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ENTERING KRISHNA'S FAMILY

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Krishna in Vrindavan is surrounded by many associates. He has got his father, Nanda Maharaja, and his mother, Yashoda. He has got so many friends, hundreds and thousands of them — boyfriends and girlfriends. The trees, the plants, the flowers, the fruits, the land, the water, the cows, and calves. He is never alone. If we say, "The president is coming." "The president" means he is not coming by himself; he is coming with his ministers, secretaries, some soldiers and bodyguards, and so many other people. He will not come alone. If an insignificant material president is always surrounded by his associates, you can just imagine how the Supreme Being is. He can never be alone. That is Krishna. Krishna is not zero — that is *śūnyaavāda*: "Everything is zero after this." Nor is Krishna undifferentiated — that would be *nirviśeṣavāda*: "Everything is like the sky." No. He is an individual, a person. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* [2.12], Krishna says, "My dear Arjuna, you are a person. I am also a person. And all these soldiers and kings who are assembled here, they are also persons. Don't think that we were not persons in the past, that we are not persons at present, and that in the future we shall not be persons. We are all individual

persons, eternally." And whenever there is a person there are associates, there is family, there is exchange of love.

This Krishna consciousness movement means to become trained up sufficiently how to enter Krishna's great family. The material world means we are running after a false family. But don't think that there is no real family life. There is real family. That is Krishna's real family, the eternal family, blissful family. So this Krishna consciousness movement means to train up people to be detached from this false family and to enter into the real family. ❀

— Arrival lecture in Dallas, 3 March 1975.

WHEN BHAJAN BECOMES BHOJAN

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Unless one possesses unalloyed devotion he cannot have the good fortune to receive initiation or teachings on devotional service from a spiritual master. If a person is careless, then after obtaining mantras and the process for worshiping the Lord through aural reception, such mantras and rituals become the source of material attachment. Those who give up duplicity and properly hear the topics of Hari from a bona fide spiritual master, and those whose ears are able to properly receive such topics, only they are able to repeat the same words. The very same mercy and teachings that *tridaṇḍī*

prabhu Sri Prabodhananda received from Sriman Mahaprabhu were preserved by him in verses for the benefit of future devotees. Those who have a taste for the mood of Prabodhananda are worthy of being called *vaiṣṇavas*. Otherwise, one simply wanders about searching for insignificant eatables like banana stalks, *dāl* balls, and drumsticks. ❀

— *Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava*. English translation by Bhumipati Das. Vrajraj Press. Vrindavan. 1999. p. 71.

FINDING A GURU

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Devotee: Why have some devotees gotten gurus who later fell down?

Gour Govinda Swami: They were not so eager. Krishna as *paramātmā* in the heart knows what is inside. Those persons who got such gurus, they were not so serious. They were thinking, “I want a guru, and this person has been branded, stamped, as guru. I’ll accept.”

Nāma-tattva

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY NAMES

*Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode’s
Jaiva Dharma, chapter 23*

With folded hands, Vijaya Kumar said, “Benign Gurudeva, by your mercy everything is auspicious for us. Please guide us in understanding the profound significance of *nāma-tattva*.”

The face of Raghunath Das Babaji immediately lit up with joy and he began to speak: “There are two categories of *harināma*: *mukhya* and *gauṇa*. Those names of Krishna that refer to his activities in relationship with the material nature are *gauṇa-nāma*, secondary names. For example, *ṣṛṣṭi-kartā*, “creator”; *jagat-pāla*, “the universal preserver”; *viśva-niyantā*, “the universal administrator”; *viśva-pālaka*, “the universal maintainer”; *paramātmā*, “the Supersoul”, and so on. The word *brahman*, although a name of Krishna not referring to him in relationship with the modes of material nature, is also a *gauṇa* name. Though there are immense benefits from chanting these *gauṇa* names of Sri Krishna, they rarely bring forth transcendental results.

“On the other hand, the names of the Supreme Lord associated with his transcendental spiritual abode are eternal and have nothing to do with the mundane plane. These names are absolute, spiritual, and are known as *mukhya-nāma*, principal names. Examples are Narayan, Vasudev, Janardan, Hrishikesh, Hari, Achyuta, Govinda, Gopal, Rama, and so on. The *mukhya-nāma* are of the spiritual sky and are non-different from the Supreme Lord himself. The most fortunate

souls in this universe attract the attention of *mukhya-nāma* with the purity of their *bhakti*, and *mukhya-nāma* dances upon their tongues in pristine glory.

“The *mukhya-nāma* have no connection with this phenomenal plane and are endowed with the complete *śakti* of Sri Bhagavan. They descend to this mundane illusory sphere to annihilate *māyā*. Therefore, the conditioned souls of this material world have no better friend and well-wisher than *harināma*....

Vijaya: “Which is the sweetest amongst the principal names?”

Raghunath Das Babaji: “The *Śata-nāma-stotra* states:

*viṣṇor-ekaikam nāmāpi sarva-vedādihikam matam
tādyk-nāma-sahasreṇa rāma-nāma-samam smṛtam*

“One name of Sri Vishnu is superior to all the Vedic mantras, and one name of Sri Rama is more potent than a thousand names of Sri Vishnu.’

“Then, the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* states:

*sahasra-nāmnām puṇyānām trir āvṛtṭyā tu yat phalam
ekāvṛtṭyā tu kṛṣṇasya nāmaikam tat prayacchati*

“When the thousand transcendental names of Sri Vishnu are chanted three times they are equivalent to chanting one name of Krishna.’

“Thus, we see that ‘Krishna’ is the supreme name. Therefore, we should always follow the instruction of Sri Gauranga and chant the *mahā-mantra*:

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare.* ❀

— Translation by Sarvabhavana Das. © Bhaktivedanta Book Trust 2003. Bhaktivedanta Vedabase. 2003.

But they were not so curious, so eager to know whether this person has Krishna cent per cent or not; whether he can deliver me cent per cent Krishna or not." Krishna knows all these things and he made such an arrangement.

Devotee: A lot of devotees are preaching that the only *uttama-adhikārī* is Prabhupada and that all of the present gurus are *madhyama-adhikārīs*. Is this a correct way to think?

Gour Govinda Swami: The symptoms of *madhyam*, *uttama*, and *kaniṣṭha vaiṣṇavas* are given in *śāstra*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, etc. You should know these descriptions very well and thereby judge and see. Don't be convinced simply by what others are saying.

Devotee: But in the past, we thought some devotees were *uttama-adhikārī*. They apparently fit the descriptions, yet later they fall down.

Gour Govinda Swami: No, no, no. They were not *uttama-adhikārīs*. An *uttama-adhikārī* never falls down.

Devotee: How does one know who is an *uttama-adhikārī*?

Gour Govinda Swami: *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and the eleventh canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* give descriptions. You should know these things. Don't be rash and accept simply because of others' opinions. You should be convinced. Others' opinions are not sufficient. Just like followers of mundane political parties glorify their leaders in order to gain more followers. Our *ācāryas* have given an example: Like the sheep who are following a leader who falls into a ditch, they also all follow and fall in. Similarly, some devotees say, "So many are going to that person and taking shelter. Let me also go there."

No one is thinking, "Is it correct? Is he a bona fide person? Is he a pure devotee, *uttama-adhikārī*? Can he give me Krishna?" Not thinking, just following. You have done like that. Can you admit it? You were not serious. You accepted someone just because he had been labeled "guru". You were rash in your decision.

But *śāstra* and the *mahājānas* say, "Don't be rash." The disciple should personally examine the prospective guru and the guru should examine the prospective disciple. The guru should think, "This person wants to be my disciple. Will he be a real disciple or not? Disciple means under discipline. If I inflict strict discipline on him, will he be able to tolerate it? Will he obey me in all circumstances? Will he not leave me under any circumstances? If I

inflict severe discipline on him, will he revolt or will he be obedient? It is the guru's business to examine the prospective disciple, and then when he is satisfied he will accept.

Understand the story of how Gaura Kishore Das Babaji accepted Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati as his disciple. There are two types of devotees, *goṣṭhy-ānandīs* and *bhajanānandīs* — those who accept disciples for the purpose of spreading the preaching and those who don't accept disciples and stay in lonely places to do *bhajan*. We are *goṣṭhy-ānandīs*, but Gaura Kishore was a *bhajanānandī*. He was a *mahātma*, a great soul. Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati had already taken *harināma* from his father, Bhaktivinode Thakur. But Bhaktivinode Thakur ordered him to approach Gaura Kishore Das Babaji for initiation. So Bhaktisiddhanta went and requested him, "Please accept me as your disciple and give me *mantra-dīkṣā*." But Gaura Kishore wouldn't listen. He said, "Get out of here! I don't accept disciples. Get out! You are the son of a rich man, a great man. I don't accept disciples. Get out." Saraswati Thakur went back to his father and said, "He refused. He told me to get out. What should I do?"

Then his father Bhaktivinode Thakur scolded him, "You nonsense rascal! Don't come to me! Go and sit there until you get his mercy. It is better to end your life there. Don't come back here and show your face. I don't want to see you." Bhaktivinode was so strict. So Bhaktisiddhanta went back, sat down in front of Gaura Kishore's kutir and cried and cried. Finally, Gaura Kishore Das Babaji said, "This son of a great man, wealthy person, has become humble now."

This is the only qualification. One must become very humble. One should not be puffed up and proud: "I'm such a great man! I'm the son of such a great person!" Mahaprabhu says, *ṭṭṇād api sunīcena* — "Be humbler than a blade of grass on the street." [*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 3] Gaura Kishore Das Babaji was then pleased, and said, "All right, all right. Come, I'll accept you." He gave him such a severe test. It was not a cheap, superfluous thing. Spiritual matters are very serious. For guru to accept a disciple, that disciple must be obedient and throughout his life accept severe discipline inflicted on him. The disciple must be convinced, "I must accept such a person as guru who can give me cent per cent Krishna. He must be a pure devotee, *uttama-adhikārī*. This is the responsibility of a disciple and the responsibility

of a guru. This is the way it should be done, but you were not doing like that. You were superfluous, not serious. Therefore you met with such consequences. ❀

— From a darshan in Bhubaneswar, April 1989.

MAHAPRABHU'S DAILY PASTIMES Srila Narahari Chakravarti Thakur's Bhakti-ratnākara 12.3365-3366

Wise scholars have advised that one meditate on the *aṣṭa-kālīna-līlā* of Prabhu Sri Gaurasundara as follows: (1) *Nisānta-līlā* — At the end of the night (about the last one hundred and forty-four minutes of the night), think about Gaurachandra going to sleep in his own bed. (2) *Prātakāla-līlā* — In the early morning (from sunrise to one hundred and forty-four minutes afterwards), think of Prabhu rising from bed, washing his face in scented water, taking his oil massage, bathing, and eating. (3) *Puroāhna-līlā* — In the forenoon (approximately 6 a.m. to 12 a.m.), think about Gaurasundara's eagerness to go to the houses of his devotees. (4) *Madhyāhna-līlā* — At noon, think about the numerous humorous sports performed by the Lord as he wanders through Nabadwip. (5) *Aparāhna-līlā* — In the late afternoon (before dusk), think about Prabhu returning to his house. (6) *Sāyāhna-līlā* — At the time of dusk, think about the Lord going to his beautiful temple. (7) *Pradoṣa-līlā* — At night



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(up until approximately 1:20 at night), think about Prabhu enjoying his pastimes in the house of Srivas surrounded by his associates. (8) *Nisāyām or rātri-līlā* — At night (up until just before dawn), think of Sri Gaurasundara's *saṅkīrtana*. ❀

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THE DANCING OF GAURA RAY The Medieval Poet Chaitanya Das

(*Bibhāsa-rāga*)

mahā-bhuja nācata caitanya-rāya
ke jāne kata kata bhāva śata śata
sonāra varaṇa gora-rāya

(Refrain) His arms long and graceful, Lord Chaitanya Ray dances. Who has the power to know how many hundreds and hundreds of ecstasies he feels? Lord Gaura Ray is splendid like gold.

preme dhara dhara aṅga niramala
pulaka aṅkura-śobhā
āra ki kahiba aśeṣa anubhava
hera-ite jaḡa-mana lobhā

He sheds tears of ecstatic divine love. His limbs are glorious. Splendid like sprouting blades of grass, the hairs of his body stand erect. What more shall I say? When the people of the world see him, their hearts yearn to attain his company.

śuniyā nija-guṇa nāma kīrtana
vibhōra naṭana vibhaṅga
nadīyā-pura-loka pāśarila duḥkha sukha
bhāsala prema-taraṅga

Hearing the chanting of his own glories and his own holy names, he dances, overcome with ecstasy. Forgetting their pains and pleasures, the people of Nadiya float in waves of ecstatic love.

ratana vitarāṇa prema-rasa varikhāṇa
akhila bhuvāna siñcita
caitanya-dāsa gāne atula prema-dāne
muṅi se ha-iluṅ vañcita

He freely gives away the jewels of ecstatic love. He showers all the worlds with a great monsoon of the nectar of ecstatic love. Chaitanya Das sings: He gives away the peerless gift of ecstatic spiritual love. Only I did not receive that gift and was cheated! ❀

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