

The Divine Voice of Sri Gaudiya Guruvarga

on behalf of Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Vani Seva Trust



Monthly E-Magazine 24th ISSUE YEAR II Contents:

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FOREWORD

Actual *sevā* and so-called *sevā* are surely not the same

When Bhagavān appeared as Śrī Vāmanadeva, He played the *līlā* as the younger brother of Indra. We can see that externally Indra rendered service to the Lord in various ways, but inside his heart another purpose was nourished. He thought: "By serving the Lord in this manner, I shall secure my position as the king of heaven. My enjoyment will become permanent, and I shall never again be deprived of my desired objects." Such service may externally appear to be devotional, but it is still contaminated by the desire for personal gain.

This is the dirty nature of the mind in devotional life. Those who are not sincere always try to employ Bhakti Devi for the gratification of their separate self-interest. Such a person can get engaged in the various limbs of devotional service, like hearing *Hari-kathā*, chanting *Harināma* or going for *parikrama* etc., and even they may appear to be greatly enthusiastic in the service of the Lord, but if their secret motive is to seek *lābha-pūjā-pratiṣṭhā* etc. then such service can never be effective.



A sincere servant can never have any separate desire. So naturally, to serve *guru-vaiṣṇava-bhagavān* without any smell of self-interest can be appreciated in devotional life. A sincere *bhakta* never utilizes Bhakti Devi as a means for establishing himself. He never thinks that: "Through my *sevā*, I can establish myself as a great personality." Rather, he prays that, "Let me just become a humble instrument in the hands of Guru and Kṛṣṇa." Therefore, the true testing of sincerity is not the quantity of our external devotional activities, but the purity of the motive behind them. *Bhakti* is not meant to decorate the false ego; it is meant to destroy the false ego inside our heart. Until and unless our heart becomes free from selfish ambition and the desire to take undue advantage of devotional service rendered by us, till then our false ego can never go away from our heart.

In this next Issue No. 24 of the magazine named '*The Voice of Gauḍīya Guruvarga*', we have again tried our best to select some very, very special articles in regard to the topic of '*Vaiṣṇava sevā*'. You will get answers to questions like: What is actually *sevā*? To whom should *sevā* be rendered? Is any *sevā* equally important? What *sevā* pleases *Gurudev* the most? And many others.

All those selected articles can surely create a sensation inside the heart of all those devotee readers. We are actually blind in front of *aprākṛta jagat*, so without the backing of *aprākṛta vāṇī* (*śrī caitanya-vāṇī*) one can never realize who we really are and what our relationship with the Supreme Lord in the true sense is. *Aprākṛta-vāṇī* (*śabda-brahma*) is always going against the strong current of *Māyā*, so naturally almost everyone fears to face that Absolute Truth, but still if we have a strong and honest resolution to know that Absolute Truth, then surely this issue can help us to rectify our wrong prejudicial perception.

Thank you all.

Truly yours in the service of Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga and Go-Mātā,
a loyal and sincere servant of The Prabhupāda,

Bābā Śrī Shyām Dās

ANY SEVĀ DONE, FOR THAT — HOW MUCH KṚPĀ ONE CAN GET LIES IN THE HANDS OF BHAGAVĀN

By Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja



Gauḍīya Goṣṭhī Pati Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda used to say: “Regarding *sevāk sevya sambandha* (the relationship between *sevāk* and *sevya*) the most vital thing is love and affection. How much energy we have given and how much money we have given is not a big factor. The most important factor is how much satisfaction one can give in the heart of the *sevya* (*Guru-Vaishnav-Bhagavan*). That is called actual *sevā*.”

Below we like to quote the following *siddhanta vichar* from *Visuddha Chaitanya Vani* book:

Śrīla Bhakti Vijñāna Bhāratī Gosvāmī Mahārāja says that: Many people come to me and request, “Mahārāja-jī, please bestow your mercy and extend your blessings to us so that we may attain *śuddha-bhakti* (pure

devotional service) and ultimately attain *prema* for Śrī Bhagavān.” But truly speaking, mercy and blessings are not things for which one ought to ask. Moreover *śrī guru*, *Vaiṣṇavas* and *Bhagavān* will not bestow their mercy simply because we have asked for it. Although through external vision it is seen at times that *śrī guru* and the *Vaiṣṇavas* extend their blessings and best wishes to others through sweet words or by keeping their hand on one’s head, such acts are not to be understood as true blessings. True blessings and mercy appear on their own from the very heart of *śrī guru*, *Vaiṣṇavas* and *Bhagavān*, even without being requested. Although such blessings may not have been expressed externally through words or actions, the effect and the fruits of such true blessings can be directly seen either immediately or in due course of time.

The desire to bestow mercy and blessings does not appear in the heart of *śrī guru-vaiṣṇavas* and *Bhagavān* without reason; the manifestation of such things is solely dependent on whether or not one has performed *snehamāyā-sevā*, service imbued with loving affection. For this reason alone, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

*sneha-sevāpekṣā mātra śrī-kṛṣṇa-krpāra
sneha-vaśa haīyā kare svatantra ācāra*

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 10.139)

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mercy is dependent only on service performed with the utmost love and affection. Because He is obliged only by affection, He acts independently. The manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mercy does not depend on caste, familial lineage or any other material qualifications, but it definitely depends on the loving and affectionate service performed by the seeker of mercy. Even though Śrī Kṛṣṇa is supremely independent, He



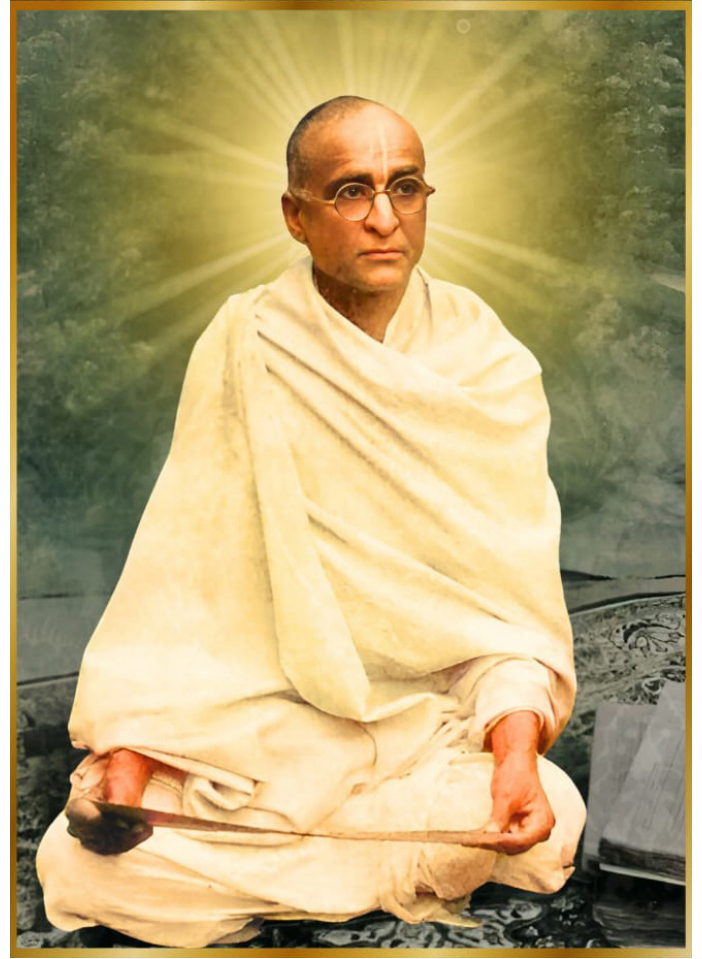
becomes controlled by His devotees’ *sneha-yukta sevā*, service imbued with love and affection. And in order to fulfill their desires, He engages Himself in performing pastimes, all the while maintaining His complete independence.”

The true meaning of loving, affectionate service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is to engage in His service according to His direct advice, moods and innermost desires. No one else can know this subject matter better than His *anukūla-śakti*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā. She is the embodiment of pure love for Kṛṣṇa, always absorbed in the mood of serving Him, and She is thus the topmost among all *sādhus*.

Affectionate service is great service

Once, many disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda gathered, and through his personal *sevāk*, Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu submitted a query to him: “Among the many devotees in the *maṭha* who having accepted the shelter of your lotus feet, sincerely and incessantly engage in rendering various kinds of services for your divine pleasure both day and night, whose service do you consider to be the topmost?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied to such a profound question with simple words: “The greatness of a person’s service to the *Vaiṣṇavas* is directly proportional to the amount of love and affection he has developed in his heart for those *Vaiṣṇavas*; the greater the affection, the greater the service.”



Bhāva-graḥi Śrīla Prabhupāda

When Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vaibhava Sāgara Gosvāmī Mahārāja, a *sannyāsī* disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, would speak *hari-kathā* during his preaching, only a few could understand him, because his expression of speech was largely incomprehensible. Although everyone in the audience would gradually leave one by one during his lectures, he would continue speaking. Seeing the hall empty, a couple of *brahmacārīs* accompanying Mahārāja would request him, “Mahārāja, you may stop your speech now; no one is present. We will begin packing up the mats and folding all the rugs in the *kīrtana*-hall.”

But Mahārāja would reply, “You are unable to understand. You are aware only of the entities present in their gross bodies who have now left. There are many living entities present here in their subtle bodies, as well as other living beings nearby — like

trees, creepers, and insects — and they are all listening. Moreover, I am speaking for my own spiritual welfare. If anyone stays and listens, they will also be benefited. Will I not be spiritually benefitted by speaking *hari-kathā* even if no one is present? Did Śrīla Prabhupāda not instruct us to perform *nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevā* — that is, to perpetually engage in the service of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* through *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* — or did he instruct us to engage in such *bhāgavata-sevā* as a demonstration only to be performed when a certain number of listeners are present?”

A few devotees eventually brought Śrīla Sāgara Gosvāmī Mahārāja’s views on these incidents to the attention of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Sāgara Gosvāmī Mahārāja was also not well adept at collecting significant donations. Once, when Śrīla Mahārāja was

returning to Kolkata, he did not even have sufficient funds to pay for his train ticket, and so he boarded the train without a ticket, along with the two *brahmacārīs* accompanying him. Upon arriving at the Kolkata railway station, the three were detained for travelling without tickets. News of this quickly reached Śrīla Prabhupāda at the Kolkata *maṭha*. Later, when Śrīla Sāgara Mahārāja reached the Kolkata *maṭha*, Śrīla Prabhupāda sent his disciples to welcome Śrīla Mahārāja with *saṅkīrtana*, and said, "Śrī Sāgara Mahārāja is truly a *jīvan-mukta mahāpuruṣa* — a great, completely liberated personality."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the pure servant of *bhāva-grahī Janārdana* — that is, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who accepts the mood and intention of one's service rather than the external paraphernalia used — would acknowledge and appreciate the mood and favorable disposition of those engaged in the service of Śrī Hari and *guru-vaiṣṇavas* with a pure, sincere heart devoid of duplicity. He was completely aloof from the consideration of such external qualifications as one's eloquence in delivering *hari-kathā* or one's ability to collect large donations for the *maṭha*.

Through this pastime, Śrīla Prabhupāda established the standard of complete impartiality and freedom from envy and duplicity. His conduct should be followed by all sincere devotees.

Any service performed with love and affection only for the satisfaction of *śrī guru-vaiṣṇava-bhagavan*, however small it is, will be approved by *guru-vaiṣṇava-bhagavan*. We should never forget that love and dedication are the most vital things in the way of *sevā* [...]

We should try to get entry into the world of *prema* (love)

Once an *ācārya* from the *śrī sam-pradāya* in South India (Udupi) went to a foreign country for preaching without taking permission from their society. But when he came back with a huge amount of honor and money to give to the temple, those committee members (devotees) did not approve his way of acting, because they were bound to follow some principles. They told him to leave the temple, and even they wanted to drive him out of Udupi. The *ācārya* was astounded; he thought I collected so much money for my society, why they act like this. So what is the inner meaning? These are very subtle things, and only by the mercy of pure *guru-vaiṣṇavas* we can understand something. To speak some dry philosophy and collect some money is not preaching *sevā*. The main question is this — whether it is approved by Balarāma-Nityānanda or not.

For example, when Duryodhana wanted to invite Śrī Kṛṣṇa for lunch, He did not accept anything, on the contrary, He went to the house of Vidura Ji to accept something as a very hungry guest, and there Vidurani, his wife, out of her deep love and affection, offered Him banana peels instead of bananas, because she was lost in the thoughts of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted it happily. Also, we know how Śrī Kṛṣṇa snatched a handful of flat rice from Sudāmā *vipra*. And on another occasion, we can see how Śrīman Mahāprabhu put his hand in the *bhikṣā*-bag of Suklambār Brahmachari and started eating crude rice one handful after another. Suklambare became shocked and started saying to Prabhu: "Why are you taking this? It is not clean." But Mahāprabhu said: "Life after life I am taking *sevā* from you", whereas we can offer super fine quality of rice to

Bhagavan, but there is no surety that Bhagavan will accept it. So please never mind, it is my request unto the lotus feet of you all, that please try to enter the world of *prema*. In this regard, I want to remind you all of another famous pastime from the Ramāyāna.

When Lord Rama and his army of monkeys were preparing for war with Rāvaṇa, Lord Ramachandra asked them to build one bridge over the sea. So, all the monkeys pulled out rocks and heavy stones from the mountains and carried them to the sea. They cut them into shape and began to build the bridge. All this was very difficult work, and it took a long time. Thousands of monkeys worked night and day. Rama felt happy. "How hard they work! Their love for me makes them work like this," thought Rama.

One day, Rama saw a small brown squirrel. He was going to the seashore, making his body wet and then roll in the sand so that it stuck to his body, and then the little squirrel carried the sand up to the place where the bridge was built and put it there.

It happened so that a great monkey was carrying a large heavy stone on his back and the squirrel came in his way. The monkey jumped back. "Here, you little thing," shouted the monkey in a voice like thunder: "you're in my way, I stepped back and you're alive now. But I nearly fell. And what are you doing here?"

The little squirrel looked up at the great monkey and said: "I'm sorry you nearly fell, Brother Monkey," he said in his small



voice, "but please always look where you are going. I'm helping Rama build the bridge. And I want to work hard for him."

"You, what?" shouted the monkey and laughed aloud. "Did you hear that!" he said to the other monkeys. "The squirrel is building a bridge with his pebbles. Oh dear! Oh dear! I've never heard a funnier story." The other monkeys laughed too.

The squirrel did not think this funny at all. He said: "Look, I can't carry mountains or rocks. God gave me only a little strength. I can only carry pebbles. My heart cries out for Rama and I'll do all I can for him."

The monkeys said: "Don't be foolish. Do you think you can help Rama? Do you think we can build a bridge with pebbles? He has a big army to help him. Go home and don't get in our way."

"But I want to help, too," said the squirrel, refusing to leave. He carried the pebbles again from the shore to the sea. The monkeys were angry and one of them

picked up the squirrel by his tail and threw him far away. The squirrel, crying out the name of Rama, fell into His hands. Then Rama held the squirrel close to Him. He said to the monkeys: "Do not make fun of the weak and the small. Your strength or what you do is not important. What matters is your love. This little squirrel has love in his heart. O Vanaras, you are brave and strong, and are doing a wonderful job bringing all these huge boulders and stones from far and dropping them in the ocean. But did you notice that it is the tiny pebbles and stones brought by this small squirrel and some of the other smaller creatures which are filling the small gaps left between the huge stones? Further, do you not realize that the tiny grains of sand brought by this squirrel are the ones which bind the whole structure and make it strong? Yet you scold this small creature and fling him away in anger!"

Hearing this, the Vanaras were ashamed, and bowed down their heads. Rama continued: "Always remember, however small, every task is equally important. A project can never be completed by the main people alone. They need the support of all, and however small, an effort should always be appreciated!" Rama then turned to the squirrel and said softly: "My dear squirrel, I am sorry for the hurt caused to you by my army and thank you for the help you have rendered to Me. Please go and continue your work happily." Saying this, He gently stroked the back of the squirrel with His fingers, and three lines appeared where the Lord's fingers had touched it.

Gaura Hari Hari Bol





All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

THE SUBTLETIES OF TRUE SEVĀ

By Śrīla Bhakti Vijñāna Bhāratī Gosvāmī Mahārāja

What is to be understood before serving?

*yaḥ śāstra-vidhim utsrjya
varttate kāma-cārataḥ
na sa siddhim avāpnoti
na sukhaṁ na parāṁ gatim
(Śrīmad Bhagavad-gīta 16.23)*

“He who discards the injunctions of the scriptures and acts according to his whimsical desires attains neither perfection, happiness, nor the supreme destination.”

A person who renders service in a completely independent mood without accepting any guidance does not render true service to the *Vaiṣṇavas* or *Bhagavān*; rather, he endeavors only to gratify his own senses. Such a person is known as *svecchācāri*, or a person who acts only according to his own desires.

Before beginning any service, one must understand the moods and desires of the *sevyā* (object of service). It is only after gaining such an understanding that one’s service can truly please the *sevyā* and even be called *sevā*. Otherwise, one’s service is sim-

ply *svecchācāritā* (an act of independence). It is often seen that a person repeatedly insists that a *Vaiṣṇava* accepts his service. Although this person's service may not be pleasing to the *Vaiṣṇava*, the *Vaiṣṇava* allows him to continue performing it so that the person can fulfill his desire and the *Vaiṣṇava* can avoid any further disturbance. The person may gain some feeling of acceptance and the chance to perform his desired activity, but this activity can never be considered true service.

Independent activities lead to great disturbances

*śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-
pañcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir
utpātāyaiva kalpate*

(*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.101)

"A person creates only disturbances by disregarding the regulations given in the *Śruti*, *Smṛti*, *Purāṇas* and *Nārada-pañcarātra*, even if his service is one-pointed to *Śrī Hari*."

Ekāntika-bhakti (single-pointed devotion) by definition means to render service in a manner pleasing to one's most worshipful object of service. Therefore, only activities pleasing to the *sevyā* can be designated as service.

One activity, two categories: labor and *sevā*

Bhagavān Ācārya and Mādhavī-devī are the eternal associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Once, on the instructions of Bhagavān Ācārya, Choṭa Haridāsa carried a bag of rice on his head from Purī to the house of Mādhavī-devī at Ālālanātha, and



in exchange brought rice from her house back to the home of Bhagavān Ācārya, who later cooked that rice and offered it to Śrīman Mahāprabhu. As soon as Śrīman Mahāprabhu took the rice, he inquired about its source. When Bhagavān Ācārya told Him Choṭa Haridāsa had brought it from the house of Mādhavī-devī, He praised the rice and externally appeared untroubled, but internally was highly displeased. Upon returning to His residence, He immediately instructed His personal servant, Govinda Prabhu, to bar Choṭa Haridāsa from visiting Him. That is why Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita has mentioned in *Prema-vivarta* (8.7), "*gopanete atyācāra gorā dhare curi* — even if you misbehave in secret, Gaura will catch you." A person may be able to hide his immoral behavior from the whole world, but Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu will surely catch him, because He is omniscient.

At first glance, Choṭa Haridāsa's carrying rice on his head all the way from Purī to Ālānātha and back appears to be an act of service. But because this activity was unpleasing to Śrīman Mahāprabhu, it was not even considered *karma*; rather, it was merely physical labor. Had Mahāprabhu been pleased with this activity, it would have been considered *bhakti*.

Displeasing the object of service is the result of mixing service with prohibited activities

What then was Choṭa Haridāsa's mistake? Without mentioning any details, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu made it very clear that Choṭa Haridāsa had done something against the prescribed rules and regulations of his *āśrama*:

*prabhu kahe — vairāgī kare prakṛti sambhāṣaṇa
dekhite nā pārō āmi tāhāra vadana*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said,
"I cannot see the face of a renunciate who [with lust] speaks to women."

*durvāra indriya kare viṣaya-grahaṇa
dāru prakṛti hare munerapi mana*
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 2.117-118)

"It is so difficult to check the senses from grasping objects of enjoyment, that a wooden statue of a woman steals the mind of even a saintly person."

*kṣudra-jīva saba markāṭa-vairāgya kariyā
indriya carāiḥ bule 'prakṛti' sambhāṣiyā*
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 2.120)

"There are many persons with little in their possession who accept the renounced order of life like monkeys. They go here and there engaging in sense gratification and speaking

intimately with women."

*prabhu kahe, — "mora vaśa nahe mora mana
prakṛti-sambhāṣī vairāgī nā kare darśana*
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 2.124)

He further said "My mind is not under My control. It does not like to see anyone in the renounced order who talks intimately with women."

*'haridāsa kã hã?' jadi śrīvāsa puchilā
'sva-karma-phala-bhuk pumān' — prabhu uttara dilā*

When Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita inquired from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, "Where is Choṭa Haridāsa?" The Lord replied, "A person is sure to achieve the results of his *karma*."

*tabe śrīvāsa tāra vṛttānta kahila
jaiche saṅkalpa, jaiche trivenī praveṣila*

"Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita then related the details of Haridāsa's decision and his entering the waters at the confluence of the Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī."

*śuni' prabhu hāsi' kahe suprasanna citta
'prakṛti darśana kôile ei prāyaścitta'*
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 2.163-165)

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu heard these details, He smiled in a pleased mood and said, "If with sensual intentions one looks at women, this is the only process of atonement."

Although the details have not been mentioned by any of our previous *ācāryas*, Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura — who is an *ācārya* in the true line of Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and who is an eternal associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, and thereby omniscient like Him — explained in detail why Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu externally rejected Choṭa Haridāsa. Śrīla Prabhupāda showed

in his *Sat-śikṣā Pradarśanī* (spiritual education exhibition) that Mādhavī-devī, an elderly devotee advanced in devotional service and one among the three-and-a-half associates of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, had a young maidservant in her home. It was this maidservant with whom Choṭa Haridāsa had glanced upon with lusty eyes, through which he 'spoke' intimately.

Restrictions in accepting service

Through this pastime, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has clearly demonstrated how the mere touch of a sense enjoyer affects the *sādhaka*. If even uncooked grains carry the sentiment and consciousness of those who touch them, then what can be said of offerings cooked by a non-devotee or by persons with material desires? It is for this reason that our *ācāryas* have advised us to remain very careful about what we accept from others. In Hindi it is said, "*jaisā khāyoge anna, vaisā banega mana* — one develops the consciousness present in the grains he eats." Elsewhere, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also mentioned:

*viṣayīra anna khāile malina haya mana
malina mana haile nahe kṛṣṇera smaraṇa*
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 6.278)

"If eaten, the grains of a materialist contaminate the mind. A contaminated mind cannot remember Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīman Mahāprabhu was so sensitive to these subtle points that He could immediately recognize the mood present in the rice offering. Although an ordinary person may not be so advanced that he can identify the subtle consciousness present in an offering made by a materialistic person, the effect does in fact exist, and one must



certainly bear the reactions. Therefore, if we truly wish to remain sincere in our efforts in *bhakti*, we should simply follow the teachings of our *guru-varga* while recognizing our inability to properly understand the consciousness of those offering us food.

A lesson about the proper consciousness for service

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has mentioned that Choṭa Haridāsa is not to be considered a person with lusty desires. In fact, he is an eternal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and through him, Śrīman Mahāprabhu imparted several useful teachings to us, as mentioned in the pastime above.

*mahāprabhu — kṛpā-sindhu, ke pāre bujhīte?
priya bhakte daṇḍa kareṇa dharma bujhāite*
(Śrī Caitanya-catirāmṛta, Antya-līlā 2.143)

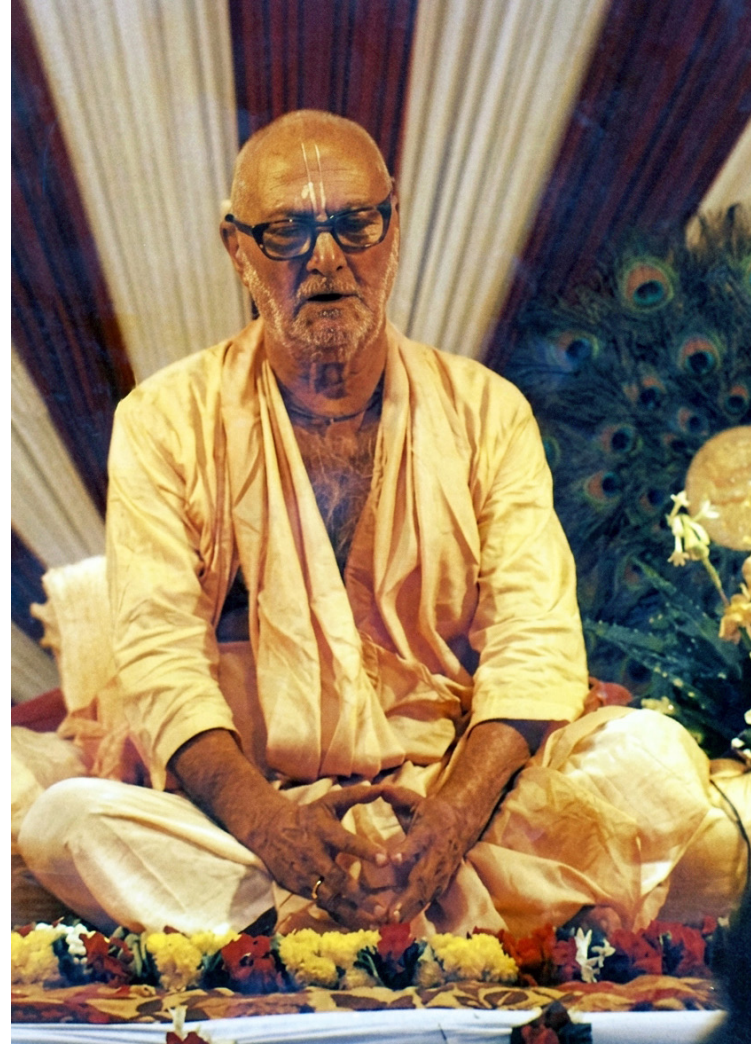
"Śrīman Mahāprabhu is an ocean of mercy. Who can understand Him? In chastising His dear devotees, He establishes *dharma*."

3

All glories to
Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

BHAKTI (SEVĀ) UNDER THE HIGHER AGENT ONLY

By Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka
Śrīdhara Deva Gosvāmī
Mahārāja



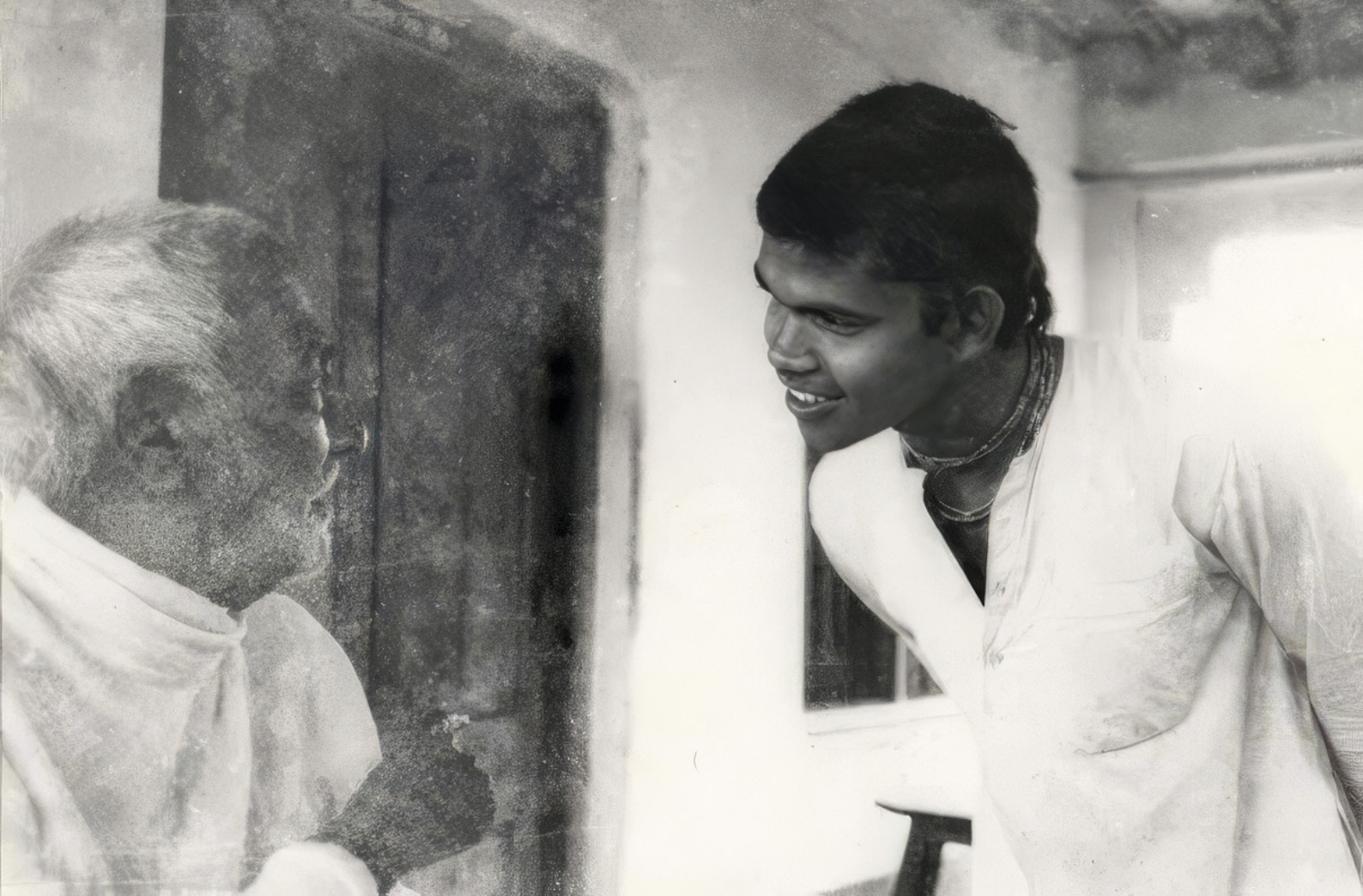
When I joined the mission, I wanted to read the books of the mission, including *Bhāgavatam*, but I did not find any encouragement from the authority. The real thing, the real requirement is to use our energy for the service of the Lord. By that process only may we go up, not by satisfying our intellectual necessities. *Jñāna-śūnya-bhakti*, an illiterate man may achieve a higher position in the realm of devotion than a literate man.

By the command of the Lord's agent, we may engage in literary culture, even as Mahāprabhu instructed Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. Of course, they had acquired their knowledge to utilize it in the service of the *sampradāya*, the *Gauḍīya* disciplic succession.

He also asked Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa to hear the *Bhāgavatam* from one who knew its real purport.

Jīva Gosvāmī was the only exception. Mahāprabhu asked him to study independently before he joined the Vṛndāvana party. He left his home and went to Benares, the center of all sorts of learning at that time. He studied different *śāstras* and then joined the others in Vṛndāvana. There, under the direction of Rūpa and Sanātana, he utilized his previously acquired knowledge in the service of the *sampradāya*.

When we get inspiration from above to study, that study is devotion. Otherwise a whim to study, to acquire scholarship, may not be *bhakti* proper, *śuddha-bhakti*.



The higher agent, the *Vaiṣṇava*, must utilize my energy. This energy must be spent to satisfy the higher world. Then it will be *bhakti*, it will be devotion. My mental imagination may bring *sukṛti*, but it won't be *śuddha-bhakti* if I have a mind to help the *sampradāya* in a scholarly way. At my own risk I must go on with my study. It is accepted that when one is connected with the higher agent, then it will be considered devotion; otherwise it is not. It is an empirical attempt with some sort of good imagination. But this is not pure *bhakti*, pure devotion. Pure devotion is to carry out the orders descending from above, from the higher agent. The waves are coming; catch them and then act accordingly.

Our Godbrother Niśikānta Sānyāl said that when we are requested by a *Vaiṣṇava* to write or read any book, then that constitutes devotion. But when of our own

accord we read any devotional book, that won't give us devotion. That will be *karma* or *jñāna*. To surrender unconditionally to the instruction coming down to us, that is *bhakti*. All else is imitation. We find this warning everywhere. This we should understand.

Even reading the scriptures is not devotion unless done on the order of the *Vaiṣṇava*. Independent reading is only knowledge-seeking. By following the *Vaiṣṇava*, our bond with the Lord is guaranteed. *Sādhū-saṅge Kṛṣṇa-nāma*: in the company of the devotees, chanting the Name or whatever service we render is guaranteed to reach Him. And what is the guarantee of that? The reply will be, "His agent is saying so, and I am therefore engaged. I am not my master; I am his servant." Such consciousness must be genuine, as far as possible. Success depends on this principle.

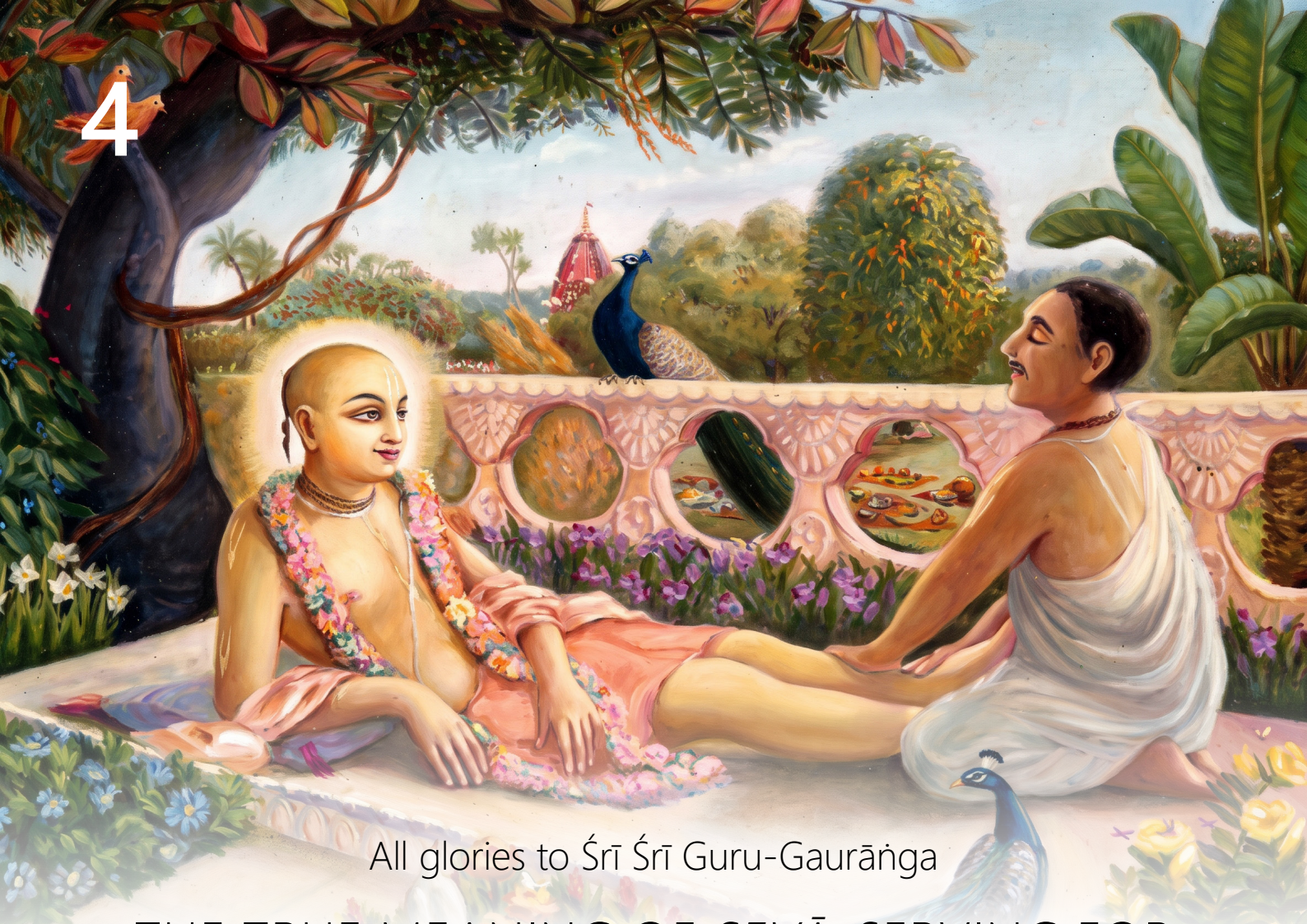
If we are appointed to preach, to do relief work here, we will execute that duty solely under the appointment of, and in the interest of, that higher plane, without any vanity. We should think, "I must put myself wholly at the disposal of the higher plane, and I shall not be eager to become an *ācārya*, a spiritual master. Otherwise, there is the danger of committing *nāma-aparādha*, offense against the Lord's Name."

Aśraddadhāne vimukhe 'py aśṛṇvati, yaś copadeśaḥ śiva-nāmāparādhaḥ. It is an offense to give the Holy Name to the faithless. It betrays the motivation to gain a position in the higher sphere. This is a type of mundane attachment, a spiritual commerce, as is the habit of caste *gosvāmīs* and other spurious lines. Rather, the healthy attitude should be, "If I am appointed from above, then I shall serve as appointed, and that too, only for the interest of those who have appointed me. I am entering that rank solely for the interest of that higher land." That is the pure and perfect approach.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī, the renowned commentator of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, has stated, *sa cārpitā eva satī yadi kriyeta, na tu kṛtā satī paścād arpyeta*: "Devotional service must be first offered to the Lord, then performed; not performed and offered afterwards." We should already be committed when we come to serve. We should not collect capital and later try to utilize it in the service of the Lord. The commitment is to Him, to Kṛṣṇa.

We have come to know about Him for Him, not for our sake or for anyone else. We preach only because of the instruction from above. Only if we receive an instruction from that higher quarter, "Go and preach," shall we do so. Only then will our preaching be service, and never if it is done for name and fame. We must have engagement from the higher office, and only on their behalf shall we preach; then it will be genuine preaching. Otherwise, it will be trading. *Na sa bhr̥tyaḥ sa vai vaṇik*: Prahlaḍa Mahārāja has warned us against this trading mentality in the name of spiritual truth.

Devotion is a separate and distinct plane where we live only for the center. We aspire to live and move only as agents of the center, never disconnected from the center. This is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Reality is for Itself, and we must strictly abide by this rule. He is for Himself, everything is for Him, we are for Him. Whatever we do must also be for Him. We must strictly adhere to this conception, and always examine whether what we are doing is for Him or for any other part, however important we may think it to be.



All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

THE TRUE MEANING OF SEVĀ: SERVING FOR THE SATISFACTION OF GURU AND BHAGAVĀN

The Best Service is What Pleases the Master

(Taken from chapter 8 of *The Life of Rāmānujācārya*, by Naimiṣāraṇya Dāsa. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. Vṛndāvana. 2005)

Once a *Brāhmaṇa* came to Śrīla Rāmānujācārya and said: "I wish to purify myself by serving you, for you are the best of devotees. By such service I shall be freed from the influence of material nature." Yatirāja [Rāmānuja, the best of *sannyāsīs*] accepted the request, saying, "What you have said is correct, for one can be liberated only by service. If you wish to serve me, then you must

stay here and do whatever I ask of you." The *Brāhmaṇa* was very pleased by this reply and said eagerly: "O master, tell me what is your desire. I will do anything you ask of me." Seeing the man's sincerity, Rāmānuja then told him: "O *Brāhmaṇa*, I have resolved to purify myself by taking daily the water which has washed the feet of a pure-hearted *Brāhmaṇa*. Now, by the grace of the Lord, you have come here. My order is that you stay here, and every day give me the water that has washed your feet. Only if you do this will you be able to render real service to me." Although a very humble person by nature, the *Brāhmaṇa* could not refuse this direct order. From that time on, every day when Yatirāja returned

from taking his noon bath in the Kāverī, he would take upon his head some of the water that had washed the *Brāhmaṇa*'s feet. One day, Rāmānuja was invited to take *prasāda* at the home of one of his householder disciples, and he went there directly after bathing in the river. After they had eaten, all the devotees began to discuss the glories of Lord Nārāyaṇa, putting various questions to Rāmānujācārya and listening intently to the explanations he gave. So sweet were these discussions that the devotees became unaware of the passage of time. Thus, by the time Yatirāja rose to leave the house, it was very late at night. When they arrived back at the *āśrama*, they found that the only person still awake was the pious *Brāhmaṇa*. "Why have you waited up so long for me?" asked Yatirāja. "Have you eaten yet?" "How could I think of eating," replied the *Brāhmaṇa*, smiling, "when I have not yet rendered my service to you?" At this, Yatirāja smiled broadly and embraced the man, saying, "You are a wonderful devotee, the perfect servant of the Lord. By being absorbed only in thoughts of service, you have attained perfection." Then he drank the water that had washed the *Brāhmaṇa*'s feet and offered it to all his other disciples.

Sevā means to seek the satisfaction of Gurudeva

By Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja

Once, a *grhastha bhakta* was receiving my Gurudeva in the month of December and it was very cold that time. That disciple instinctively arranged some nice hot water to wash Gurudeva's lotus feet which were feeling cold due to the weather. After that, they put Gurudeva in a chair and gave him a garland and so on. One foolish person was watching all of this. The misguided

observer saw how the *grhastha* made the hot water and all of the other arrangements. Then, after a long time, Gurudeva also went to that person's house. That so-called devotee received Gurudeva, but this time it was during the hot season. He nonetheless still planned to put hot water on Gurudeva's lotus feet just as he had previously seen done. Gurudeva shouted: "What are you doing!? Are you foolish!?" The host responded, "I thought this was the rule, so I just followed." He thought he was doing *sevā* but this is not *sevā*. *Sevā* means to seek the satisfaction of Guru and *Vaiṣṇava*. It is not according to your whimsical attitude. Please, wherever you go, you must speak about this *siddhānta* so that other people can also learn this kind of truth and nourish it in their hearts.

Encouraging others to serve according to their nature

(Taken from the book 'My Beloved Masters' by Śrīla Bhakti Vijñāna Bhāratī Gosvāmī Mahārāja)

At one point, Śrīla Bhakti Prakāśa Araṇya Gosvāmī Mahārāja exhibited the pastime of having an ocular disease that affected his vision and made it difficult for him to recognize people. Guru Mahārāja arranged for his treatment in a hospital in Kolkata and sent me to see to Śrīla Mahārāja's needs. A specialist at the hospital told me, "Before operating on his eyes, we must first control his diabetes. In order to do this, we need to manage his diet, and so his food must come from the hospital." I told the specialist: "Śrīla Mahārāja will not eat hospital food. We can prepare and provide him with whatever foods you advise." The doctor accepted my proposal, and I began bringing Śrīla Araṇya Gosvāmī Mahārāja food prepared in the *maṭha*

especially for him. The day of Śrī Annakūṭa Mahotsava eventually came, and a grand festival was held at our *maṭha* in Kolkata. Śrī Amiyā Rāya, a female disciple of Śrīla Araṇya Gosvāmī Mahārāja, was in attendance at the festival. She honored *prasāda* in the *maṭha* and packed some to take to her family members at home. On her way home, she stopped by the hospital to see her *gurudeva*. By providence, Śrīla Araṇya Gosvāmī Mahārāja was accepting *prasāda* at that time. Seeing her *gurudeva* taking simple *prasāda*, she became upset and said: "Today is Annakūṭa. What kind of *prasāda* are they serving you?" Before Śrīla Araṇya Gosvāmī Mahārāja could answer her, Śrī Amiyā Rāya filled his plate with the *annakūṭaprasāda* meant for her family. At her insistence, Śrīla Mahārāja honored some of the *prasāda*. His blood sugar increased, and the date of his operation was postponed as a result. The specialist told me: "The food you are giving Mahārāja is more regulated than what he would have received from the hospital. But please explain to him that he is not to accept food from anyone's hands but yours." When I conveyed the specialist's order to Śrīla Araṇya Gosvāmī Mahārāja, he told me: "Look, there are two ways of serving: according to one's own desires as permitted within the scope of scriptural injunctions, and with the consideration of what is most beneficial for the object of our service. Amiyā Rāya understands only the former; she serves according to what she feels is best for herself. She is not yet advanced enough to practice the latter, in which she would serve according to what is best for her object of service. Anyway, I will do as you and the specialist say." Once Śrīla Mahārāja's sugar levels returned to normal, the doctor performed the operation, and Śrīla Mahārāja regained his normal eyesight after only a few days.

How to understand who is the actual *guru-sevaka*?

By Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja

Gauḍīya Goṣṭhī Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda said that:

"He who can completely harmonize his own heart with *Guru-pādapadma* is a *snigdha-śiṣya* in the truest sense." If we can find all same *ācāraṇa* (etiquette) and *siddhānta-vicāra* of *Sad Gurudeva* in the life of a disciple, then surely, we can identify that he is a *snigdha-śiṣya* of *Sad Gurudeva*.

*Vettha tvaṁ saumya tat sarvaṁ
Tattvatas tad-anugrahāt
brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya
guravo guhyam apy uta
(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.1.8)*

"And because you are submissive, your spiritual masters have endowed you with all the favors bestowed upon a gentle disciple. Therefore you can tell us all that you have scientifically learned from them."

All our behavior and activities, I mean *ācāraṇa*, should be approved by our *paramahamṣa-gauḍīya-guru-varga*, like Śrī Svarūpa Gosāi, Śrīla Sanātana Gosāi, Śrīla Rūpa Gosāi, Śrīla Raghunātha Gosāi, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda, etc. In that case, we need not take undue advantage of utilizing the *vaiṣṇavīpratiṣṭhā* of our *Sad Gurudeva* to identify ourselves in front of the public to get false *pratiṣṭhā*. Rather, people should become inquisitive about who his *Gurudeva* is by watching the perfect *ācāraṇa* and *siddhānta-vicāra* of a *snigdha-śiṣya*.

The evergreen example of the complete dedication of Śrī Kureśa unto the lotus feet



Kureśa by the mercy of Śrī Nṛsiṃhadeva from that *āśrama*. But really, this is the matter of high regret that the *bhāṣya* was taken away forcefully by some hooligans deputed by those *Māyāvādīs* from *Śāradā Maṭha* from Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya. So Śrīla Rāmānuja Ācārya was feeling disappointed, but Kureśa, the great *guru-sevaka*, was successful to memorize the whole *Bodhayana-bhāṣya* within that time, waiting to rewrite the whole book as it is for *guru-sevā*, because Śrīla Rāmānuja Ācārya wanted to write one *bhāṣya* on *Vedānta-sūtra* on the basis of that *Bodhayana-bhāṣya*. The ideal *guru-sevā* of Kureśa is a rare example for us all.

We are always in confusion to detect a genuine *guru-sevaka* or *sādhū*. Logical interpretation cannot stand in the way of that Absolute Truth, but we always forget this vital point. As per external calculation, we cannot see that Śrīla Prabhupāda was busy to serve his *Gurudeva* (Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja), but still his *Gurudeva* was highly satisfied with him for his *guru-gaura-vāñī-sevā*, whereas external exhibition of *guru-sevā* by somebody to gather *lābha-pūjā-pratiṣṭhā* can come to a flop end, though he may enjoy material popularity all over the world.

Gaura Hari Hari Bol

Anarchism in the field of *sevā*

(By Gauḍīya Goṣṭhī-pati Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda Paramahansa Jagad Guru from the book compiled by him named – ‘*The specialty of Śrī Caitanya Deva*’)

Pure stainless neutral *sevā-vṛtti* (the natural function of *ātmā*) is *Bhagavad-sevā*; here in this case no question of expression of restlessness. *Bhoga* either in the form

of Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya, the great *guru*, should be discussed for our absolute benefit. He took life risk to go in front of Vidvad Jana Kolāhala, the notorious demon king of *Madhurī*, in the guise of Śrī Rāmānuja Ācārya to save *Gurudeva* from danger, because he was always ready to sacrifice his own life for *Gurudeva*. That kind of idealism is really very, very rare. The stolen *Bodhayana-bhāṣya* on *Vedānta-sūtra* was kept secretly at *Śāradā Maṭha* in the Himalayan hill in the way of *Badrinātha* by those *Śaṅkara Māyāvādīs*. Anyhow, this was rescued by Śrīla Rāmānuja Ācārya and

of *dharma-artha-kāma* or detachment developing out of avoiding *dharma-artha-kāma* — both cannot help in the way of attainment of eternal *vṛtti* of *ātmā* (the natural function of *ātmā*) which is called *bhakti*.

Again, though if sometimes the partial exposal (or expression) of *nitya-svabhāva* (the original nature of *jīva* — I mean the interest in *Bhagavat-bhajana*) can be seen — still *baddha-jīva* can also reserve the right of getting deviated from the track of *Bhagavat-bhajana*. *Niṣiddha-ācāra* (prohibited *ācāra*), *kapaṭya-nāṭya* (dancing of falsity or complicity or duplicity), *parādhrah* (violence to others or *jīva-himsā*), *pratiṣṭhā-āśā*, desire to achieve respect or honor from others or the desire to collect those matters relating to material enjoyment (sense gratification) — throwing away the *ātmā-sevā-vṛtti* into water. By the development of such nonsense, it is quite natural to get detached from *Bhagavat-prīti*, then, the situation cannot allow one to become a real *bhakta*. From then on, material ego (false ego) develops to engage me in my doership. Śrī Gaura-sundara Himself wanted to teach all about *śuddha-bhakti* in this world to restore the original (real) *caitanya* (absolute consciousness) of those *baddha-jīvas* by preaching Himself (or by showing *ācaraṇa* Himself). Śrī Caitanya Deva has given advice to the human being to develop egolessness (to develop *ātmā-sevā-vṛtti* unto the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Bhagavān).

Affectionate service is great service

By Śrīla Bhakti Vijñāna Bhārati
Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Once, many disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda gathered together and, through his personal assistant, Śrī Paramānanda Prabhu, submitted a query to him: "Among the many devotees in the *maṭha* who, having accepted the shelter of your lotus feet, sincerely and incessantly engage in rendering various kinds of services for your divine pleasure both day and night, whose service do you consider to be the top-most?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied to such a profound question with simple words: "The greatness of a person's service to the *Vaiṣṇavas* is directly proportional to the amount of love and affection he has developed in his heart for those *Vaiṣṇavas*; the greater the affection, the greater the service."



All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga

ŚRĪ GURU-TATTVA AND SEVĀ

By Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

Excerpts from a lecture delivered in the Sarasvata Assembly Hall, Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Māyāpura Saturday, 9.00 pm, on the 28th day of the month of Māgha (January) 1931

*om ajñāna-timirandhasya jñānanjana-salakaya
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namah*

A Golden Opportunity to Serve Collectively

Today I have an opportunity to worship my Śrī Gurudeva. Last year, also, I had the good fortune of worshipping him, and today that auspicious occasion has come again. By the mercy of *Bhagavān*, I had the fortune of being able to serve Śrīla Gurudeva for another year. If Śrīla Gurudeva had wanted to deprive me of service to him, I would not have survived this past year. Since I have been granted this one year, I must again, today,

contemplate whether I have properly taken advantage of that opportunity and served him accordingly.

Śrīla Gurudeva said that we shall collectively engage in the service of *Bhagavān*. He used the word “we” which means he was not referring to one person alone. Many persons egotistically profess, “I am *Bhagavān*’s exclusive servant” or “I have been selected to perform a particular service to Him because no one else is qualified to do it.” But Śrīla Gurudeva’s words issue from a heart melted with loving compassion: “Come! Let us forget our tendency to block each other’s spiritual progress; this is violence. Service to *Bhagavān* is superior to all else.”

By saying "superior to all else" he is not implying, "No one can do this service but me; I will not allow anyone else to do it." My *Śrīla Gurupādapadma's* nature contains no such violence.

Humbly Praying for Help

"*Bahubhirmilitva yat kirtanam tadaiva saṅkīrtanam* – *saṅkīrtana* means congregational chanting."

Glorification and prayers are included in *saṅkīrtana*. From an external perspective, one who offers *stuti* (Vedic prayers) holds a lower position than the object of the prayers. A third party however, can best understand the glories of a person by hearing his prayers.

Sri Gaurasundara explained that to genuinely call out for *Bhagavān*, one has to be more humble than a blade of grass (*trṇād api sunīcena*). We cannot cry out for someone until we have accepted our own insignificance in relation to that person. We beg for assistance when we are forced to acknowledge our helplessness. Whenever we find ourselves incapable of completing a task on our own, we are left with no choice but to seek another's help. Alone I cannot complete a task that requires five people to accomplish.

Sri Gaurasundara has instructed us to genuinely cry out for *Bhagavān*, which means He has urged us to solicit Sri *Bhagavān* for help. This we have heard from *Śrīla Gurudeva*. However if I cry out to Him with the intention of involving Him in service to me, or if I petition Him for the purpose of accomplishing any task, my cries lack the real humility of *trṇād api sunīcena*. Real humility is never found in an external show of humility, which is actually mere duplicity. Calling out to *Bhagavān* in the mood of being His master, expecting

Him to obey like a servant, is ineffective. He does not hear such a call because He is supremely independent and fully conscious. Consequently, He is not controlled by anyone. Until a person's egoism establishes roots in sincere, non-duplicious humility, his prayers will not reach *Bhagavān*, who is fully independent.

A person who is more humble than a blade of grass may cry out to *Bhagavān*, but unless he is endowed with the qualities of patience and tolerance, his calling out will still not bear fruit. If we show impatience by hankering after our own interests, our behaviour is in direct opposition to the mood of *trṇād api sunīcena*. If we are fully confident that *Bhagavān* is the Complete Being, and that our calling out to Him will never result in scarcity, we will not experience any dearth of patience. But if I become greedy, intolerant and restless, and if I remain adamant that I will accomplish my task on the strength of my own ability and competence, I will not be able to call out to *Bhagavān* in the true sense.



If we are excessively vain, we cannot properly call out to Him. And also if we try to annihilate our real self-interest, then we will not be able to cry out to *Bhagavān* properly. Often, I think that I am obliging Him by my prayers, and therefore I engage in other activities in which I don't need to ask for His help. This mentality also indicates the absence of tolerance.

We therefore require a guardian to save us from such tendencies until we become qualified to sincerely pray in the mood of *trṇād api sunīcena*. His shelter and support are necessary to shield us from such unfavourable inclinations. Śrīla Narottama dasa Thakura says: "*asraya laiya bhaje, tanre krsna nahi tyaje, ara sabe mare akarana* — one who performs *bhajana* under the shelter of personalities who are the abode of love for Kṛṣṇa is not neglected by Kṛṣṇa; everyone else lives in vain."

We are incompetent to proceed without a bona fide *Guru*

Serving the lotus feet of *Śrīla Gurudeva* is our foremost necessity. In this world, we even need a *guru* to perform *karma* (material activities), to acquire *jñāna* (knowledge) or to fulfil any *anyābhilāṣa* (desires not connected to serving Kṛṣṇa). The guidance of such worldly *gurus* engenders insignificant results, which are the antithesis of the results bestowed by the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*. *Śrīla Gurudeva* is the source of our genuine welfare. The very moment we become bereft of his mercy, diverse worldly desires manifest in our hearts. And if the *vartma-pradarśaka guru*, who is the first to tell us about spiritual life, does not tell us how we should take shelter of the lotus feet of *Śrīla Gurudeva*, we may end up losing the gem in hand. *Nāma-bhajana* (chanting Kṛṣṇa's

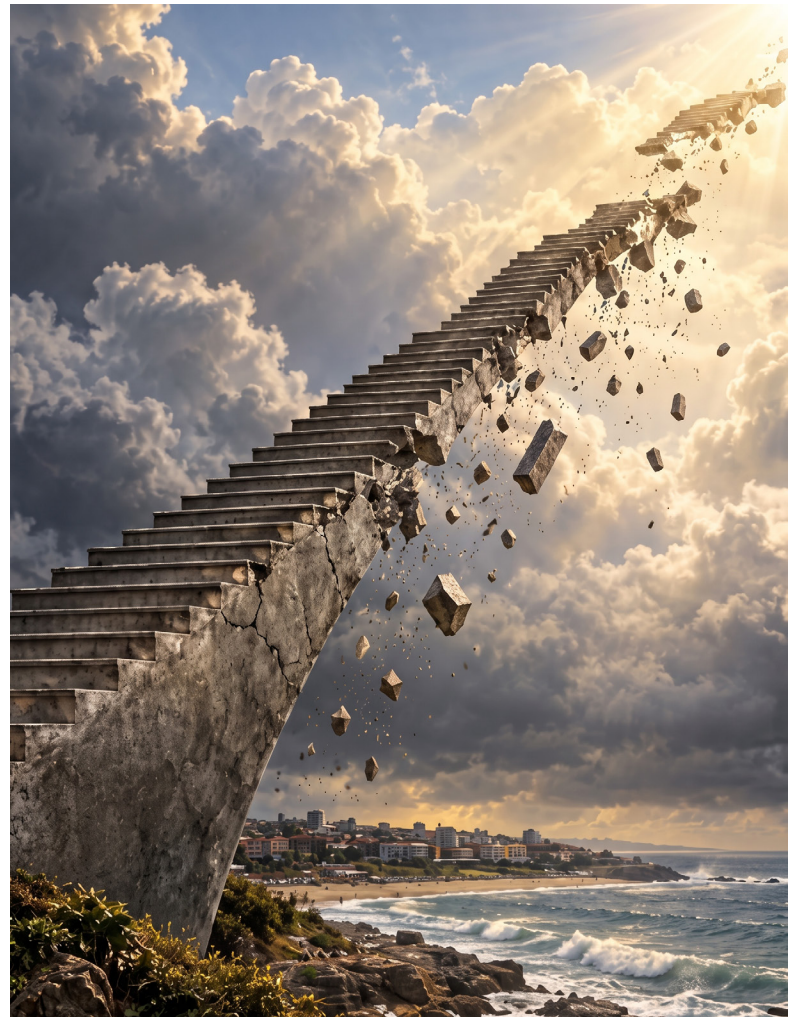
names) is the sole method of performing *bhajana*, and it is the only method *Śrīla Gurudeva* confers upon us. Consequently, our responsibility is to worship his lotus feet at the beginning of each year, that is, every *guru-pūjā*. Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī says:

*guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt
krsna-dīkṣādi-siksanam
visrambhena guroh seva
sādhu-vartmānuvartanam*

(*Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu* 1.2.74-75)

"The first four limbs of *sādhana-bhakti* are to accept the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*, to take *dīkṣā* and receive instructions on service to Kṛṣṇa from him, to serve him with intimacy and affection, and to follow the path of the *sadhus* under his guidance."

In a realm that is concealed and mystifying, it is impossible to proceed by depend-



ing on one's own multitude of competencies. Just as it is impossible to foresee the future or make plans for the future on the strength of one's own ability, similarly, mundane conceptions cannot help one penetrate or attain the supra-mundane realm. My senses have experienced something of the time that has already passed, and therefore I have knowledge of it, but I remain ignorant about the future. In the same way, our current senses are incapable of informing us about that realm that is complete and inconceivable. Our eyes can only see a few miles into the distance, and our ears can only hear words spoken nearby.

If we depend on our own competence to proceed in such a realm, we will never reach the far end, the Ultimate Reality. Such an attempt is likened to Ravana's efforts to build a stairway to heaven. Construction may begin, but it will eventually crumble to the ground. It cannot exist in a void where no support is present. Similarly, we desire to ascend to that unknown realm, and we try to do so on the strength of our own competence, but we always fail. Furthermore, if we consider an ordinary mortal who is *laghu* (spiritually impotent and not at all grave) to be *guru* (weighty with potency), we face failure.

We will have to recognize who is *guru* and who is *laghu*. A *guru* is engaged in service to that Complete Entity whom all real gurus honour as their sole object of worship. This does not refer to a *guru* (teacher) of sitar or physical exercises. Such a *guru* cannot save one from the clutches of death.

*gurur na sa syat sva-jano na sa syat
pitā na sa syāj janani na sa syat
daivam na tat syan na patiś ca sa syāj
na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum*
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.18)

"That guru is not a guru, that father is not a father, that mother is not a mother, that demigod is not a demigod and that relative is not a relative who cannot protect us from the clutches of death, cannot bestow eternal life upon us and cannot protect us from ignorance, because of which we are deeply engrossed in this material world."

Ignorance is the sole reason a person falls into the clutches of death; a person with knowledge does not. All the education in the world is immediately dispensable for one who becomes mad or paralysed or who meets with death. Unless we are searching for the ultimate truth, we tend to become unconscious, or devoid of real consciousness.

When we are impelled to enjoy our senses, like the tongue, hands, legs, arms and genitals, we are enchanted and then deceived. It is therefore imperative upon us to remember *Śrīla Gurupādapadma* at the beginning of each year, each month, each day and at every moment, for he can protect us from all such deception.

Remember *Śrī Guru* every day, every moment

Our *Gurudeva*'s forms are manifold. If he did not manifest himself in various ways, then who else would protect us? That person whom my *Gurudeva* has accepted as his own is my saviour. I do not want to see the faces of vile persons who criticize my *Gurudeva* or who support those who criticize him. They are the cause of all inauspiciousness.

The very instant I deviate from or forget the lotus feet of *Śrīla Gurudeva*, who is continuously attracting me to his lotus feet, at that very moment I am unques-



tionably deprived of the Truth. Upon such deviation, I became engrossed in contemplating countless scarcities. I hurry to bathe in a holy place, and I become busy protecting myself from the cold. In this way I chase after activities other than service to *Śrīla Gurudeva*.

My *Gurudeva* constantly protects me from *dvitīyābhiniveśa*, becoming absorbed in activities separate from the interest of *Bhagavān*. If I do not remember my *Gurudeva* at the beginning of each year, each month, each day, and at every moment, I will surely fall further away from the path of *bhakti*. Consequently, I myself will wish to be recognized as guru, and the sinister contemplation of how others will worship me will invade my mind.

This alone is *dvitīyābhiniveśa*. We have not assembled here to perform *guru-pūjā* just for today, but to begin the performance of it at every moment, forever.

Sri Gaurasundara is Kṛṣṇa Himself, who came to this Earth as *jagad-guru*, the spiritual master of the whole world, and spoke *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. May the *mahānta-gurus* (exalted, manifest *gurus*) and all great *Vaiṣṇavas* who are surrendered to their lotus feet impart all aspects of the teachings of *Śikṣāṣṭaka* to us. May they deliver us from our calamitous situation.

My Gurudeva appears to me everywhere

Our spiritual masters (*āśraya-jātīya guru-varga*) are the abodes of love. They appear to us in different forms to bestow their mercy upon us. They are reflected in all objects and in every entity. Indeed, they are the special manifestations of *Śrīla Gurudeva*, he who imparts *divya-jñāna*, transcendental knowledge. The object of love, Kṛṣṇa (*viṣaya-jātīya*), is one half of the equation, and the abode of love, *Śrī Guru (āśraya-jātīya)*, is the other half. Their combination results in a complete whole through *vilāsa-vaicitrya* (wonderfully variegated pastimes). *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* is the complete manifestation of the object of love, and *Śrīla Gurudeva* is the complete perception of the abode of love. When the transcendental reflection of *āśraya-jātīya tattva* falls upon any conscious being, he is to be understood as a manifestation of my *Gurudeva*. *Gurudeva* is that person whose behaviour at every moment instructs us that our entire life is meant for serving *Bhagavān*. That very *Gurudeva* is reflected in the heart of every living being and is situated in every entity as *āśraya-jātīya tattva*.

*cūta-priyāla-panasāsana-kovidāra
jambv-arka-bilva-bakulāmra-kadamba-nīpāh
ye 'nye parart ha-bhavaka yamunopakulah*



samsantu krsna-padavim rahitatmanam nah
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.30.9)

"O mango, *priyala*, jackfruit, *asana* and *kovidara* trees! O trees of *jambu*, *arka*, *bilva* and *bakula*! O *amra*, *kadamba* and *nipa* trees, as well as all other plants and trees growing along Yamuna's shores whose lives are devoted to benefiting others, we have lost our minds in the agony of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so please tell us where He has gone."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the *rāsa-sthalī* (the place of the *rasa-līla*), and the *gopis*, who are eternally liberated souls, approached each and every living entity in search of Him. Did the *gopis* simply depend upon the knowledge acquired through their senses to find Him? We receive the opportunity to hear about these subjects from our *Gurudeva*. The variegated transcendental pastimes of *Nanda-Govinda*, *Yaśodā-Govinda*, *Śrīdāma-Sudāma-*

Govinda, *Citraka-Patraka-Govinda*, *Varṇśī-Govinda*, *Go-Govinda* and *Kadamba-Govinda* are accounts of the *rasa*-laden pastimes of Sri Sri Rādhā-Govinda.

If a person is blessed with the *darśana* of Śrī Guru in his heart, or if he makes a place in his mind where Śrī Guru can wander, then such pastimes are revealed in his heart. The one and only way to attain service to the Complete Being is to worship that person who, by his every activity, encourages us to serve the Complete Being. Our *Gurudeva's* image, reflected in many different ways, constantly manifests newer and newer lessons for us.

My *Gurudeva* manifests in various repositories, and upon seeing their attitude of service to *Bhagavān*, I pray that I may spend thousands and thousands of lifetimes serving Śrī Hari in their association, and that my aversion to serving Him, which has prevailed for millions of lifetimes, is finally destroyed.



In reply I said: "I cannot say that they have left *hari-bhajana* just because they have returned to their homes. In fact, I see each and every one of those *brahmacaris* as amazing *Vaiṣṇavas* and their *Vaiṣṇava* qualities and devotion for the Lord have increased manifold. What a wicked atheist I used to be, but my wickedness substantially abated in their association. I see that I am averse to *Bhagavān*, but they all are engaged in *hari-bhajana*. By the mercy of Śrīla Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvāmī, I have come to know this verse:

"vaiṣṇavera nindyā-karma nā paḍe kāne, sabe kṛṣṇa bhaje, tñha ei mātṛa jāne,"

"Gossip about *Vaiṣṇavas* indulging in abominable activities should never enter my ears. I should only see that all persons are serving Kṛṣṇa."

From my perspective, everybody is advancing in *hari-bhajana*, and this universe, which was created by *Bhagavān*, is prospering in every respect. Everyone except me is receiving spiritual benefit. You have become restless without due reason, and because you are intensely eager to serve *Bhagavān* you want the devotees who left to also be increasingly keen to engage in *hari-bhajana*. They are, however, engaged in *hari-bhajana*. Still, you are dissatisfied and want their exuberance to serve their beloved Lord to increase a millionfold. My heart, on the contrary, is meager and unable to accommodate the magnitude of their *bhajana* of Śrī Hari. They exemplified living according to an astonishingly high ideal. The only person who is incapable of performing *hari-bhajana* is me, because I busy myself with finding faults in others. How, then, can I ever make progress?

Everyone is advancing except me

Once I went to *Maṅgala-giri* in South India to establish the sacred impressions of Sriman Mahaprabhu's footprints. A devotee amongst us raised this doubt: "When I first came to the *matha*, I noted the character of the *matha* residents and their attachment to serving *Bhagavān*. This impressed and inspired me, and I cherished a high aspiration to be like them. But now, the standard I once envisioned attaining has lessened considerably. I am engrossed in various mundane thoughts such as thinking about the many *brahmacaris* who have turned to their homes and entered household life."



Enthusiastic to find faults

Who finds faults in the *Vaiṣṇavas*? Those who depend on their senses to acquire knowledge. Their senses — the eyes, ears, nose and so forth — are their sole support; hence external objects deceive them. In other words, those who are averse to *hari-bhajana* find faults with the *Vaiṣṇavas*. When a person tells me that someone has stopped chanting his *harinama*, I think, "He must have become highly elevated at heart as a result of so much chanting. This is why he has left the path of *bhajana*, which is the sole source of one's welfare, and become engaged in other activities. Only a rich man is so content that he does not care to earn more."

In *Srīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, Bhagavān says: "*na me bhakto praṇaśyati* — My devotees never perish or face misfortune."

*api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyah
samyag vyavasito hi sah*
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.30)

"If even a man of abominable character worships Me with single-pointed focus, he is still to be considered a *sadhu* because he is rightly situated in *bhakti*."

*kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā
śāśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijanihi
name bhakto praṇaśyati*
(*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.31)

"He quickly becomes virtuous and attains eternal peace. O Kaunteya, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes."

Can anyone who is one-pointed and unflinching in his performance of *hari-bha-*

jana ever become degraded? They have doubtlessly attained full auspiciousness. Our attitude, however, is defective, and this is why we do not attain our own auspiciousness.

*para-svabhāva-karmāṇi
na prasamsen na garhayet
visvam ekamakam pasyan
prakṛtya purusena ca*
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.28.1)

"Sri Bhagavān said: Do not criticise or praise the conditioned nature and activities of others. View this world as a combination of material nature and souls who have an enjoying propensity, both based on the one Ultimate Reality."

If I depend on my sense-perception for information, I will remain deprived of service to the Lord, who is beyond the perception of the senses (*adhokṣaja*), and of *Śrīla Gurudeva*. I have not attained my own welfare, but still I meditate on the auspicious behaviour of others, and although I myself am full of shortcomings, I am enthusiastic to find faults in others. If I ever began to really focus on my own welfare, would I have time to observe another's imperfections?

*kṛsneti yasya giri tam manasadriyeta
dikṣāsti cet pranatibhis ca bhajantam isam
śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anyā-
nindādi śūnya-hṛdam ipsita-saṅga-labdhyā*
(Upadesamṛta ,verse 5)

"One who chants Kṛṣṇa's name just once is a neophyte devotee (*kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*). One should consider him to be his family member and silently respect him. One who, fully understanding the principle of *dikṣā*, has accepted initiation from a qualified guru and performs *bhajana* of Bhagavān in accordance with

Vaiṣṇava conventions is an intermediate devotee (*madhyama-adhikārī*). One should respect such a devotee who is endowed with the correct understanding of reality and illusion by offering him *praṇāma* and so forth. One who is adept in the science of *bhajana* as described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other *Vaiṣṇava* scriptures, and who performs exclusive *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee. Due to his undeviating absorption in Kṛṣṇa, the pure heart of such a devotee is free from faults such as the tendency to criticize others. He is an expert in *bhajana*, meaning that he mentally renders service (*manasa-seva*) to Sri Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, which take place during the eight segments of the day (*asta-kaliya-lila*). Knowing him to be a topmost devotee whose heart is established in the particular mood of service to Sri Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for which one aspires, and who is affectionately disposed towards oneself, one should honour him by offering *daṇḍavat-praṇāma*, making relevant inquiry and rendering service with great love."

Our lives are short. Last year we gathered here to worship *Śrīla Gurudeva*. Since then, those who received the mercy of Bhagavān have departed from this world. However, for the purpose of finding faults in others and to show an example of the absence of *tṛṇād api sunīcena*, we are in this material world absorbed in sense gratification.

The slightest tendency to find faults in others is completely absent in *Śrīla Gurudeva*. At the same time, his sole function is to kindly point out our hundreds and thousands of faults, which are the cause of our misfortune. May we not lose sight of this quality of *Śrīla Gurudeva*.

If I live for one more year, then I will absorb myself in the service of *Gurudeva* at every moment from today onward and give up my tendency to criticize others. I will not say: "I am valorous, scholarly and a gifted speaker; he is foolish, ignorant and cannot express anything." On the strength of exclusive absorption in *hari-katha*, I will not foster an attitude of aversion to *Bhagavān*, and thus I will become truly benefited.

*Sadhaka and siddha are not the same
āśā-bharair-amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathamcit
kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sampratam hi
tvam cet kṛpām mayi vidhāsyasi n aiva kim me;
prāṇair vrajena ca varoru vākāriṇāpi*
(*Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*, verse 102)

"O Varoru (girl with beautiful thighs), I am passing my time with the sole hope of being able to serve You. If you withhold Your mercy, what value to me is this life, the land of *Vraja*, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of *Baka*?"

Some people ask me, "Why don't you give *siddha-praṇālī* (the identity of one's eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa)?" However, I cannot understand how a *sadhaka* and a *siddha* can be on the same level. How can one in the stage of *sādhana* that is full of *anarthas* cultivate the activities of *sādhana* that is free from *anarthas* or that of *siddhi* (the stage of perfection)? If someone is *siddha*, self-realized, and he mercifully reveals his *svarūpa* to me, then only can I come to know his eternal constitutional form.

In *madhura-rasa* Śrīla *Gurudeva* is *Vārṣabhānavī* (Sri Rādhā). According to a person's eternal nature, he will see that same Śrī *Gurudeva* as a certain absolute reality (*vastu*). One in the mood of a parent sees him as Nanda-Yaśodā; one in the



mood of a friend sees him as *Śrīdāma-Sudāma* and one in the mood of a servitor sees him as *Citraka-Patraka*.

The truth of who is *visaya* and who is *asraya* appears in the heart of one who remains engaged in service to *Śrīla Gurudeva*. This truth does not manifest in the heart by an artificial means. When the tendency to serve arises in a fortunate soul, this truth automatically appears in his heart. We are not obliged to serve anyone other than our *Gurudeva*. The nature of *nitya-līlā* (Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes with His devotees), which even Śeṣa, Śiva, Brahmā and others cannot conceive of, will never be realized by one whose consciousness is polluted with mundane conceptions.

I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of you all, my *guru-varga*.

(Translated from Śrīla Prabhupada's *Harikathāmṛta* by the Rays of The Harmonist team)

HOW 'MUCH' I SERVE *GURU-VAIṢṆAVA* IS NOT SO IMPORTANT AS 'HOW' TO SERVE *GURU-VAIṢṆAVA*

By Śrī Śrīla Shyām Dās Bābā Mahārāja



Gauḍīya Goṣṭhī Patī Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura used to say that "In the hearts of those who harbor *anyābhilāṣa* — worldly desires — whether they be *karmīs*, *jñānīs*, *yogīs*, or even pseudo-devotees, the *chāṇḍālīnī* in the form of prestige is ever engaged in her seductive dance. This is because none of them are truly estab-

lished in *vaiṣṇavī-pratiṣṭhā* — that divine and humble position which is grounded in pure servitude. The innate identity of "I am Kṛṣṇa-dāsa", the genuine self-conception of a servant of Kṛṣṇa, is absent in them."

It is the fact that most of the time *baddha jīvas* want to prove themselves superior to others instead of focusing on actual *guru-sevā* with-

out any duplicity. So-called *guru-sevā* and actual *guru-sevā* are surely not the same. So-called *guru-sevā* can be detected when our material ego is the center point of our life, but actual *guru-sevā* means to serve *Gurudeva* on the platform of the real self (*attma*).

Competition in devotional field can only take place if we are in illusion about our real self. If we think that we are this material mind and body, then naturally this creates dirty competition, which is the worst enemy in our *bhajan* field. That is why the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* clearly states in the second śloka:

*dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām
vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu śivadaṁ tāpa-trayonmūlanam
śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte kiṁ vā parair īśvaraḥ
sadyo hr̥dy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śūsṛṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt*

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.2)

"Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are totally free from any *matsaratā*. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. This beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of *Bhāgavatam*, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart."

Gauḍīya Goṣṭhī Patī Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda used to say that: "*Bhakti* is the natural function of our soul".

It is only *bhakti śakti* (or *svarūpa-śakti*) which can allow us to do some actual *sevā*, and it is only when we can recognize this *bhakti-śakti* (or *svarūpa-śakti*) in others that we can give proper honor and respect to each other, and only then it will be possible for us to serve jointly together in harmony under the strict guidance (*ānugatya*) of *Śrī Guru*.

Śrīla Sadananda Svami, the first western adherent to *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* philosophy in the 20th century (the most intimate disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda) used to say that: "The true *Upaniṣads*, like God's Word Revelation

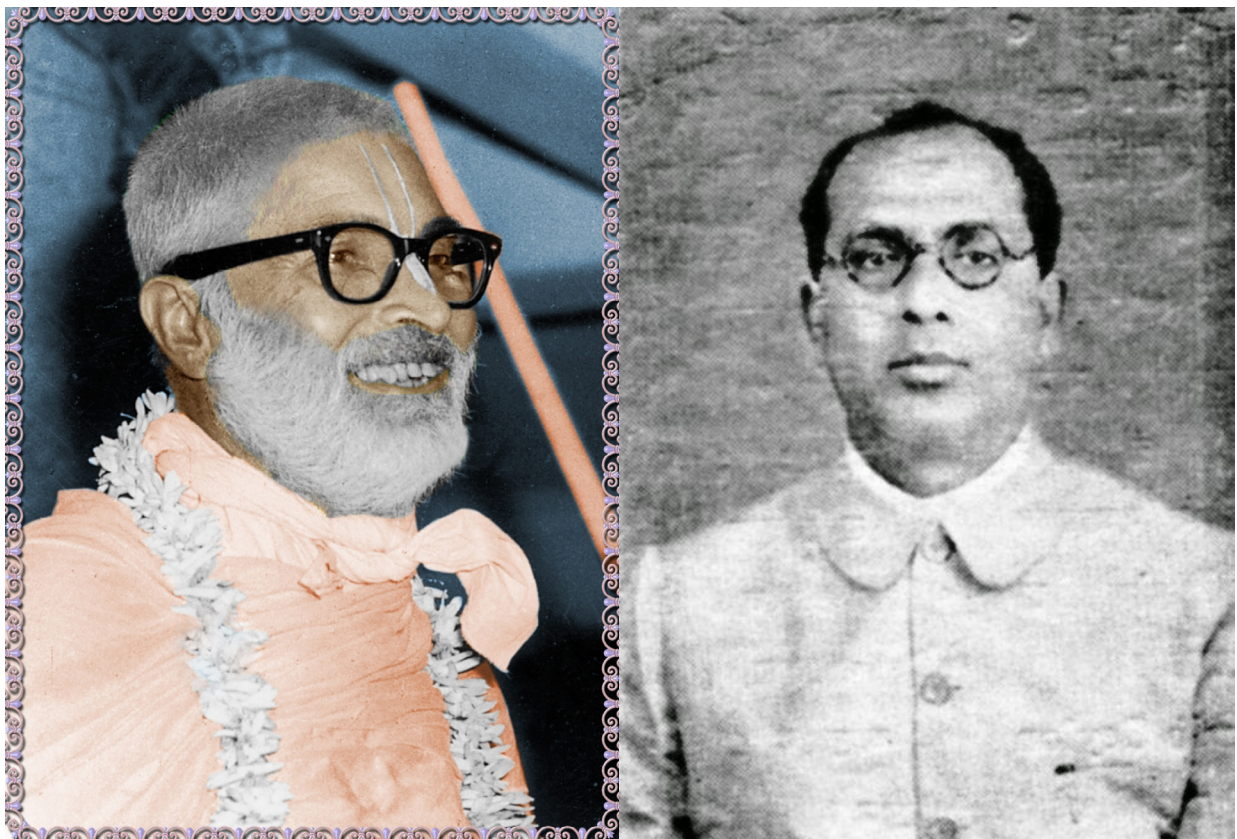


as a whole, are eternal living presence, and as such they cannot be written, or printed, or read, or uttered. They are expressions of *svārūpa-śakti*, of which God, His realm, the idea, the thing, and the real Word consists. This is why a Name of God, for example, never can be heard, read or expressed in its essence by someone who does not have *svārūpa-śakti*. It is the *svārūpa-śakti* itself which hears in the *ātmā* of the person who listens and sits before the *guru*, just as it is the *svārūpa-śakti* which speaks in the *guru's ātmā*."

But from the view point of the material ego which is always colored with the mood of doership, one will be unable to realize that everything is actually done by *Śrī Guru*, and that we are just like puppets in the hand of *Śrīla Gurudeva*. Sometimes we think that *Gurudeva* is one old man who is lying on bed unable to serve anymore. But this is not *guru-darśana*! Only *Gurudeva* making fool of us. In reality everything is done by *Sad Gurudeva*. To illustrate this we would like to give the following example:

One day Hayagriva Brahmachari and Aprakrita Prabhu approached Śrīla Prabhupāda after coming back from *bhikṣā-sevā*. Both of them declared in front of Śrīla Prabhupāda that from today onwards we can no longer do this *sevā*. Even though Śrīla Prabhupāda could realize everything, still he started asking the reason for why "You are speaking like this". Then both of them said that: "We are collecting so much money for *sevā* by traveling here and there, and at the end of the day we are giving everything to the *Maṭha* in charge, but actually we have no idea about what he is doing with that amount." Then Prabhupāda became very harsh and said: "Do you think I don't know who is doing what! Everybody coming with different different purpose in front of *guru*, if someone like to collect money or misuse, then let him do so. What it concerns to you? Why you want to leave your *bhajana*? Do your own *sevā*. What will go or come if someone is going to misuse money?"

The very next morning both of them



again went for *bhikṣā*, but they could not collect even one *paīsā*. They could realize their own fault. On coming back to *Maṭha*, both of them went in front of Śrīla Prabhupāda and begged for pardon. They said: "Today we could not collect anything." Then Śrīla Prabhupāda in a loud voice, started to say: "Do you think that you are doing *bhikṣā*? Actually, I am doing." Then both of them were completely shocked after hearing those powerful declaration by Prabhupāda.

Even though Śrīla Aprakṛita Prabhu and Haigriva Brahmāchari both of them are eternal *pārṣadas* of Śrīla Prabhupāda, but still they do such *līlā* for the benefit of common people like us to teach us the gravity of *guru-tattva*.

Another such powerful illustration we can find in Śrīla Prabhupāda's '*Upakhyane Upadesa*':

Once there was a fierce battle between the legions of the demigods and the demons. The demigods were extremely enthusiastic to defeat the demons. They succeeded in defeating the demons only by the influence of the power of *Bhagavān* (God). However, the demigods forgot about *Bhagavān's* mercy and accredited the victory to their own physical strength and military expertise. Thus, the demigods became swollen with pride and basked in the respect and praise of the public. To dispel this foolishness and hypocrisy, *Bhagavān* changed His form and became visible at a short distance from the demigods. They were unable to recognize this disguised form of the Supreme Lord, so they said to *Agni* (the demigod of fire): "Who is this worshipful person who has appeared before us? Go and investigate."

As soon as *Agni* approached Him, that great personality asked: "Who are you?"

Agni replied: "I am *Agni* — I am the famous *jāta-vedāḥ!*"

Bhagavān inquired: "What power do you have?"

Agni boldly asserted: "I can burn the whole earth to ashes in an instant."

Then *Bhagavān* placed a dry straw in front of *Agni* and requested: "Demonstrate your power by burning this piece of straw." *Agni* approached the piece of straw, but even after exerting his whole might, the straw remained intact.

Then *Agni* returned to the demigods and informed them: "I could not recognize that exalted person."

When *Agni* failed, the demigods decided to send *Vāyu* (the wind demigod) to discover the identity of that *Mahā-puruṣa* (great person). The demigod *Vāyu* set off and approached *Bhagavān*.

Bhagavān asked: "Who are you?"

Vāyu replied: "I am *Mātariśvā* (the wind-god)."

Bhagavān asked: "What power do you have?"

Vāyu said: "I can blow away everything on the face of the earth."

Then *Bhagavān* placed a piece of straw in front of *Vāyu* and asked him to move it. Even after applying all his power, *Vāyu* could not move that insignificant piece of straw even a tiny bit. Crestfallen, *Vāyu* returned to the demigods and reported: "I could not recognize that great being."

Finally, the demigods appointed *Devaraja* Indra, the king of the demigods, to solve the mystery. As soon as Indra approached that great person, He disappeared from view. At that moment, Indra saw the exquisitely beautiful goddess Uma Devi, the consort of Śiva, appear in the

sky. Approaching Uma Devi, Indra asked: "Who is this *Mahā-puruṣah*?"

Uma Devi informed him: "This is *Brahma*, the Absolute Truth. You demigods became glorious only by His victory. Your power is manifest only by His power. When He withdraws His power, you do not have any power of your own. The original owner of your power (*kṣamatā*), expertise (*dakṣatā*), heroism (*virata*), and prowess (*pauruṣa*) is only the Supreme *Brahma*. He is the musician. You are just His instrument. When you think that you are doing everything with your own strength, then at once *Brahma* takes away all your power."

Those who disregard the power of *Śrī Guru* and *Bhagavān* desire to use the eternally acquired prosperity, worship and prestige (*lābha*, *pūjā*, *pratiṣṭhā*) of *Śrī Guru* and *Bhagavān* for their own enjoyment. Then the Lord, the spiritual master and the saints take away their proficiency. When the soul employs his abilities and energy

sincerely in the service of God, exclusively for the pleasure of the Lord, only then does he become *kṛpā-prārthi*, truly desirous of the grace of *Hari*, *Śrī Guru* and *Vaiṣṇavas* (saints). Conversely, when a soul uses his God-given potential to nourish his arrogance (*dāmbhika*) or when he becomes hostile (*vidveṣa*) towards the spiritual master and pure devotees, then he meets with complete ruination. The only source of all power is the Supreme Lord. All wealth, women, profit, worship, and prestige are obtained only from Him.

*pratisthasa taru – jadamaya maru
napelo rāvaṇa juhiya raghava
vaiṣṇava pratistha, ta'te' kara' nistha
taha nd bhajile laghibe rnurava*

(*Vaiṣṇava Ke*, verse 4)

"The demon *Rāvaṇa* (lust-incarnate) fought with Lord *Rāmacandra* (love-incarnate) in order to gain the tree of worldly reputation — but that oasis turned out to be but a mirage cast in the desert."

Most of the time we merely profess with our lips: "By the mercy of *Śrī Guru*, even a dumb man may become eloquent, and a lame man may cross mountains. Therefore, I possess no merit of my own. Whatever power is manifest in me arises solely from the mercy of *Śrī Guru*. I shall sing only that which is revealed through the *śrauta-vāṇī* (divine sound descending through disciplic succession)."

As soon as we forget that we are only an instrument in the hand of *Gurudeva*, then all our activities can be compared to the bathing of an elephant. Maybe we can conquer the whole world by our so-called preaching style, but if we forget this most vital point, then everything can become completely useless. Can one pencil claim



that it has painted some picture? Can one chisel claim that it has given a shape of a statue? Can one broom claim that it has cleaned the temple floor? So, if we cannot recognize that we are nothing but an instrument in the hand of *guru-Vaiṣṇava*, then we can never get actual *mangal* in our *bhajan* life. Only if we understand that we are being used by *śuddha guru-Vaiṣṇavas* out of their causeless mercy according to time, place and circumstances, then and only then the question of jealousy, envy etc. cannot contaminate our heart.

Śrīla Sadananda Svami used to give a very excellent example, like the following: "Imagine a flower bud, containing so many things. Can the subtle elements drawn by the roots — which give nourishment and growth and are conducive to forming the whole bud — compete with each other as to who will contribute to the formation of the stalk, the filaments, the calyx, the petals or the sepals?"

Unfortunately, at present we can see that so-called devotees are always trying to compete with each other, rather than cultivating a sweet mood of cooperation, so that finally the mission of Gauḍīya Goṣṭhī Pati Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda can be served. The evil mood of one so-called devotee with which he is roaming around — to watch who is doing what — to stop others from going beyond the limit of his own capacity — can bring great harm to our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society. Out of jealousy if we are unable to recognize devotees according to their *Vaiṣṇava* etiquette and *seva*-mood, then the whole system of *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* society can collapse down. Even in this material world, in any country, the ruling government also usually gives honor to those who are showing some special qualities. Such exclusive qual-

ities should be brought into light. If we are not going to have that kind of open heart, then those exclusive personalities would be automatically ignored. For the overall development of the whole human society, this kind of tolerance should be there.

Nowadays it has become a fashion that some so-called devotees like to apply the dashing-pushing trick by the help of elbows or by kicking each and every one in the way of his competition with someone. This kind of dirty and cruel mentality can only be compared with the effort of Ekalavya, who, in the guise of *guru-bhakti*, completely went against *Guru-padapadma*.

Gauḍīya Goṣṭhī Pati Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda told that: "The desire to become greater than another devotee is not devotion. It is the tendency of the *atibadi apa-sampradāya* (deviant sects) and non-devotees. The endeavor to remain behind the *Vaiṣṇavas* and remain under their guidance is *bhakti*. Being more skillful than everyone else in activities is not *guru-bhakti*. *Bhakti* entails remaining always under the guidance (*ānugatya*) of the *Vaiṣṇavas*. Therefore, we should never try to become 'greater' than the *Vaiṣṇavas* by wearing a mask of *guru-bhakti*."

Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Puri Gosvāmī Mahārāj also used to say that: "*Chaitanya-maṭhe amader sakaler tiki badha ache* (we — those who are having direct link with Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission in the form of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha — must have some unavoidable (inseparably) tied bondage with Chaitanya Maṭha — the original *Gauḍīya Maṭha*). It will be an offense to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda if we do not see ourselves and others outside of our *Maṭha* as part of his family. Even in a mundane situation, we should discover

our loving relationship with them and follow the divine mood of giving and taking procedure with them like brothers and sisters... Then what is the reason for why there cannot be such a free and spontaneous loving relationship among *Vaiṣṇavas*?"

He also used to say that: "A *Vaiṣṇava* is simple-hearted and is a pure *brahmāṇa* (which is quite natural)."

*sahaje nirmala ei 'brāhmaṇa'-hṛdaya
kṛṣṇera vasite ei yogya-sthāna haya*
(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 15.274)

"The heart of a *brahmāṇa* is by nature very clean; therefore, it is a proper place for Kṛṣṇa to sit."

Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Puri Gosvāmī Mahārāj also repeatedly used to say that: "A *Vaiṣṇava* cannot have something inside his heart and speak something else. Nor would he say one thing at one place and another thing, which is contradictory to that, at another place to misguide others intentionally. *Kutinati* (deception, diplomacy, and duplicity) are all destroying the creeper of devotion. A *Vaiṣṇava*'s life should be an open book, and any word of a *Vaiṣṇava* is always matching with his action."

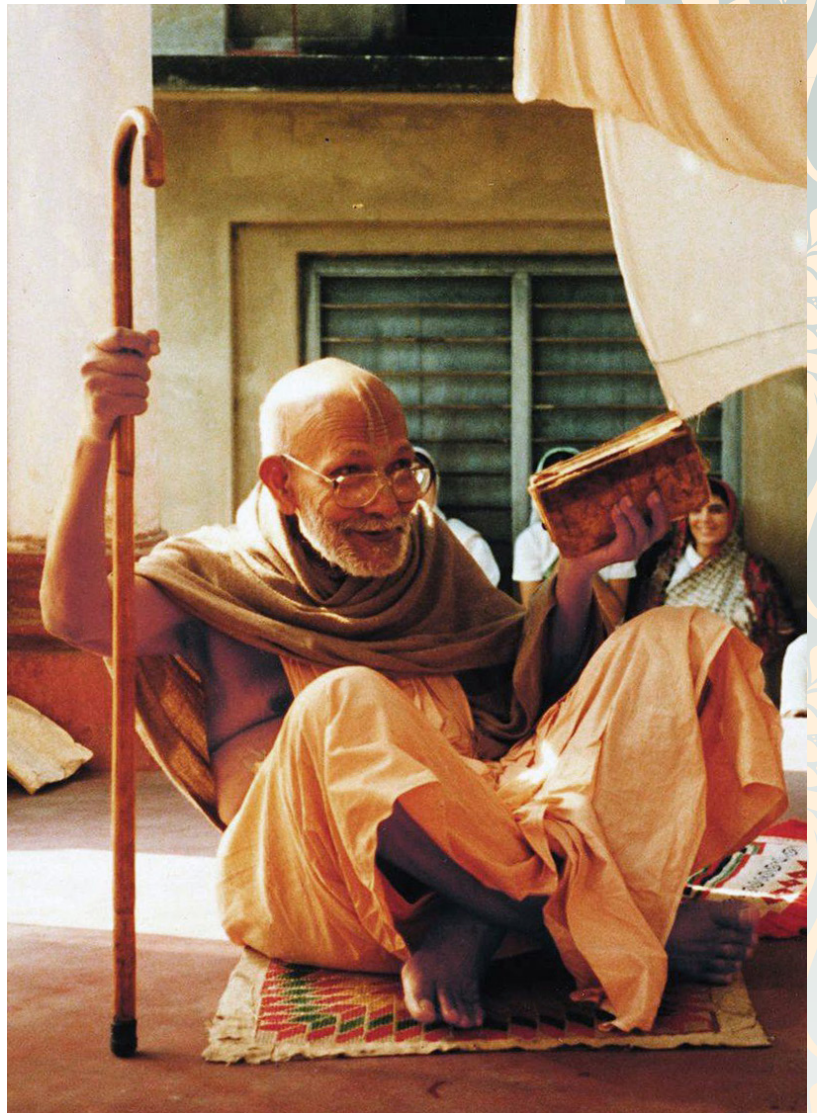
Śrīla Prabhupāda always used to quote the following verses from 'Prema-Vivarta', by Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍita:

*yadi bhajibe gora saral kara nija man
kutinati chhari bhaja gorar charan
gorar ami, gorar ami mukhe balile nahi chale
gorar achar, gorar vichar, la-ile phal phale*

"If you want to worship Lord Gaurāṅga, make your heart simple and straightforward. Worship the lotus feet of Lord Gaurāṅga, giving up deceit and duplicity.

Merely saying, 'I belong to Gaurāṅga, I belong to Gaurāṅga' is giving Him lip service and has no effect. Following the example of His *achar-vichar* & *adarsha* can give the result."

Gaura Hari Hari Bol



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