



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्  
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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## CHILDREN AND DISCIPLINE

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

Regarding your question: Should force be used on children? No, there shall be no forcing the children to do anything. Child should not be forced. This is all nonsense. Who has devised these things? If we want them to become great devotees, then we must educate the children with love, not in a negative way. Of course, if they become naughty we may show the stick but we should never use it. Child is nonsense, so you can trick him to obey you by making some little story and the child will become cheated in the proper behavior. But never apply force, especially to his chanting and other matters of spiritual training. That will spoil him and in the future he will not like to do it if he is forced. (Letter to Brahmanya Tirtha, 10 December 1972)

## A COTTAGE IN THE CITY

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta  
Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada*

From the letter I received yesterday I came to know that a devotee has resolved to put impediments on the path of glorifying Lord Hari in Madras by building and then living in a cottage with a desire to make advancement in his *bhajana*. ... I am not in favor of *sannyāsīs* constructing cottages within the city and living there. This kind of life could be better accomplished



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

inside the caves of the Himalaya Mountains. Such a performance of *bhajana* could be performed while living as trees, like the twin *yamalārjuna* trees.

To glorify Lord Hari is the only goal of the human form of life. It awards one the opportunity to perfect his life. There is no need to lead an idle life on the pretext of solitary worship, or to invite unnecessary poverty on the pretext of possessing no material assets. These put obstacles on the path of glorifying Lord Hari. You should immediately stop your plan to live in a cottage, and instead engage fully for the pleasure of Krishna by preaching the glories of guru and Gauranga while practicing detachment internally as mentioned in

books like *Prārthanā* and *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* (in other words, not by making a show of *bhajana* in public), and by mentally accepting statements like:

*ṣaḍa-rasa bhojana dure parihari  
kabe braje māgīyā khāiba mādhu-karī*

When I give up the desire to enjoy the six kinds of food and thus fill my belly by begging alms door to door, then the worship of Hari and the achievement of Mahaprabhu's mercy can be accomplished. (Srila Narottam Das Thakur's *Prārthanā* 9.29.3)

Even while riding on the motorcar of the Madras Gauḍīya Maṭha, the principle and guise of a sincere beggar can be maintained. There is no need to externally display artificial renunciation or luxury by imitating the *sahajīyas*. Renunciation is a state of the heart. There is a gulf of difference between the considerations of those who misuse renunciation and that of the followers of King Janak and Raya Ramananda. Taking advantage of, and imitating, King Janak or Raya Ramananda, and thus acting like Ravana, is not internal renunciation, or *yukta-vairāgya*. When duplicity enters one's heart and is externally displayed [in the form of false renunciation], no one can achieve their true welfare.

You don't have to minimize the Supreme Lord and the execution of his devotional service. Not understanding this, many people have been misled and have simply learned how to become lazy.

— *Patrāmṛta, Nectar from the Letters*, Translated by Bhumipati Dasa; Published by Isvara Dasa. Touchstone Media, Kolkata. 2012.

## BHAKTI AND THE SANSKRIT ALPHABET

*Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja*

If you tread this path of devotional service, *bhakti-patha*, you will achieve *a-pa-varga*, the spiritual world. If you are only a passive listener you cannot tread this path. If you don't have full confidence on what *sādhu* and Krishna say, if you don't cultivate their instructions in your life, then you cannot tread this path of *a-pa-varga*. Instead of treading the path of *a-pa-varga* you'll tread the path of *pa-varga*. Srila Prabhupada has explained what is *pa-varga*. It is described in the books of Sanskrit grammar — *pa*, *pha*, *ba*, *bha*, *ma*, these five alphabets are known as *pa-varga*. Those who are literature students, who study Sanskrit grammar, they can understand. are the five groups of Sanskrit alphabet.

One part of the Sanskrit alphabet is divided into different *vargas*, categories of five letters, and they are named according to the first letter of the category. *Ka-varga*, *ca-varga*, *ṭa-varga*, *ta-varga* and *pa-varga*. The category *pa-varga* consists of the five letters *pa*, *pha*, *ba*, *bha*, and *ma*. Now, in philosophy, these five letters are taken to signify a path:

'Pa' is taken to stand for *parīśrama*, hard labor — *gardabhera mata āmi kari parīśrama* — those on the path of *pa-varga* toil like an ass. Then 'pha'. From such hard toil, *phena*, foam, will come out from your mouth. Then comes 'ba', which stands for *biṣāda*, lamentation, disappointment and pessimism. Following that is 'bha', which stands for *bhaya*, fear. In this world there is fear at every moment. "Oh, there is war declared now! What shall we do? Now we'll die! Everything will be destroyed." The last letter, 'ma', stands for *mṛtyu*, death. These five alphabets are *pa-varga*.

Those who do not tread the path of hard labor, foam coming from the mouth, lamentation, fear, leading ultimately only to death are said to treading the path of '*a-pa-varga*'. Kapila Muni says, *āśv apavarga-vartmani* — you should tread the path of *a-pa-varga*, the path of liberation, the path of devotional service (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 3.25.25). Then, *śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati* — gradually you'll develop *śraddhā*, faith; *rati*, taste; and ultimately pure *bhakti*.

— From a lecture on *Nectar of Instruction* text 3. Bhubaneswar, 15 January 1991

## THE IMPORTANCE OF VAISHNAVA SEVA

*A Story from South India*

Obtaining the mercy of a pure devotee is an absolute necessity for those who aspire for the service and association of the Supreme Lord in the spiritual world. Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes in *madhya-līlā* 22.51 of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*mahat-kṛpā vinā kona karme 'bhakti' naya  
kṛṣṇa-bhakti dure rahu, saṁsāra nahe kṣaya*

Unless one is favored by a pure devotee, one cannot attain the platform of devotional service. To say nothing of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, one cannot even be relieved from the bondage of material existence.

There is a story in the life of the great devotee Kanchipurna that nicely illustrates this principle. Kanchipurna was one of the five disciples initiated by Srila Yamunacharya whom the members of the Śrī

Sampradāya consider to be his most intimate followers. Although born in a *sūdra* family, Kanchipurna was famous throughout South India as a great *vaiṣṇava*. He resided in the city of Kanchipuram, where he daily offered the service of fanning the famous deity of Lord Vishnu known as Sri Varadaraj Swami.

Kanchipurna's simplicity and devotion endeared him to Lord Varadaraj, so much so that the two of them began having daily conversations. Some of the local people found out about this and individuals began approaching Kanchipurna, requesting him to convey questions on their behalf to the Lord. Varadaraj Swami would reply and then Kanchipurna would relate the answer back to the questioner. One day someone asked if they would go to Vaikuntha at the end of their life. Lord Varadaraj confirmed that after leaving his present body, that devotee would go to Vaikuntha.

The desire arose in Kanchipurna's heart to know if *he* were going to go to Vaikuntha after his present life. However, he was too shy to ask about himself. The Lord knew the heart of his dear devotee, and a few days later, Varadaraj Swami asked Kanchipurna, "Is there anything that you want to ask me?"

"No, no. I have no question", replied Kanchipurna.

The Lord then insisted, "Kanchipurna, is there nothing that you want to ask me?"

Finally, Kanchipurna revealed his heart. "My dear Lord, when will I go to Vaikuntha?"

Varadaraj Swami cast a loving glance on his devotee, and said, "Kanchipurna, you are my dear servant. I love you, but you will not go to Vaikuntha after this life. Although you have served me with great devotion, you have never served my devotee. Unless someone serves one of my devotees they cannot enter into my abode."

Hearing the Lord's words, Kanchipurna stood there for a moment, and then, without saying a word, he suddenly put the fan down on the altar and left.

Kanchipurna went searching for a devotee whom he could serve.

Being famous all over South India, it was not easy for Kanchipurna to find a devotee willing to accept his service. Although he tried and tried, no one would allow him to serve. Rather, everyone he approached said, "No! No! No! You are a great devotee. Lord Varadaraj personally talks to you! I cannot allow you to serve me. I'll go to hell!"



*The deity of Lord Varadaraj in Kanchipuram*

Finally, Kanchipurna took off his saffron cloth. Donning some white dress, he went to the home of one of his godbrothers disguised as a cowherd man. For six months he rendered service to that devotee's cows, always being careful to hide his face. After a short time his godbrother noted his devoted service and developed great affection for the mysterious cowherd man who was taking such good care of his cows and asking for nothing in exchange. He began addressing the cowherd as "My boy, my boy!" However, the mysterious cowherd would neither speak nor allow anyone to get too close to him. Hence no one knew his real identity.

One day, Kanchipurna got wet. Having only one set of white cloth, he went back to his small room to change into his saffron-colored clothes. At that time his godbrother happened to see him and realized who he actually was. "Kanchipurna! It's you! What are you doing? You will destroy me! I cannot allow you to render service to me. Rather, it is I who should serve you!"

Kanchipurna then returned to the temple of Lord Varadaraj. Seeing his dear devotee entering the temple, the Lord smiled upon him and said, "Kanchipurna, for six months you did menial service





Inner doors to the deity chamber at the Varadaraj temple in Kanchipuram

for one of my devotees. Now at the end of this life you can come to my abode.”

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The Lord has reserved the right to only allow those persons entrance into his abode who have served one of his dear devotees. In *antya* 6.97 of his *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur quotes from the *Varāha Purāṇa*:

*siddhir bhavati vā neti saṁśayo 'cyuta sevinām  
niḥsaṁśayas tu tad bhakti paricaryāratātmanām*

One may doubt whether the servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead will attain perfection, but there is absolutely no doubt that those who are attached to serving his devotees will attain perfection. [In Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada's purport to *Caitanya-bhāgavata*, *ādi* 1.10, this is cited as being from *Śāṅḍilya-smṛti*.]

A similar statement is made by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in his purport to *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 4.21.39:

Srila Narottam Das Thakur sings, *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā*, which means that unless one serves the *vaiṣṇavas* and *brāhmaṇas*, one cannot get liberation from the material clutches.

— Rambhakta Das and MD