Six years passed, and Advaita Prabhu almost gave leave to Mahaprabhu, saying, "Our pastimes of introducing the chanting of Hare Krsna are finished." Then Mahaprabhu continuously showed Radharani's mood of tasting krsna-prema, ecstatic love of Krsna, for twelve years. Svarupa Damodara and Ramananda Raya, who are Lalita and Visakha, the two principle gopi assistants of Radharani, were Mahaprabhu's most important company during that time. There, so many things about the deep feelings of Divine love have been shown. It has never been found in the history of the world, or even expressed in any scripture how such intense love within can produce such corresponding symptoms on the surface. That was shown by Radharani and later shown by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

It was shown by Mahaprabhu in His practices also, how krsna prema, love of Krsna, can play a man like a doll. Sometimes His legs and hands would enter inconceivably into His body, and sometimes His joints would disconnect and His transcendental body would appear elongated. Sometimes His whole body would become white, and He would lay unconscious, breathing so

slowly that His breath could not be traced. In this way, He exhibited many amazing symptoms of ecstasy.

Svarupa Damodara, the personal secretary of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has explained the meaning of His appearance in his memoirs, which were recorded in the Caitanya-caritamrta of Kaviraja Goswami. He writes:

radha krsna-pranaya-vikrtir hladini saktir asmad
ekatmanav api bhuvi pura deha-bhedam gatau tau
caitanyakhyam prakatam adhuna tad-dvayam caikyam aptam
radha-bhava-dyuti-suvalitam naumi krsna-svarupam

Sometimes Radha and Krsna are combined; sometimes They are separate. They are separate in Dvapara-yuga, and in Kali-yuga they are combined as Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Both are eternal expressions of the same Absolute Truth. Summer, autumn, winter, and spring continue in a cyclic order; it cannot be said that summer is the beginning and winter comes later. So, the pastimes of Sri Radha and Krsna are eternally being enacted. In ancient times, sometimes Radha and Krsna divided Themselves and showed Their pastimes; again both of Them, the potency and the owner of the potency, are combined and closely embraced as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The predominating and the predominated moiety are mixed, and an extraordinary ecstatic feeling is there. Krsna is overpowered by His potency, and He Himself is searching after His own Self: krsnasya atmanusandhana. Krsna Himself is engaged in the search for Sri Krsna, Reality the Beautiful. The influence of Radharani over Krsna has transformed Him into a devotee, and He is searching Himself. Sweetness is tasting Itself and becoming mad. And it is living sweetness; not dead or static, but dynamic ecstasy - sweetness endowed with life. And He is tasting Himself, the personification of happiness, ecstasy, and beauty, and dancing in madness, and His performance of kirtana means distributing that ecstasy to others. The ultimate sweetness, or ananda, is such that no other thing exists that can taste itself and express its own happiness with such intensity. I have described Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in the Prema Dhama Deva Stotram:

atma-siddha-sava lila-purna-saukhya-laksanam
svanubhava-matta-nrtya-kirtanatma-vantanam
advayaika-laksya-purna-tattva-tat-paratparam
prema-dhama-devam-eva naumi gaura-sundaram

"The highest conception of the Absolute Truth must also be the highest form of ananda, ecstasy. Mahaprabhu's dancing indicates that He is full of ecstasy, and His kirtana is distribution of that rasa. So, if we scientifically search out who Mahaprabhu is, we cannot but find that He is the Ultimate Reality. He is mad in tasting His own internal nectar, and His dancing is the outcome of His transcendental ecstasy. And He is chanting, distributing that to others. So, studying quite closely the character of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, we cannot but think that He is the Supreme Absolute Truth, in its fullest, and most dynamic expression."