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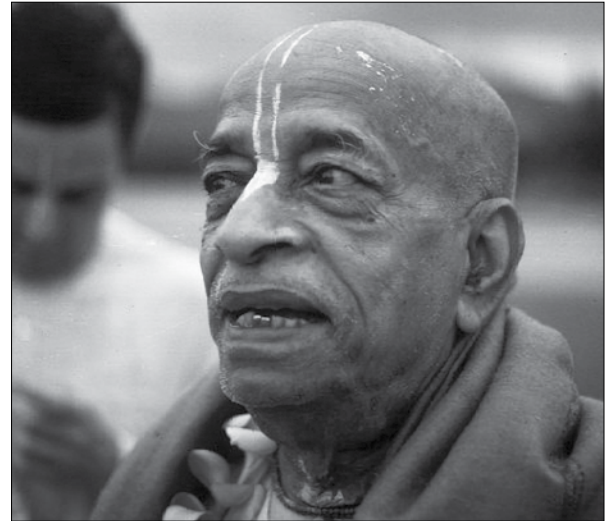
GOING BEYOND APPRENTICESHIP

*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

The more you are engaged in devotional service, the more your senses become pure or uncovered. And when they are completely uncovered, without any designations, then you are capable of serving Krishna. *Vaidhī-bhakti* is apprenticeship. Real *bhakti*, *parā-bhakti*, is *rāgāmuga-bhakti*. After surpassing *vaidhī-bhakti*, we have to come to *rāgāmuga-bhakti*. In the material world, if we do not try to make further progress in devotional service, if we are simply sticking to the *śāstric* regulation process and do not try to go beyond that, we remain *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*. The *śāstric* process of regulation is required. Without the *śāstric* process you cannot go to that platform. But if we only stick to the *śāstric* process and do not try to improve ourselves, we remain *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*. The *śāstric* process is *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra*, the lowest stage of devotional service.

*arcāyām eva haraye pūjāṁ yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhaktieṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktiḥ prakṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

Generally, when people come to the temple they are very devoted to the deity. They offer their respects, offer flowers and other things, follow the regulated process, and circumambulate. This is a nice beginning. But one has to go above this. One has to know who is actually a devotee.



*His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

One has to do good for others. That is a *madhyama-adhikārī*. If I am satisfied with only worshiping the deity in the temple and following regulative principles, and I have no other idea, then I am *prakṛta-bhakta*. *Prakṛta* means on the material platform. Such a devotee can fall down at any moment because he's on the *prakṛta* stage. And *prakṛta* means this *guṇamayī prakṛti*, the three modes of material nature. It is very strong.

Any devotee can fall down if he remains a *prakṛta-bhakta*. He has to raise himself above this to the level of *madhyama-adhikāra*. We are enjoying the interactions

of the three modes of material nature and we are thinking it to be spiritual. My *guru-mahārāja* used to say that it is like licking a bottle of honey. That is not real honey. You have to open the bottle and experience the real honey, then you'll get a taste. That is advancement of spiritual knowledge. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* describes [3.25.25], *satāni prasāṅgān mama vīrya-sainivido bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyamāḥ kathāḥ* — In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart.

Therefore, if we do not associate with advanced devotees, *uttama-adhikārīs*, if we simply want to remain in the lowest stage of devotional service, then we are not making progress. Then we shall simply enjoy the material field without entering into the spiritual platform. ❀

— From a lecture on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 1.2.33 in Vrindavan, 12 November 1972.

BHAGAVATAM WITHIN CHAITANYA CHARITAMRITA

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta
Saraswati Thakur*

True well being will be available to the people of the world only if they listen to the discourse on *bhāgavata* from one who is himself a person *bhāgavata*, who is leading the practical life of a true devotee without maintaining the slightest attachment for the life of a *karmī* or the life of a monistic *jñānī*. Even if all the books of the world were to be burned, there would be no harm provided one treatise was left — the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Even if thousands of learning centers were to be abolished, there would be no feeling of inconvenience, provided the reading and teaching of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* would be continued. But what a wonder! What irony! This book of books has been converted into a commodity for trafficking! The course the world is taking is just the opposite of the teaching Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave.

There is no other book in the world like the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. This is not mere tittle-tattle or an exaggerated homage. If one reflects on it as a truly impartial judge, one will realize that there has not been, nor will there ever be a book like the *Bhāgavatam*. This book presents a gradual evolution of conceptions of the absolute, from better to best, as non-existent, denied, attributeless, neuter, masculine, couple, consort by marriage, and, lastly, paramour.



Lord Narayana

Unknown artist. Painting from the wall of the Radha Gopal temple in Purusottampur village, Orissa.

Sri Krishna's sports are described in the tenth canto. What, then, is the necessity of the preceding nine cantos? In them has been shown the deliberation of these conceptions to prepare the ground for introducing the main subject — the description of Krishna's transcendental sportive dalliances with the *gopīs* of Vraja, in the *gopī-gītā*, etc., of the tenth canto. There were many who had read the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* before Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came into this world. However, the real purport and actual object of the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is only comprehensible to those who have read it after reading the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* was written by Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami, one of the chief followers of the line of Sri Rupa Goswami. These persons have read the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* inside of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. The unrefined ease-loving people who pretend to be *vaiṣṇavas* may read the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, and the mercenary discourses may explain it — but according to the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* they only misconstrue and cover the true meaning. Their elucidation may please the mind of their readers and hearers, but they only make the way to hell easier to access for themselves and their admirers. ❀

— From *Sri Chaitanya's Teachings*. Edited by Sri Bhakti Vilas Tirtha Goswami Maharaja. Sree Gaudiya Math. Madras. Page 238-241.

FAITHFULNESS TO ONE'S GURU
Srila Narahari Sarkar Thakura's
Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Bhajanāmṛta, verses 42-58

*sakala-vaiṣṇavā eva guravaḥ. tatra dīkṣā-guravaḥ
 śikṣā-guravaś ca viśeṣataḥ santi tayor eva kāryam.*

All *vaiṣṇavas* are to be considered as gurus, spiritual masters. Amongst all the *vaiṣṇavas*, the initiating guru (*dīkṣā-guru*) and instructing guru (*śikṣā-guru*) are special. It is proper to offer these two a special level of respect. The orders of these two are to be followed.

*yadi tāv alpa-balau tathāpy anya-mahatām
 mukhāc chikṣā viśeṣaṁ jñātvāpi gurave deyam. tad
 eva guruṣu paṭhanīyaṁ na tu gurau helā kartavyā,
 yathā sneha-bhājana-putro 'rthopārjanaṁ pitre
 dattvā prārthya ca svayaṁ bhūṅkte. yadi svayaṁ
 ānīya khādati, tataḥ kuputraḥ pāpī syāt.*

If one's initiating spiritual master and instructing spiritual master are of small spiritual potency, or in other words, if they do not possess a special power to give spiritual instructions on devotional service, then one may listen from the mouth of other great advanced *vaiṣṇavas* and understand the special instructions. However, thereafter the disciple must go to his spiritual master for his confirmation of those instructions. A faithful son goes out to earn money, then brings the wealth gained to his father, then later asks for some allowance from the father, and whatever he receives from the father he is entitled to spend for his own enjoyment. If a son earns money but does not give it to the father and instead directly enjoys the wealth, he is considered to be a fallen son and a sinful person. Similarly, a disciple may hear some instructions from another advanced *vaiṣṇava*, but after gaining that good instruction he must bring it and present it to his own spiritual master. After presenting it, he should hear the same teachings from his spiritual master with appropriate instructions. A disciple who listens to the words of other *vaiṣṇavas*, even if their instructions are proper and true, but does not reconfirm those teachings with his own spiritual master and instead directly, personally accepts those instructions, is considered a bad disciple and a sinner. In any case, one should not disobey the order of the spiritual master.

*tasmāt sarvatra vaiṣṇavānāṁ guruḥ samādhikārā
 pūjā kāryā. tathāpi kāya-mano-vākyair guror eva
 sevanaṁ kuryāt. kārya-kāle parair guror ava-
 helāyāṁ guror eva gurus tat-pakṣa eva grāhyaḥ.*

For this reason, in all circumstances all *vaiṣṇavas* are to be offered respect like one offers respect to one's spiritual master. However, with body, mind and words one serves one's own spiritual master. In the performance of devotional activities one can disregard the instructions of other gurus, but one should not disregard one's own guru's instructions. One should always remain faithfully with one's own guru.

*paśya, paśya, yathā pitā gurur tathā tasya bhrātā
 grajo 'nujaḥ, pitur adhika-pūjyo vā pituś cedātmīya
 eva vā, tathāpi pituḥ pitā-gurur api guruḥ, tasya pūjā
 dvi-guṇiteti śailī loka-prasiddhā, atra yadi pitaraṁ
 kārya-kāle ete vrthaiva garhayanti, tarhi pataiva gu-
 ruḥ, pituḥ pakṣa eva āśrayaṇīyas tad balenaiva jīvā-
 lambanaṁ kāryam. pitā gurur vā patir vā nirguṇo 'pi
 pūjya eva. eteṣāṁ balān mahadbhir jñānibhir vā saha
 vivaditavyaṁ ke nāma-janāḥ pituḥ kalaṅke jīvanti?*

Kindly understand this by an example: Just as one respects one's father as a guru, the father's older and younger brothers are also similarly respected, but, nonetheless, the father is worthy of the most respect. Notwithstanding the above, if the father's guru, even if he is family related, comes, one should double the respect, as he is the spiritual father of the father, or the guru of the guru. He is offered twice the *pūjā* or respect. This behavior is recognized as appropriate by all authorities. Just like in day to day life, even though the brothers of the father may openly criticize him, one still takes shelter of one's father. Similarly, one remains under the shelter of one's own spiritual master, even if the spiritual master is criticized by his elder or younger godbrothers. Just as one depends upon one's father for one's livelihood, one must depend upon the strength of the spiritual master for advancing in devotional service. If a father or spiritual master or husband is not possessed of outstanding qualities, still he is always worshipable. Taking shelter of the above-mentioned persons, one may even disagree with those senior to oneself. In this world, what kind of person is there who can remain alive at the expense of his father's or guru's defamation or disgrace?

*balābalaṁ khalu-jīvanāṁ sarve tad anumatam
 eva guru-mukhād vā sva-buddhyā vā vyavaharan-
 tīti kramah, ātmānaṁ tad-dāsyē tadā gaṇayanti.
 eṣa eva paro dharmah.*

One should live his life on the strength of the spiritual master. All authorities agree to this principle. It is the duty of the disciple to hear instructions from the guru and act on them after due contemplation. In all cases, one should always consider himself the servant of the spiritual master. This is certainly the perfection of religiosity. ❀

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GREAT MISFORTUNE Ramachandra Das

*hā hā mora ki chāra adṛṣṭa
yabe gaura prakaṣṭa, āmāra janama naila
teṅi muṅi adhama papiṣṭha*

(Refrain) Alas! What has fate ordained for me? It brought me something useless, like a pile of ashes! When Lord Gaura manifested his pastimes, I was not born. Therefore, I am the lowest and most sinful.

*nā herinu gauracanda, nā herinu nityānanda
nā herinu advaita gosāṅī
ṭhākura śrī-sarakāra, nā herinu pada tānra
nā herinu śrīvāsa gadāi*

I could not see Lord Gaurachandra! I could not see Nityananda and Advaita Gosai! I could not see the



Unknown artist

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

lotus feet of Narahari Sarkar Thakur! I could not see Shrivasa and Gadadhar Pandit!

*ki mora karmera lekhā, se saba nahila dekhā
ekā āmi kena janaminu
saba avatāra sāra, śrī-gaurāṅga avatāra
nā dekhinu kena nā marinu*

Due to my past karma, fate has ordained that I would not see any of them. Why was I born alone like this, away from them? I did not see Lord Gaurāṅga, the essence of all incarnations. Not having seen them, why have I not died?

*prabhura priya sva-gaṇa, ṭhākura vamaśī-vadana
suta-suta hao muṅi tāra
ahe gaura nityānanda, tabe kena mati manda
rāmacandra ati durācāra*

I am the grandson of Vamshivadan Thakur, who was a dear associate of the Lord. O Lord Gaura-Nityananda! Why was the misbehaved fool Ramachandra Das not born then? ❀

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