

মহৎসঙ্গ প্রসঙ্গ

On Associating
with Great Ones

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On Associating
with Great Ones

Śrī Kanupriya Goswami

Based on lectures collected and edited in Bengali
by Śrī Gauraraydas Goswami

Introduced, translated, and annotated
by
Neal Delmonico

Blazing Sapphire Press

715 E. McPherson
Kirksville, Missouri 63501
2009

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ISBN 978-0-9817902-0-6 (0-9817902-0-8)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009908627

Published by:
Blazing Sapphire Press
715 E. McPherson
Kirksville, Missouri 63501

Available at:
Nitai's Bookstore
715 E. McPherson
Kirksville, Missouri, 63501
Phone: (660) 665-0273
<http://www.nitaisbookstore.com>
<http://www.blazingsapphirepress.com>
Email: neal@blazingsapphirepress.com

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नामविष्णुनाथ
श्रीमन् कायस्थिय गौडामो

Translator's Introduction

The twentieth century turned out to be an extraordinary century for writers writing about Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism, the religious tradition that developed around the sixteenth century saint/reformer/ecstatic, Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya (1486-1533 C.E.). During the final decades of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the tradition underwent an exuberant literary renaissance and flowering during which it succeeded in bursting out of India and appearing on the world stage as a religious tradition to be recognized and reckoned with. While a few of those early works were written in English,¹ the vast majority were written in Bengali. Bengal, being the birth place of Śrī Caitanya, naturally witnessed among its citizens during that period the greatest share of renewed interest in his life and religious insights. Of the enormous number of works on Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism written in Bengali during that period, few have ever been translated into English. Forget about translation, even the scope and contents of this vast field of literature have not been surveyed in Bengali, English or any other language that I am aware of. Just the few quick glances at this literature that I have had over the years suggest that it is filled with many rich and innovative Hindu theological reflections that would be of value to general readers as well as scholars who have an interest in the diverse views and insights of the religions of the world.

Why there was such a proliferation of Caitanya Vaiṣṇava literature during that period of seventy or so years (roughly 1880-1950 C.E.) is hard to say. Certainly, the fact that more printing presses were in the

¹Some of the English works of note are Premānanda Bhāratī's *Sree Krishna: the Lord of Love* (New York, 1904), Shisirakumar Ghosha's *Lord Gouranga, or, Salvation for All* (2 vols., Calcutta, 1923), Bhagavat Kumar Sastri's *The Bhakti Cult in Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1924), and Dr. Mahanamabrata Brahmachari's *Vaiṣṇava Vedānta* (Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1937, and later published separately.).

hands and under the control of affluent Bengalis was an important factor. The first printing presses in India were established by the Baptist Mission Press at Shreerampur (Serampur) on the Ganges north of Calcutta in the last few decades of the 18th century. The primary purpose of the Baptist Mission was to spread the good news of the Christian gospels among the Indian populace and Sreerampur, as the headquarters of the Baptist Mission in India, was an influential part of that program throughout the 19th century. But by the second half of that century many Bengalis had acquired their own presses and were busily publishing Bengali and Sanskrit titles and numerous periodical journals. It is in the context of this publishing frenzy, sometimes called the Bengal Renaissance, that the literary flowering and output of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism should be seen.

Another factor was the rather forward looking policy adopted by the British of educating young Bengalis for posts in the civil service. By encouraging education and creating the facilities for good educations by establishing schools and colleges, a large, highly educated and deeply literate population developed in Bengal by the end of the 19th century. Of course, the government-sponsored education was largely in English and was highly westernized, nevertheless traditional subjects like Sanskrit and Bengali literature were also taught at the government established institutions. Even Christian church-established institutions made room for traditional subjects, as was the case at Scottish Churches College, for instance. This rather enlightened British policy, it should be noted, was in marked contrast to the policies of some of the other major colonial powers, such as the Dutch and the Portugese, who preferred to keep the people of their colonies in the dark, fully dependent, and fully exploited.

Finally, it was not really until the end of the 19th century that the Bengalis began to recover their self-esteem and with that strengthening recovery they were drawn back to the roots of their own traditions. This recovery was no doubt aided by the growing sense of nationism and heightened national identity that was the result of the events and aftermath of the mutiny of 1857. Initially, the Indians, not just the Bengalis, were deeply impressed by British power, culture, intellectual life, and religion. This initial impression of the British also provoked at the same time something of a sense of shame and embarrassment in the Indians of that generation, embarrassment occasioned by viewing, through lenses provided by the British, their own culture, intellectual history and achievements, and religious beliefs and practices and comparing them

with those of the British. Over time, however, as the Indian population had more time to observe the British *ubermensch* in action. Suspicion grew into fulfilled disillusionment with the “enlightened” British and their plans for India. With the mutiny in 1857, it became clear that British rule was really a threat to the Hindu way of life as well as to the Muslim way of life that had adapted to and flourished in India since the 12th century. The result of this growing disillusionment with and critical outlook towards all things British was a desire among the younger generations of the second half of the 19th century to return to the roots of their own tradition, to rediscover themselves in the beliefs and practices of their forefathers.

Perhaps there is no better example of this process of first being impressed with and then rejecting British culture and religion than in the life of Raja Rammohun Roy (1772?-1833 C.E.) who lived through the early period of Indian engagement with British culture. Rammohun as a young man became deeply influenced by the criticisms leveled at the Hindu religion and culture by the Christian missionaries of the time. He became convinced that the worship of images that is so much a part of the practice of Hinduism was indeed “idolatry” and that it was a rank misunderstanding of the original, pure, revelatory insights of the ancient Hindu tradition found in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads. Even at the age of sixteen he wrote a tract critical of the Hindu tradition called *The Idolatrous System of the Hindus* which managed to anger many conservative members of Hindu society and effectively ruin his relationship with his high caste *brahmin* father.² He believed and argued that the ancient texts taught a monotheistic belief in “the existence of one supreme God—a God endowed with a distinct personality, moral attributes worthy of His nature and an intelligence befitting the Governor of the universe.”³ By making such arguments he drew upon himself the ire of the Hindu population of his father’s generation, but attracted the support and sympathy of many in his own generation. When, however, he turned his attention to Christianity, he found signs of a similar corruption by idolatry in Christian belief and practice, a critique of which he expressed in his book *The Precepts of Jesus a Sufficient Guide to Peace and Happiness* (1820), which contains a selection of passages from the Gospels with his own critical introduction. “While he praised the morality of Jesus, he rejected his divinity and his miracles. Moreover, he took exception to all the abstruse and supernatural presentations of his teachings, decrying

²William Bysshe Stein, *Two Brahman Sources of Emerson and Thoreau*, v.

³*ibid.*, vi-vii.

them as superstition or mythological nonsense.”⁴ To discover the true religion of the Hindus, Rammohun returned to the roots of the tradition, the ancient texts. This became the model for the later generation of Vaiṣṇavas of the Caitanya tradition, though the supreme god that they found there was not the abstract, disembodied god of Rammohun who was beyond speech and intellect, but the god Kṛṣṇa who was regarded as very much embodied and as a result very close and approachable.

Among the Caitanyite writers who participated in the Vaiṣṇava renaissance were Śrī Haridāsa Goswami (1867-1946) whose reworking of the life of Caitanya in two massive volumes, one for the Navadvīpa portion and one for the Jagannātha Purī portion of his life, was called the *Śrī Caitanya-bhārata* (1906) because it was enormous in size like the great Indian epic, the *Mahābhārata*. Shishirkumar Ghosh’s (1840-1911) *Beautiful Life of Nimai (Śrī Caitanya) (Amiṇī Nimāi Carita, 1904)* extended to six volumes in Bengali and two large volumes when an abridged version was finally published in English (1922). Vipinavihārī Goswami (1850-1919) wrote his lengthy *The Delight of the Ten Roots (Daśa-mūla-rasam, 1898)* which presents, in Bengali verse with Sanskrit citations from numerous texts, the entire theology of the Caitanya tradition on the basis of ten fundamental principles.⁵

Śrī Surendranath Goswami, the father of Śrī Kanupriya Goswami, the author of the text translated here, is accredited with some thirty-two works ranging from poetry, plays, and other literary productions to essays on science, philosophy and, of course, *bhakti*. Towards the end of the period the historian Dr. Radhagovinda Nath produced his huge five volume presentation of the philosophy of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism and completed his multivolume editions of the major biographies of Caitanya with his notes and commentaries. Prolific writers and scholars

⁴ibid., ix. Rammohun’s position was admired and supported by the Unitarians of New England, a reaction that paved the way for Rammohun’s later influence, through his translations, on such American savants as Emerson and Thoreau.

⁵The ten roots are: (1) The statements of accepted scripture are the main sources of evidence for knowledge about the divine, (2) Hari, who is Kṛṣṇa, is the highest truth in the universe, (3) he possesses all powers, (4) he is an ocean of divine savors (rasas), (5) all living beings are his separated parts, (6) because of being a marginal power (*taṭastha-śakti*), all living beings in their bound state are imprisoned by material nature, (7) because of being a marginal power, all living beings in their liberated state are freed from material nature, (8) the living beings and material nature are simultaneously different from and not different from Śrī Hari, (9) pure *bhakti* is the means to blessedness for the living beings, and (10) pure love for Kṛṣṇa is the goal for all living beings. These are taken from the work of one of Vipinavihārī Goswami’s disciples, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and confirmed in *Bāḡhnāpādā-sampradāya o Vaiṣṇava Sāhitya*, 529-31.

like Rasikamohana Vidyābhūṣaṇa and Sundarananda Vidyavinode produced numerous works on various subjects relating to the history and philosophy of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism. Bimanbihari Majumdar's work, though appearing towards the end of this period or even after it had ended, should also be included in this company. His seminal study of the materials available for constructing the life of Śrī Caitanya is now a classic in Caitanyite studies. The field is almost too vast to describe and much of the literary output remains unknown or has been lost.

Along with the production and publication of new works on Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism in Bengali and Sanskrit, the period witnessed the repeated, almost periodic, publication of the major scriptural source texts of Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism, beginning in the 1880s with the publications of the works of the Gosvāmins with major commentaries and Bengali translations by Rāmanārāyaṇa Vidyāratna at Barahampura in the Murshidabad District of Bengal. That body of publications was reissued in several newer editions by Rāmanārāyaṇa's son, Rāmadeva Miśra, even into the 1930s. The canon was again published by Nityasvarupa Brahmachari from Vrindaban in Devanagari script in the early years of the 20th Century and again in the 1930s and 1940s by Haridāsa Dāsa Bābā from Navadvīpa in Bengali script with Bengali translations. In the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābā began the process all over again publishing the whole canon and then some in Devanagari script with Hindi translations while simultaneously Puridāsa Mahāśaya published the canon with verse indices and notations on variant readings and manuscript sources in Bengali script. Finally, Haridasa Sastri published the whole canon again in the 1970s and 1980s, also in Devanagari script with Hindi translations and largely based on the previous editions of Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābā whom he had previously assisted in the earlier publications. No doubt the repeated publication and therefore easy availability of the original scriptural texts of the Caitanya tradition in all of these editions contributed greatly to the renaissance of Vaiṣṇava literature in the first half of the 20th century.

Though he entered the field rather late, his first book called *The True Nature and Religion of the Living Being (Jīver Svarūpa o Svadharma)* came out in 1934, Śrī Kanupriya Goswami became even in this field of literature one of the most respected writers of the writer/theologians of the Caitanyite renaissance. The short work presented in translation here, based on a series of lectures he gave towards the end of his life, gives only a brief introduction to the thought of this master of his tradition. Nevertheless, many of the main themes of his larger body of work can be

found briefly expressed in this short text.

A Short Biography of the Author

Śrī Kanupriya Goswami was born in north Kolkata in 1891 on the street that is now known as Vivekananda Road. His father's name was Surendranath Goswami and his mother's name was Vindhyavasini Devi. He was born into an old, respected Vaiṣṇava family that traces its ancestry back to some of the famous companions and followers of Śrī Caitanya. Kanupriya was a member of the eleventh generation from Kānu Ṭhākura (16th-17th centuries) who was the grandson of Sadāśiva Kavirāja, a direct companion of Śrī Caitanya. Sadāśiva Kavirāja and his son and grandson are mentioned in several of the old hagiographies of Śrī Caitanya and a short Sanskrit hymn praising Śrī Caitanya in fifteen verses survives in Sadāśiva's name.⁶ His son was Puruṣottama Dāsa, another leader and writer of the early movement,⁷ and Puruṣottama's son was Kānu Ṭhākura, another important member of the early Caitanya movement and a composer of numerous Bengali songs.⁸ For instance, the last of the biographies of Śrī Caitanya, the *Immortal Acts of Śrī Caitanya* (*Śrīcaitanya-caritāmṛta*) (completed in about 1612) by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja we find this:

Śrī Sadāśiva Kavirāja was a very great being.
And Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa was his son.
From birth he was intent on serving Nityānanda's feet.
He ceaselessly enacted childhood sports with Kṛṣṇa.
His son was the great soul Śrī Kānu Ṭhākura.
In his body resided the ambrosia of love of Kṛṣṇa.⁹

⁶The hymn is entitled the Fourteen on the Unusual Son of Śacī (Caitanya) (*Śrī Śrī Śacīnandana-vilakṣaṇa-caturdaśakam*) and is printed in *Śrī Śrī Caitanyacandrodaye Viśiṣṭa Tārakātraya* by Sundarananda Vidyavinode, 26-48. It is written using verbs in the present tense which indicates that it was written during the lifetime of Caitanya.

⁷Puruṣottama is best known for his compendium of important verses from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* strung together with his connecting statements and comments. It is called the *Collection of the Essential Principles of Bhakti for Hari* (*Śrī Hari-bhakti-tattva-sāra-saṅgraha*).

⁸Kānu Ṭhākura's songs are found scattered throughout the numerous collections of Vaiṣṇava songs that were created in the 17th and 18th centuries.

⁹Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 1.11.38-40.

Although Kanupriya was thus born in such a distinguished family in the Vaiṣṇava community, it was the quality and depth of his writing that brought him the greatest recognition and respect. It comes as something of a surprise then when one learns from his nephew that he had no formal education.¹⁰ He never attended any school or college. His nephew, Kishoraray Goswami, whose short essay on Kanupriya's life is half hagiography, points to this fact as miraculous evidence of Kanupriya Goswami's high level of religious attainment in his previous life. Though it may be true that Kanupriya never went to school formally and was to a large degree self-taught, it is hard to believe that his father did not either teach him himself or hire a tutor for him when he was a young boy. Kanupriya's knowledge of the scriptures of the Caitanya tradition, especially the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and the writings of the Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana, was indeed enormous and his writing style in Bengali was complex, sophisticated, and grammatically correct.

His fame became established with the appearance of his first book, the *True Nature and Religion of the Living Being* in 1934. It had been published serially in a popular Vaiṣṇava journal, *Śrī Śyāmasundara Patrikā* (The Journal of Śyāmasundara [Dark-beautiful Kṛṣṇa]), edited by another well known Vaiṣṇava savant and writer of the renaissance, Śrī Prāṇagopāla Goswami of Navadvīpa. His cogent and logical presentation of some of the fundamental beliefs about the nature of human life, on the backdrop of the universal drama of life, and about the purpose of human life in cultivating its truer inner nature in relationship with the divine was warmly received by a populace that was troubled by the political unrest of the struggle for independence and unsettled by modern philosophies and ideologies like historical materialism. . It was his second book, however, that really brought him to prominence. His second book was entitled the *Thought-jewel of the Holy Name* (*Śrī Nāma-cintāmaṇi*) (1943) was an even greater success than his first. It was an elaborate apologetics on the power of the divine name, an important aspect of Caitanya Vaiṣṇava theology, again presented in a cogent and logical way with numerous examples and analogies drawn from the ordinary, familiar lives of his Bengali audience. As a result of the success of that book, Kanupriya Goswami was given the title of "Teacher of the Science of the Divine Name" by other Vaiṣṇava writers and groups of the time. The rest of Kanupriya's books were in some way centered around

¹⁰Kishoraray Goswami, *Śrī Nāmaśraye jīvana theke nitya jīvane Jaya Śrī Śrī Gaurarāyahari*, 6.

his book on the holy name. Two more volumes of the *Thought-jewel* came out eventually and two other books, *A Small Piece of the Mystery of Bhakti* and *A Small Drop of the Mystery of Passionate Bhakti*, both rather large in size, which the author introduces as texts meant to be read as introductions to his work on the holy name. Thus, Kanupriya produced six major texts in Bengali with numerous citations from the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava scriptures and a series of essays edited by his nephews that were based on his lectures delivered at various times and in various places. In the course of all these books and lectures, Kanupriya Goswami presents a reasonably well-argued and scripturally based theology of the Caitanya tradition. Taken all together, in fact, his books present a relatively complete and authentic course in the worldview, philosophical orientation, and practices of the modern Caitanya Vaiṣṇavism.

Though Kanupriya Goswami never formally became an renunciant, he lived a life of simple renunciation, austerity and religious practice. He never married. He devoted his full attention to the sacred image that he worshiped throughout his life, an ancient painting of Śrī Caitanya that he inherited from his father. The image's name is Śrī Gaurarāya, another name for Śrī Caitanya and is the combined form of Śrī Caitanya and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is Caitanya but portrayed with some of the traits of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, such as his famous flute. For all intents and purposes Śrī Gaurarāya was his family. His life was largely devoted to the daily worship and service of Śrī Gaurarāya, the study of the sacred texts of his tradition, private worship (*bhajana*) and the writing of books and giving of lectures and speeches on holidays and special occasions. He passed away in 1975.

Theology in the Modern Caitanya Vaiṣṇava Context

What does theology mean when applied to the works of writers like Śrī Kanupriya Goswami in the context of the modern world? Obviously, theology does not mean the academic study of theology. Writers like Kanupriya were never trained nor did they study in any academic institution or environment. As far as I know there are no institutions in existence that are for the Caitanya tradition what seminaries and yeshivas are for the Christian and Jewish traditions. For writers like him theology was a part of their religious practices. One of the forms of practice that is prominent among followers of the Caitanya tradition, and indeed of

many of the *bhakti* traditions of North India, is Kṛṣṇa-kathā, participating in discourses on, discussions, narrations, textual recitations, and elucidations of the mythical story and character of Kṛṣṇa. It is a form of oral and aural meditation and the source of deep emotional and sometimes ecstatic responses in the audience. Such experiences are called *rasa* or *bhakti-rasa* and are much sought after in the tradition. This practice naturally extends to all of Kṛṣṇa's descents or *avatāras*. Thus, discourses on Śrī Caitanya, who is believed to be a descent of Kṛṣṇa, are also included in the practice of Kṛṣṇa-kathā.

One might expect that amateur theologians like Kanupriya Goswami might lack the philosophical sophistication of their counterparts in the West who were trained in the monasteries and great universities of Europe and the *madrasas* of Northern Africa and the Middle East. Just as the great Christian, Jewish, and Muslim theologians drew heavily upon Greek (Plato, Aristotle, etc.) and Roman philosophers (Plotinus, etc.), Hindu theologians had a rich fund of traditional Sanskrit learning and philosophical reflections to draw upon. Thus, when discussing epistemology and when framing valid syllogisms, writers like Kanupriya could draw upon the discussions of the schools of ancient logicians (Naiyāyikas) and Vedāntins (those who dealt most directly with the Upaniṣadic texts), as he does, for instance, in the opening sections of book, *A Small Piece of the Mystery of Bhakti*.¹¹ When discussing and applying hermeneutics to various verses of the Upaniṣads and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* they could turn to techniques developed in the early school of Mīmāṃsā to aid in the interpretation of Vedic texts. When discussing aesthetics, there was the rich tradition of Sanskrit aesthetics stretching back a thousand years, especially relating to the aesthetic experience (*rasa*), to draw on. It is not even necessary for Kanupriya to be aware of the ultimate sources of the ideas and methodologies he is using to be able to apply them properly to the problems at hand. Three thousand years of unbroken and self-reflexive tradition comes to the aid of writers like Kanupriya Goswami like that extra pair of arms so often included in the iconic images of Viṣṇu.

1. What conventions does he observe in constructing and presenting his theology within his tradition?
2. What is the theology of that KG presents?

- (a) The metaphor of power and possessor of power.
 - (b) The different types of power.
 - (c) The pleasure-giving power (*hlādinī-śakti*) which draws deity to living being like a bee to a flower.
 - (d) Bhakti as a manifestation of the pleasure-giving power.
3. Where does his theology of the holy name fit in?
 4. CV theology as an example of a variety of panentheism.

The Power and Province of Saṅga

1. KG frames his discussion of CV around the concept or phenomenon of *saṅga* in these lectures.
2. What is *saṅga*?
3. How does it spread *bhakti*?
4. Memes?
5. Is the spreading of a disease or infection a workable or proper metaphor here for the spreading of *bhakti*?
6. The power of the model.
7. The imitation of a model as the root understanding of the nature of religious cultivation.
8. Note the fine line KG must walk here in order to be both inclusive and exclusive at the same time.

Conventions Observed in this Translation

1. The use of KG's Bengali translations of the Sanskrit verses instead of my own direct translations, because he often promotes a specific interpretation of the verse or passage in question and that interpretation is important to his argument.

2. Use of the English word "threads" instead of "qualities" for the Sanskrit word *guṇa*.
3. Justification for the different translations of the types of threads (transparent, translucent, and opaque instead of goodness, passion and darkness).
4. Propriety of translating *jñānin* as gnostic and *jñāna* as gnosis. Possible confusion introduced because specific associations of those words in the western religions.

Bengali Editor's Introduction

I consider the primary cause of the appearance of the present book before the eyes of the people of the world to be the auspicious will and unbounded compassion of Śrī Śrī Gaurarāyahari¹² And, for his special grace on this fallen soul, I wish before all else to offer my obeisance at his lotus-like feet—the reservoir of all his blessings.

I think there is a special need on the part of this humble soul to offer a few very brief comments on the history and purpose of the editing and publishing of this book.

The speaker of all the materials of this book is my most honorable [uncle] Śrīmat Kānupriya Goswami—whose many written works, which are full of fundamental research and the conclusions of scripture, books such as *The True Nature and Function of the Living Being (Jīver Svārūpa o Svadharma)*, *The Thought-jewel of the Holy Name (Śrī Nāma-cintāmaṇi)*, *A Small Particle of the Secret of Bhakti (Śrī Bhakti-rahasya-kaṇikā)*, and so forth, are well known to many good folk in the Vaiṣṇava world and are studied and highly respected by them. It seems hardly necessary to point out the futility of an insignificant person like me giving an introduction to someone like him.

I will only humbly present, in the next few pages, what little needs to be said concerning the history and beginnings of the materials I have collected together and edited into the form of these essays, now issued

¹²This is the name of the sacred image worshiped by the author, Śrī Kanupriya Goswami, and his nephew, Gaurarāya Dāsa Goswami, the collector and editor of this collection of his uncle's lectures.

in the form of a book, entirely on the basis of subjects collected from his lectures on Hari.

At present¹³ most revered Goswami Prabhu has lived in his *āśrama*-house near the bank of the Ganges in the holy abode of Navadvīpa and has remained wholeheartedly engaged in the daily worship of his sacred image Śrī Gaurarāyahari, one year after another for twenty years. This many people know. People from the surrounding area also know about the regular lectures that he gives in the courtyard of his *āśrama*-house in observance of every special holy day, before an audience of *sādhus* and good folk, on the methods and goals that are founded on the teachings of the Śrī Gaudīta Vaiṣṇava tradition, and especially on principles and greatness of the holy names. They also know how many people, hearing those lectures, feel themselves greatly edified and filled with an indescribable joy. I have myself on many occasions been fortunate enough to be present in that *āśrama* when he was delivering those lectures. Realizing the special usefulness of all those priceless lectures in bestowing superb guidance for travellers on the path of the highest goal and in pointing out the means of obtaining the greatest peace in the midst of the inhospitable conditions of the present time, I am always carefully keeping notes of all the subjects I have heard. It is not possible to keep any written account of all the lectures that Śrīmat Goswami Prabhu has given to date. Whether or not someone else among his circle of listeners (audience) has made any efforts in this matter, I do not know. Though all those lectures, which are very sweet and which are enlivened by the force of his own deep feelings, along with their fine conclusions on many matters that very difficult to understand and their analysis of considerations and arguments that is quite appropriate for the present age, are most useful and enjoyable for the broader general public, since there is no suitable arrangement to make them available, they will remain engraved in the memories of a few bright people for a while and then in the end will disappear beyond time's veil into the unknown. I find this to be a truly painful and lamentable matter.

For the present world which is scorched by the torments of the Age of Kali, all of his lectures are like a great, powerful medicine, which has issued from his heart by the impetus of Śrī Gaura. They seem as if they have appeared almost on their own. If one were able to put all

¹³This book was published in 1970. So the editor of the Bengali text wrote this introduction in 1969 or 1970. At that time, Śrī Kanupriya Goswami was still alive. The translator of this work also met Goswami several years later in 1974 at his house in Navadvīpa.

those lectures into the form of an essay and publish it as a book, then it would have a less fleeting existence. This was how I considered it, at least within my own deliberations. How others may think about it or accept it, I have no way knowing. On this matter, everyone has his own an independent way of thinking about it.

For this reason there is this effort on the part of someone as low and ignorant as me, even though I am unqualified in every way—yet I perceive that in the midst of this there is the impetus of the grace of most compassionate Śrī Gaurahari on this poor soul. The first fruit of this insignificant person's labors is the publication of the present essay in the form of a book.

In my editing of all the lectures into the form of an essay, I have tried as much as possible to keep it unchanged and to keep the words he used in particular places undisturbed. Nevertheless, at the time of my turning them into an essay it is not unexpected that some errors, inadvertent mistakes, and such may have been introduced into it through my own inexperience. If the audience of intelligent readers will please point out any failing like that, I will with thanks endeavor to correct it. If there is any need to inquire about some subject or inform me about something, please write to the publisher's address.

The present essay is a much altered, enlarged, and corrected version of an essay that was published previously under the title "The Roots of the Birth of *Bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa is Association with Holy Men" (*Kṛṣṇabhakti Janmamūla—Haya Sādhusaṅga*) in various issues (14-2-69 to 14-8-69) of the journal, *Himādrī*. In the publication of that essay, because of many flaws like printing mistakes, exclusions, the changing around of words and sentences, it became practically incomprehensible. Also since the essay was published in parts, absorbing its full meaning was difficult. For all these reasons and especially because of being implored on the necessity of its being reprinted in the form of a book in the opinion of several sympathetic readers, the corrected essay is published as the present book under the name "On Association with the Great Ones" (*Mahat-saṅga Prasaṅga*).

There is another announcement. If this present book infuses a little enthusiasm into the community of its good and intelligent readers, if they perceive it as useful, if as a result of that they express an interest I will be encouraged in this work. If that happens I will write this kind of essay the brief notes of his other lectures which I have collected and it will be possible to publish them gradually under the name of the "A

Garland of Works of Speeches on the Lord" (*Śrībhāgavatī-vāṇī Granthamālā*). Nourishing this hope, the present work, as an introduction, has been selected as the first blossom of that garland. After this, the only provisions on the path of fulfilling this great undertaking for someone insignificant like me is the causeless grace of Śrī Gaurahari and the blessings and wellwishes of his *bhaktas* and, of course, the grace of Śrī Guru; this is for me my only source of strength.

Finally, there is this announcement: the entire responsibility for the work of printing this book along with the burden of correcting its proofs was undertaken with special enthusiasm by the retired librarian of the municipale corporation of Calcutta, Śrī Ahīndranārāyaṇa Śarmā Caudhuri. Without his help the publication of this book would not have been possible. Therefore, feeling deeply indebted to him I pray only for the complete prosperity and favorability of his worship at the feet of Śrī Gaura.

Begging for the grace of the *bhaktas*,

the humble editor (Śrī Gaurarayadas Goswami)

Śrī Dolapūrṇimā, 1376 (1970), Śrī Caitanyābda 484

Part I

On Associating with Great Ones

Chapter One

I praise him, the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya, whose grace makes even a lame person cross over a mountain and a mute person recite the Vedas.¹⁴

Among all the embodied beings, the fleeting human body is very rarely attained. Even then, meeting someone who is dear to Vaikuṇṭha is even rarer still.¹⁵

At the beginning of this essay on the auspicious topic of the great benefit and influence of contact with those few, very rare great souls, a bit of clarity is needed concerning the causes of the conditions of misery, consisting of bondage to the cycle of rebirth and redeath that is produced by the adverse actions of embodied living beings who are beginninglessly turned away from Hari. In the *Gītā* the Lord himself says:

Transparency, translucency, and opacity, the [three] threads born out of Nature (Prakṛti), bind the imperishable embodied being to the body, Great-armed one.¹⁶

¹⁴Cc., 1.3.1:

पङ्कुं लङ्घयते शैलं मूकमावर्तयेच्छृतम् ।
यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे कृष्णचैतन्यमीश्वरम् ।

¹⁵Bhāg., 11.2.29:

दुर्लभो मानुषो देहो देहिनां क्षणाभङ्गुरः ।
तत्रापि दुर्लभं मन्ये वैकुण्ठप्रियदर्शनं ॥

¹⁶Bg., 14.5:

Although by true nature a changeless, eternal, and deathless self, the living being, beginninglessly turned away from Kṛṣṇa, is, through its own adverse works, united by Māyā with a body made of the three threads and as a result of that it wanders through the jungle of cyclic material existence on the two feet of birth and death. From time without beginning it wanders so. Therefore, becoming freed from connection with those three threads, transparency and so forth, is the way for all the living beings to be saved from fear, anxiety, unhappiness, and lamentation and to reach immortality. That is taught in the *Gītā*, too:

Passing beyond these three threads that spring from the body,
the embodied being is freed from birth, death, old age, and
misery and becomes immortal.¹⁷

If one is to overcome those three threads, one needs at the root of that endeavor the appropriate faith (*śraddhā*), since at the root of all of the endeavors of living beings the presence of the appropriate type of faith is necessary. The natural faith of the living being who is bound by the three threads is in accordance with the different threads among the three, transparency and so forth, and thus is of three types. By that thread-induced faith the living being strives for a thread-bound object. As [stated in the *Gītā*]:

Threefold is the faith of embodied beings born of their na-
tures: transparent, translucent, and opaque. Hear of that
from me.¹⁸

Therefore, the faith that is needed as the basis of efforts to overcome the three threads should be free of thread or thread-less (*nirguṇa*). Striving for a thread-less object is not produced by the natural, thread-bound

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।
निबध्नति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥

¹⁷Bg., 14.20:

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन् देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।
जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ।

¹⁸Bg., 17.2:

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।
सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥

faith of the living being. The Lord himself says that by means of a particular kind of faith one strives for a particular kind of object:

Faith in matters of the higher self (knowledge, yoga, austerity, etc.) is from transparency; faith in the rites (that bring one to heaven and so forth) is from thread of translucency; and faith in matters contrary to piety (or the law) is from the thread of opacity. However, faith in my service is free of the threads.¹⁹

Therefore at the root of an attempt to cultivate pure *bhakti*, free from all the material threads and having the form of worship of the Lord, one must have a thread-free faith relating to the Lord. By means of a faith different from that, a faith influenced by the material threads, it is not possible to strive to cultivate thread-free *bhakti*. For this reason, when one obtains by some stroke of tremendous good luck thread-free faith, one will be able to engage in the cultivation of *bhakti* for the Lord. And by that *bhakti* one will easily become freed from the ropes made of the three material threads.

For this reason, the Lord himself has pointed out the way that is the best and the easiest for the living beings among all the other ways of becoming freed from the ropes of Māyā's three threads:

This divine Māyā of mine, composed of the threads, is very difficult to cross beyond. Those who surrender to me cross beyond this Māyā.²⁰

Thus, the best way to cross over the difficult-to-cross, three-threaded Māyā is *bhakti* defined as surrender only to the Lord. For the living being, who is a minute particle of consciousness under the control of Māyā, taking shelter at the feet of the Lord, who is unlimited consciousness in

¹⁹Bhāg. 11.25.27:

सात्विक्याध्यात्मिकी श्रद्धा कर्मश्रद्धा तु राजसी ।
तामस्यधर्मे या श्रद्धा मत्सेवायां तु निर्गुणा ॥

²⁰Bg., 7.14:

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

control of Māyā is the natural path to overcome Māyā. Nevertheless, as long as at the root of that endeavor, thread-free faith in matters relating to the Lord, has not been infused, even if the Lord himself instructs one to adopt the *bhakti* of faith characterized by surrender, no living being can take it up without that thread-free faith. Therefore it is seen that after giving instructions on topics of rites, knowledge, yoga, austerity, and so forth, as his last order and highest instruction, the Lord himself, offering freedom from fear to the living beings wandering about restlessly on the path of mundance existence in repeated birth and death, calls out to them with great emphasis to give up all other practices and simply surrender to him:

Give up all other duties (*dharma*s) and surrender to me alone.
I will free you from all sins. Do not grieve.²¹

To respond to that call, however, one needs thread-free faith related to the Lord. Without that no one can respond to that accentuated call. Therefore, those engaged in rites, those cultivating knowledge, those practicing yoga, and so forth, each according to his or her own respective thread influenced faiths — whatever subject they are engaged in, they remain endowed with faith in that subject. The reason for this is that without being connected with thread-free faith, even the Lord's own invitation to take shelter with the Lord who is beyond all the threads is useless — as long as along with that call one is not infused with thread-free faith relating to the Lord.

In order to reveal this secret to all living beings befuddled by Māyā with her three threads the Lord himself said:

Those situated in translucency, transparency, and opacity worship the gods and so forth, headed by Indra who delight in translucency, transparency, and opacity. In that way they do not worship me.²²

²¹Bg., 18.66:

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज ।
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

²²Bhāg. 11.21.32:

रजःसत्त्वतमोनिष्ठा रजःसत्त्वतमोजुषः ।
उपासते इन्द्रमुख्यान् देवादीन् तथैव माम् ॥

Therefore, one is able to understand this: the appearance or non-appearance in a living being, who is under the control of *māyā*, of engagement in thread-free *bhakti* for the Lord, which is the very best way to gain freedom from worldly existence, has but one cause—the connection or lack thereof with a suitable thread-free faith in the Lord.

The sublime occurrence that is at the root of thread-free faith relating to the Lord, or in other words, the one and only way to obtain *bhakti* for the Lord, is association with and service of the great *bhaktas* of the Lord.

By contact with the saintly arise discussions, like medicines for the heart and ear, that reveal my prowess. By enjoying those, faith [ie., *bhakti* as practice preceded by faith], attraction [ie., *bhakti* feeling (*bhāva*)] , and *bhakti* [ie., *bhakti* as love (*preman*)] towards [me], who am the path to final freedom, quickly develop one after another.²³

Now I will begin to discuss, as far as I am able, the nature and greatness of those rare great ones, the lovers of the Lord, who are the only means to attain that very difficult to attain *bhakti* of the Lord.

Bhakti is primarily of two types: threaded and unthreaded. For the embodied living being who is in the state of being threaded or bound by the threads of transparency and so forth, deceit or ignorance must exist. Therefore, as long as that deceit continues, people in general are inclined, in accordance with the threads and their operations, to engage in efforts to achieve thread-bound enjoyment and liberation. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* this point has been made:

That deceit that I call the opacity of ignorance
is the desire for piety, wealth, sense enjoyment and liberation.

Among those the primary deceit is the desire for liberation.
Because of that *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa disappears.²⁴

²³Bhāg. 3.25.24:

सतां प्रसङ्गान्मम वीर्यसंविदो
भवन्ति हृत्कर्णरसायणाः कथाः ।
तज्जोषणादाश्चपवर्गवर्त्मनि
अद्धा रतिर्भक्तिरनुक्रमिष्यति ॥

²⁴Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Cc), 1.1.50:

The natural inclination towards the thread-free Lord or towards *bhakti* for him in the form of service and so forth is unable to appear. Therefore, in the thread-bound condition allowances are made in all the scriptures for enjoyment and liberation, that is, the “four classes” centering around piety, wealth, sense enjoyment, and liberation, so that one might gain the greatest benefit possible in accordance with the threads. For that a natural, thread-bound faith is useful for people in general.

Now, let’s briefly consider this subject a bit more. In the material world generally speaking the “four classes,” also known as the “four goals of human life” (*puruṣārthas*), are piety, wealth, and sensual pleasure within the category of enjoyment and, beyond those, liberation. They are all related to the material threads. At the root of all the actions of living beings is a faith born of their natures. By the translucent and the opaque faiths, according to their natures, an interest in enjoyment arises and by the transparent or illumined faith an interest in liberation arises. But, *bhakti* is essentially thread-free. In a living being touched by the threads, because of the absence of thread-free faith connected with the Lord, an interest in or inclination towards thread-free behavior connected with the Lord or pure *bhakti* does not arise.

In the *Gītā* this is said with respect to the inclination towards material or thread-bound things arising from thread-induced faith:

The transparent or illumined worship the gods, the translucent worship supernatural spirits [*yakṣas* and *rakṣas*, semi-divine beings] and the others, the opaque or unillumined people, worship the dead, the ghosts.²⁵

Though the faiths of the three threads is discussed in this place in the *Gītā*, thread-free faith is not mentioned. The thread-free faith in the form of service to the Lord has been discussed in the previously cited verse from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (3.25.24).

*ajñānatamer nāma kahi ye kaitava
dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa-vāñchā ei sava
tār madhye mokṣa-vāñchā kaitava pradhāna
yāhā haite Kṛṣṇabhakti haya antardhāna*

²⁵Bg., 17.4:

यजन्ते सात्त्विका देवान् यच्चरद्वांसि राजसाः ।
प्रेतान् भूतगणाञ्चान्ये यजन्ते तामसा जनाः ॥

Now the thing to know is that in order for the practices like rites, knowledge, *yoga*, and penance and so forth, which are born out of thread-induced faiths, to succeed, connection with *bhakti* is completely necessary. For this reason the *bhakti* that is connected with the performance of all those thread-bound practices so that they are brought to life and made successful is known by the name “threaded *bhakti*” (*saguṇa-bhakti*). That *bhakti* that is pure, free of the intention of achieving one’s own happiness, and has the sole objective of serving the Lord free of desire is known as thread-free *bhakti* (*nirguṇa-bhakti*). Śrī Rūpa in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* has described it in this way:

All efforts or engagements of the body, mind and speech for Kṛṣṇa if they are not antagonistic but completely favorable [towards him] are called *bhakti*. And if that *bhakti* is not clouded by any other sort of desire or the quest for knowledge or ritual success or something like that, and is completely unmixed then it is called the highest *bhakti*.²⁶

When this supreme or pure *bhakti* arises, not even the slightest desire for any thing else awakens in the devotee’s heart except for the desire to meet the Lord in order to serve him.

That a connection with and the assistance of *bhakti* is necessary for the success and invigoration of all the other forms of practice is understood from the scriptures:

As all living beings thrive in the shelter of their mothers, so do the successes (*siddhi*) thrive by connecting themselves with *bhakti*.²⁷

Therefore the author of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* has revealed that same idea in his book in many places:

²⁶Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (Brs.), 1.1.11:

अन्याभिलाषिताशून्यं ज्ञानकर्माद्यनावृतं ।
आनुकूल्येन कृष्णानुशीलनं भक्तिरुत्तमा ॥

²⁷Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 11.569:

जीवन्ति जन्तवः सर्वे यथा मातरमाश्रिताः ।
तथा भक्तिं समाश्रित्य सर्वा जीवन्ति सिद्धयः ॥

Without *bhakti* no practice is able to produce any result
All results bestows *bhakti*, independent and powerful.²⁸

“Rituals, *yoga*, and knowledge look to the face of *bhakti*.” Therefore, if any performance of the four classes [of human activity] is done without *bhakti*, it will not produce results. For this there is much evidence in the scriptures. Though *bhakti* is manifested in both forms, thread-bound and unthreaded, in actuality they are both the same *bhakti*. It is just like a mother who has two conditions, one as a servant of Kṛṣṇa and the other as the protector of her children. The servant of Kṛṣṇa form is her bright and shining, pure condition. And again in the process of caring for her children her caring for them requires her to do unclean things sometimes and thus she is seen in an impure form through contact with the impure. In that way too even *bhakti*, though by nature pure, appears as unthreaded or threaded because of being pure or impure in accordance with whether the intention of its possessor is “for Kṛṣṇa” or “for myself.” When connected with the threads it does not bring about the appearance of its main result which is unthreaded *preman-bhakti*. Rather, being by nature like a desire-fulfilling tree, in its threaded form it joins itself with the various means and practices to achieve the desires of the living beings such as enjoyment, liberation, and the supernatural powers and thus only bestows its secondary results — it invigorates those various means or practices.

On the other hand, if that unthreaded source of faith in the Lord, self-manifesting *bhakti* or *Bhāgavata-dharma* (the characteristic trait of a lover of Bhagavān, the Lord) is not infused into the living being itself by its own grace through the medium of association with unmotivated great ones, then it cannot be attained even with the thousands of practices like rituals, knowledge and so forth that are touched by the threads. Therefore, that most beneficial *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, which beyond all human effort, is very rarely attained.

Through the path of knowledge liberation is easily attained
and enjoyments like heaven and so forth through sacrifices
and other pious acts. But this [self-revealing] *bhakti* to Hari

²⁸Cc., 2.24.65:

*bhakti vinā kono sādhana dite nāre phala
sarba phala dey bhakti svatantra prabala*

is very hard to attain even with thousands of that sort of threaded practices.²⁹

Therefore it has been determined that the main result of *bhakti* to the Lord is the appearance of love for the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and its secondary or subsidiary result is success in the four classes (*caturvarga*) of human endeavor. This is known from the scriptures:

Whatever results are attainable through sacrificial rites, penance, knowledge, renunciation, the eightfold *yoga* system, charity, and even other beneficial practices my *bhakta* quickly attains through *bhakti* to me, even heaven, liberation, and my own abode, if somehow, though my *bhakta* does not desire them, he has even a little desire for them because they may be favorable to his worship [of me].³⁰

This unthreaded or pure *bhakti* is also known as perfected by nature, the highest, singular, unmixed, unadulterated, and so forth. There is only one way for it to be planted in the heart of a living being — the finest association with and mercy of the great *bhaktas*, that is, of the saintly ones, and of the discussions of Hari that arise from that. That sort of association is called “uncaused” (*ahaituka*) which is to say that it is not attained as a result of one’s own ability, wealth, or efforts.

Some people through some special good fortune attained by chance or, in other words, by association with and the grace of a *bhakta* of the Lord, have developed faith in discussions of the Lord’s names, qualities, forms, and sports and are not overly detached from rituals and their results, thinking them

²⁹Brs., 1.1.36:

ज्ञानतः सुलभा मुक्तिर्भुक्तिर्यज्ञादिपुण्यतः ।
सेयं साधनसाहस्रैर्हरिभक्तिः सुदुर्लभा ॥

³⁰Bhāg., 11.20.32-33:

यत्कर्मभिर्यत्तपसा ज्ञानवैराद्यतश्च यत् ।
योगेन दानधर्मेण श्रेयोभिरितरैरपि ॥
सर्वं मद्भक्तियोगेन मद्भक्तो लभतेऽज्ञसा ।
स्वर्गापवर्गं मद्दाम कथञ्चिद्यदि वाञ्छति ॥

illusory like those desiring liberation, nor are they, on the other hand, overly attached to them like those who desire enjoyment from them. For such people *bhakti* brings about success [that is, it bestows love (*preman*)].³¹

One can supply an example here. It is like how in the ordinary world one can acquire, in exchange for an adequate amount of money, silver, gold, ordinary jewels and precious stones at a shop. But one cannot acquire the truly rare jewels like the Kaustubha, Syamantaka, or Kohinor there. Even if one can pay an adequate amount of money, those rare jewels cannot be bought. Those priceless gems are things rightfully enjoyed by emperors and kings of kings. Only through such an emperor's dear friends and by their grace is one able to acquire those kinds of jewels. Pure *bhakti* is like a great jewel, too. Apart from the compassion of one of the Lord's dear friends there is no other way to obtain that jewel.

The difference between *bhakti* in its threaded and unthreaded forms can be understood from Kapila's teachings to his mother Devahūti. First he talks about threaded *bhakti*:

Bhakti-yoga is recognized to be of many types by its different paths, noble lady. Its state is variegated by the manner of the threads and nature of the human beings [who practice it].³²

Then thread-free *bhakti* is described. Just like pure stream of the Gaṅgā, the purifier of the fallen, arising from its source in Gomukhī flows down in a thousand streams and purifies everything and everyone who touches it, so do the streams of pure *bhakti*, originating from the eternal companions of the Lord in his eternal abode, appear in this

³¹Bhāg., 11.20.8:

यदृच्छया मत्कथादौ जातश्चद्वस्तु यः पुमान् ।
न निर्विण्णो नातिसक्तो भक्तियोगोऽस्य सिद्धिदः ॥

The phrase *yadṛcchayā*, "by chance," in this verse is glossed by "somehow by the appearance of some good fortune born of the completely independent grace of and association with a *bhakta* of the Lord," केनापि परमस्वतन्त्रभगवद्भक्तसङ्गतत्कृपाजातमङ्गलोदयेन, in the *Bhakti-sandarbhā* of Śrī Jīva.

³²Bhāg., 3.29.7:

भक्तियोगो बहुविधो मार्गैर्भाविनि भाव्यते ।
स्वभावगुणामार्गेण पुंसां भावो विभिद्यते ॥

universe produced by Māyā through the lineal successions of the great ones and infuse the hearts of living beings with pure *bhakti* whose root is faith connected with the Lord.

Just as the Gaṅgā flows in a stream of pure water without ceasation down to the sea, the mind moves without interruption, by the mere hearing of my qualities, to me who am in the hearts of all. Such is the definition put forward of thread-free *bhakti-yoga*, *bhakti* for the Supreme Person which is not shrouded by knowledge, rituals and so forth and which is not performed for any other purpose.³³

The definition of the highest *bhakti* that is given in the *Nārada-pañcarātra* is not in any way different from the definition of pure or the highest *bhakti* described by Rūpa Gosvāmin in his verse beginning *anyābhilāsitā-śūnyam*. For instance:

That service of Hṛṣīkeśa (Kṛṣṇa) by means of the senses that is free of all qualifications [free of all desires for enjoyment in this world and the next] and that, being linked only with the desire to please Kṛṣṇa alone, is pure [unshrouded by knowledge, rites, and so forth], is the highest *bhakti*.³⁴

Therefore, that highest *bhakti* or pure *bhakti* which is the very core of the consciousness power (*saṁvit*) intimately united with the core of the pleasure power within the essential powers (*svarūpa-śakti*)³⁵ cannot be any part of this deadened world of Māyā. That self-revealing *dharma*

³³Bhāg., 3.29.11-12:

मद्गुणश्रुतिमात्रेण मयि सर्वगुहाशये ।
मनोगतिरविच्छिन्ना यथा गङ्गाम्भसोऽम्बुधौ ॥
लक्षणं भक्तियोगस्य निर्गुणस्य ह्युदाहृतम् ।
अहैतुक्वव्यवहिता या भक्तिः पुरुषोत्तमे ॥

³⁴*Nārada-pañcarātra* cited at Brs, 1.1.11-12:

सर्वोपाधिनिर्मुक्तं तत्परत्वेन निर्मलं ।
हृषीकेण हृषीकेशसेवनं भक्तिरुत्तमा ॥

³⁵The phrase that defines *bhakti* in the Caitanya tradition is: *hlādinī-sāra-samaveta-saṁvit-sāra-rūpā*, “the essence or core of consciousness [power] united with the essence or core of pleasure [power].” See Baladeva, for instance, *Siddhānta-ratna*, para. 38. [Trans.]

of the Lord in the form of waves of *bhakti*, in order to enlarge the ultimate good fortune of living beings, who are bound beginninglessly to this world, flows in one stream from Śrī Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā, from Brahmā to Nārada and from Nārada to Vyāsa, Śuka and so forth, and also in another stream in the lineage from Saṅkarṣaṇa to the Catuḥsana, to Sāṅkhyāyana, Parāśara, Maitreya, Vidura and so forth. Then, both streams uniting into one in Śuka's words and gushing up like a fountain of the highest nectar in the presence of thousands and thousands of seers, brāhmaṇa-seers, king-seers, great seers, god-seers, and seers of Brahman in the assembly occasioned by King Parīkṣit's sitting down in his fast unto death, it ceaselessly flows in this phenomenal world through channels in the form of the successions of pure *bhakta*. The simultaneous conjunction of these two causes — the most elevated contact with the successions in the form of unmotivated association with the great ones (1) and hearing discussions of Hari, like streams of the Gaṅgā, from the mouths of those saintly ones (2) — infuses pure *bhakti* into the hearts of living beings. This subject was mentioned previously in the verse beginning *satām prasaṅgān mama vīryasaṁvidah*.

The living being is beginninglessly turned away from Hari and struck low by Māyā through the beguilement of ignorance, has forgotten its true self-nature and confuses itself with the lumpen body. As a result of that, it becomes blinded by illusions in the form of the subtle traces or residual desires (*vāsanā*) for material objects. Therefore, when the living being is in that state of identification with matter, its own essential and innate condition as a servant of Kṛṣṇa is not revealed. Just as at the touch of the morning's rays of light in the form of contact with the great ones, a lotus flower gradually begins to blossom in the light of day, so does the lotus of the living being's heart, in which, after the beginningless darkness of ignorance is destroyed, a sense of being a servant of Kṛṣṇa or of being turned toward Kṛṣṇa awakens. It is said: *matsmṛtiḥ sādhu-sevayā*,³⁶ "from contact with and service of the saintly, a living being's recollection of Kṛṣṇa, lost for an eternity, is awakened." In this way a living being who has turned towards Kṛṣṇa is transformed into a pure living being. In that state, pure *bhakti* in the form of stories of Kṛṣṇa arising from contact with the great is passed into the pure heart of the living being and finally, like nectar suffusing a lotus flower, the heart of the living being is infused with the honey of divine love (*preman*), which is the only thing enjoyed by that bumblebee Kṛṣṇa.

³⁶Bhāg., 11.11.45.

A small pot that is upside down in a rainstorm is at first, by the force of the rain, turned rightside up and then along with that is filled by the rain showers. But when water falls on the pot in its upside down condition, though the dirt on its outside is surely cleansed away, it is not filled with water. In a similar way when one has contact with stories about Kṛṣṇa in some other fashion, not through contact with the saintly, the exterior impurities of the heart are indeed removed. But one only gets the secondary results of that in the form of the four groups [of goals, that is, of piety, wealth, sense enjoyment and liberation]. As a result of contact with the saintly, however, like a pot being straightened up by the rain, the operations of the heart of the living being are changed from being beginninglessly turned away from the Lord to being turned towards the Lord and in the showers of pure *bhakti* in the form of stories about Kṛṣṇa from the mouths of the saintly, the vessel of the heart, starting with faith and so forth, becomes filled with the water of thread-free *bhakti*. The destruction of the border-line living being's identification with matter and the living being's becoming identified with the Lord's essential power (*svarūpa-śakti*) through pure *bhakti* is the benefit of all benefits — the highest attainment of all attainments. This can only occur from happenstance conjunction of two causes simultaneously — the instrumental cause of contact with the saintly and the material cause of stories about Kṛṣṇa [heard in that company].

Practically speaking apart from the conjunction of contact with the saintly and the *bhakti-yoga* of hearing and praising that comes from that, there is no other way to attain *bhakti*. I am the only shelter of the saintly.³⁷

³⁷Bhāg., 11.11.48:

प्रायेणा भक्तियोगेन सत्सङ्गेन विनोद्धव ।
नोपायो विद्यते सम्यक्प्रायणां सतामहम् ॥

Chapter Two

“Association with the saintly is the source of the birth of *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa.”³⁸ By this statement, association with the saintly (*sādhū-saṅga*) is said to be the root of birth of *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, it is first necessary to discuss to some degree the nature of the saintly or great ones, that is, to ascertain their essential defining characteristics.

Just as in the case of the knower, knowledge and the thing known, by the conjunction of those three with each other, each of the three is known. In the presence of one of them the presence of the other two is unavoidable. In the same way the *bhakta*, *bhakti*, and Bhagavān (the Lord) have an unbreakable connection with each other. Therefore, wherever the *bhakta* is, there is *bhakti* in the form of discussions about Hari. And wherever *bhakti* is, there Bhagavān is certain to be present too. Therefore, there is an inseparable connection between these three. These three are one and one is these three. And the co-existence of these three together is known in the world as Bhāgavata-dharma, the law of the Lord.

Though discussions of Hari or talks about the names, the forms, the qualities, and the sports of Bhagavān are not different from him, there is in a special sense a principle of eternal non-difference between the holy named and the holy name. It is like a chickpea inside its skin. Though from the outside with the skin on, it appears to be one, inside the skin the existence of two peas is well known. In the same way in the covering of the skin of truth (*tattva*) the holy named and the holy name are non-different. Even so, freed from their covering they each exist separately. For the two peas in their skin there is no way to determine whose function it is to bud and so forth and thus those functions are perceived

³⁸Cc., 2.22.48: *kṛṣṇabhakti janmamūla haya sādhusaṅga*.

as simultaneously accomplished by both. In the same way the functions of endless creation and so forth are understood to be accomplished from both the natures of the holy named and holy name together.

Therefore, Brahman or Kṛṣṇa and the *praṇava* or the name of Kṛṣṇa that are mentioned in Śruti — the Named and the Name — to both of those is non-different agency assigned. Brahman and the conveyor of Brahman, the *praṇava* (*om*), since the two are principles that are not different from each other, what all of the Śruti say about Brahman in passages like: *sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ brahma*,³⁹ “all this is Brahman,” they also say about the conveyor of Brahman in passages like *omitīdaṃ sarvaṃ*,⁴⁰ “om is all this,” and *omityetadaḥsaramidaṃ sarvaṃ*,⁴¹ “the syllable om is all this.” In relationship to this non-difference, an even clearer statement exists in Śruti:

This syllable [*om*]⁴² is Brahman; this syllable is the highest.
Knowing this syllable, whatever one desires one achieves.⁴³

The Brahman, or the principle of non-dual knowledge (*advaya-jñāna-tattve*), mentioned in Śruti is manifested in two ways: it is either with or without qualification. Brahman with qualification is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, covered over by indirect statement.⁴⁴ Brahman without qualification is Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s bodily glow. Therefore, he is the foundation or resting place of Brahman. In the *Gītā*, there is Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s own statement on the matter: *brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhāham*, “I am the foundation or ground of Brahman without qualification.”

Therefore, when Brahman, the subject of speech, and the speech that conveys it, the *praṇava* or *omkāra*, are said to be non-different, then too the subject of speech, the Named, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the speech that conveys him, the Name of Kṛṣṇa or the holy name, should also be understood to be non-different. Bhagavān and the name of Bhagavān are non-different

³⁹Chānd. U., 3.14.1.

⁴⁰Tait. U., 1.7.

⁴¹Māṇḍukya U., 1.

⁴²*akṣara*, also “imperishable.”

⁴³Kāthaka U., 2.16:

एतद्धोवाचरं ब्रह्म एतद्धोवाचरं परम् ।
एतद्धोवाचरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत् ॥

⁴⁴Śruti (*Gopāla-tāpanī* ?): कृष्णो ब्रह्मैव शाश्वतम्, “Kṛṣṇa is eternal Brahman itself.”

as has been made well-known in all scriptures. Take for instance the *Padma Purāṇa*: *abhinnatvān nāma-nāmino*, “because of the non-difference of the Name and the Named.” There is a detailed discussion of this subject in the first section of my *Nāma-cintāmaṇi* (Thought-jewel of the Holy Name).

Again, since Brahman is the unqualified manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *praṇava* which conveys Brahman is the unqualified manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name or, in another way to put it,] the *praṇava*’s qualified manifestation is the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the name of Bhagavān. This, too, is understood from the evidence of scripture. Just as from the *praṇava* manifestation of the creation and of the Vedas and such is said to arise, so too from the eighteen syllable mantra of Kṛṣṇa’s names,⁴⁵ the entire creation along with the Vedas and the rest are said to arise. In the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* and other Śruti texts that is found in a more detailed manner.

Therefore from our deliberations on this subject so far this much can be established: when the three, *bhakta*, *bhakti*, and Bhagavān are found together in one place, then referring to it as “association with the saintly,” one means the meeting together in one place of the three: the *bhakta*, *bhakti*, and Bhagavān in his non-different nature as the holy name and the holy named. And the meaning of “talks of Hari” from the lips of a *bhakta* is talks about the names, forms, qualities, and sports of Hari. Moreover, since the names are mentioned first, the names are then understood to be the most important of them all, the very whole [of which the others are parts]. In addition, when the whole, the holy name, is present, its limbs or parts in the form of the nine types of *bhakti*, headed by hearing, praising, and so forth, and *bhakti*’s result, divine love (*preman*), are also present along with it. This is the essential definition of “the great” [in the phrase “association with the great,” *mahat-saṅga*]. In other words, by contact with the “raiser of the dead” in the form of the grace of the “great” in the combination of all those elements, the finest spiritual nature is awakened in the living being suffering under *māyā*. When that happens, pure *bhakti*, as discussions of Hari from the mouths of the saintly, is infused into the heart of the purified living being. In the gradual arising of that unthreaded (*nirguṇa*) *bhakti*, it appears in mind’s states of unclean, clean, and fully clean as the *bhakti* of practice, the *bhakti* of feeling, and the *bhakti* of love. The living being (*jīva*) is transformed into a *bhakta* (devotee) and attaining immortality is made eternally for-

⁴⁵The Gopāla-mantra.

tunate. This begins by the combination of being turned back towards Kṛṣṇa and of hearing the holy names from the mouths of the saintly, both of which result directly from association with the saintly, and then, as a result of those, the nine forms of *bhakti*, beginning with hearing and praising, appear and divine love arises gradually through the stages of faith and so forth. Since the holy name which is non-different from the holy named is present with the saintly, the holy name is worthy of being considered a material cause of pure *bhakti*. Therefore, in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said: *sādhū-saṅga nāma vinā prema nāhi haya*:⁴⁶ “association with the saintly does not become divine love without the holy name.” In other words, association with the saintly is the instrumental cause of divine love and the holy name is the material cause.

After this we have to discuss the “seed principle,” that is, the primary cause of the root of the birth of *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa. Just as the seed is the cause of the cause or the cause of the root of a tree, it is known from scripture that the Named and the Name, in essence non-different from each other, are simultaneously the seed of the root of the creation. Therefore the Named and the Name are seen being described as the seed principle in scripture. For instance [Kṛṣṇa says]:

Know me to be the eternal seed of all beings, son of Pṛthā.⁴⁷

Again, in reference to the holy name there is a statement: “seed of the tree of *dharma*.”⁴⁸ Or, in the *Caritāmṛta*: *kṛṣṇa-nāma bīja tāhe nā haya anikara*,⁴⁹ “the seed of the holy name in him has not sprouted,” and *bhakti-latā bīja*, “the seed of the vine of *bhakti*.”

In the statement from Śruti, *omitīdaṃ sarvaṃ*,⁵⁰ “the *om* is all this,” the indistinct name of Bhagavān is specified as the seed at the root of creation. Again in the *Brahma-saṃhitā*, in the verse *śabda-brahma-mayaṃ veṇuṃ vādayantaṃ mukhāmbuje*, “playing the flute made of sound-brahman

⁴⁶Cc., 3.3.253. The text found in Dr. Radhagovinda Nath’s edition is slightly different: *sādhū-kṛpā nāma vine prema nāhi haya*, “Without the grace of a holy one and the holy name, divine love does not arise.”

⁴⁷Bg, 7.10:

बीजं मां सर्वभूतानां विद्धि पार्थ सनातम् ।

⁴⁸*Padyāvalī*, 19: बीजं धर्मद्रुमस्य

⁴⁹Cc, 1.8.26.

⁵⁰Tait. U., 1.7.

with his lotus mouth ... ,” the presence through the flute, before the creation of the world by Brahmā, of the holy name and the holy named, in their non-different essence, as the seed is established as is the agency of the holy name in the creation of that world. In the previously mentioned *Gopāla-tāpanī* Kṛṣṇa’s name in the form of the eighteen-syllable mantra is described as the seed of the entirety of the universe of rebirth or as the cause of all and thus the supremacy of the name of Kṛṣṇa which is not different from Kṛṣṇa in the causation of the creation is indicated. Not only is it the cause or seed of the universe; the supremacy of the name of Kṛṣṇa as the seed at the root of the creation from the *praṇava* of the *gāyātrī* and from the *gāyātrī* of the Vedas has been proclaimed in scripture. Though this requires a lengthy discussion, a little glimpse of this subject can be had from the following quote:

Praṇava, the great word, is an image of God.
From the *praṇava* arise all the Vedas and the world.⁵¹

Therefore, from the seed of Kṛṣṇa’s name, which is non-different from Kṛṣṇa, appears the entire universe along with the scriptures headed by the Vedas. Also, although association with the saintly is said to be the root of *bhakti*, the seed or first cause of that root is the presence of the holy name in the saintly person’s heart and at the beginning of all discussions about Hari heard from the lips of saintly persons.

Thus, this much is known from the essential definition of the saintly or the great person, that through associating with the saintly it is possible to attain the simultaneously association with the *bhakta*, with *bhakti*, and with the Lord (in the indistinguishable forms of Name and Named) all together. Moreover, from the secondary definition, or the definition based on a knowledge of the effects of a thing, it is known that from the discussion of and hearing about the names, forms, qualities, and sports of Hari through the words of the saintly ones pure *bhakti* is infused into the hearts of the living beings.

“The living being’s true identity is eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa.”⁵² In accordance with this statement of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* being a servant of Kṛṣṇa is the living being’s eternal state of being, which, though eternally remaining in the hearts of living beings deluded by *māyā* is not

⁵¹Cc., 2.6.158:

praṇava se mahā-vākya īśvarer mūrti
praṇava haite sarva-veda jagater utpatti

⁵²Cc, 2.20.101: *jīver svarūpa haya kṛṣṇer nityadāsa*.

capable of manifestation because of their being beginninglessly turned away from him. By the influence of the association of the saintly the state of turning towards Kṛṣṇa arises. When that happens the backward conditions produced by ignorance: being an enjoyer (I am the enjoyer), being the agent (I am the doer), and being the master (I am the master) are erased from the hearts of the living beings and the pure awareness, “I am the servant of Kṛṣṇa, not of anyone else,”⁵³ arises. This is called being turned towards Kṛṣṇa. This is the living being’s eternal, essential nature. From the association and grace of the great ones that long dormant state of being a servant of Kṛṣṇa is awakened. But, the appearance of pure *bhakti* in the heart of the living being is not part of its essential nature. That attribute is infused from contact with narratives about Hari received from the mouths of the great ones. Since pure *bhakti* which is a function of the essential or internal power (*svatūpa-śakti*) is not able to reside by itself in the living being who is part of the marginal power (*taṭastha-śakti*), the living being is not described as the eternal “*bhakta*” of Kṛṣṇa but as the eternal “servant” of Kṛṣṇa. Only when one’s fullest sense of being a servant of Kṛṣṇa arises, can one along with that become a *bhakta* of Kṛṣṇa, too. Since apart from that, or without the grace and association of the great ones, the conceits of being an agent either as a ritualist (*karmī*), a cultivator of knowledge (*jñānī*), or a practitioner of yoga (*yogī*) remain in all other living beings, the condition of being an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa is not perceived.

In a living being who is a religious aspirant in whom pure *bhakti* has been infused, the nine forms of *bhakti* as practice, beginning with hearing and repeating, are also infused and as their result the appearance of divine love occurs progressively through the stages of faith and so forth. Therefore, for the saintly one the repeating is of primary importance and for the aspirant the hearing of that is of primary importance. And again within the hearing and repeating the holy name is the most important of all.

Therefore, the tremendous greatness of repeating the holy names (*nāma-saṅkīrtana*) which is the seed of all is clearly praised in the *Bhāga-vata*:

For embodied beings who are rotating around [on the wheel
of material existence] there is no higher gain, since from this

⁵³*Padma Purāṇa*, 60.90: दासभूतो हरेरेव नान्यस्यैव कदाचन

[loud repetition of the holy names] one attains the highest peace and the cycle of repeated birth and death is destroyed.⁵⁴

Now we will consider the external definition (*taṭastha-lakṣaṇa*) or the influence or power of association with the great ones. The eternal definition is knowledge by means of the effects of something. By means of the effects the great *bhaktas* or saintly ones have, their unsurpassed greatness or power is known.

That all sacred rivers like the Ganges and so forth and sacred sites like Kurukṣetra, Kāśī, Puṣkara, and so forth are able to destroy the sins of selfish living beings, help them gather merit, and bestow on them the four classes or human objectives even upto bringing them liberation is well known. But in the process of destroying sins and bestowing merit and the four objectives, they themselves become polluted and desecrated by accepting pollutions left behind by the pilgrims. In that condition, on the arrival of saintly *bhaktas* and by the power of their touch the pollutions are removed and all of the holy places again become sacred. As a result of that they are able to become purifiers again. One can thoroughly understand this subject from the faithful statement of King Yudhiṣṭhira to the great spirited, Vidura.

Great *bhaktas* like you are themselves [as pure as] the holy places, lord. They make the sacred places sacred through [the presence] within them of the lord who holds the club [Viṣṇu]. [They only go to them to make the holy places holy. Otherwise, they have no need to wander around to the holy places.]⁵⁵

The meaning of the verse is: the *bhaktas* of the lord have no personal purpose to fulfill by wandering around to the holy places. Still they selflessly visit all the holy places which have become polluted by contact

⁵⁴Bhāg., 11.5.38:

न ह्यतः परमो लाभो देहिनां भ्राम्यतामिह ।
यतो विन्देत परमां शान्तिं नश्यति संसृतिः ॥

⁵⁵Bhāg., 1.13.10:

भवद्विधा भागवतास्तीर्थभृताः स्वयं विभो ।
तीर्थीकुर्वन्ति तीर्थानि स्वान्तःस्थेन गदाभृता ॥

with materialistic, selfish people in order to purify them through the gift of their own purity. What greater statement can be made about the greatness of those saintly *bhaktas*?

Moreover, since arrival of the saintly in order to obtain purification is very rare, the rivers with pious waters like the Gaṅgā and so forth and the auspicious holy places like Puṣkara and so forth themselves go to where the nectar-like discussions of Hari flow from the lips of the saintly. As it is said:

There do the Gaṅgā, Yamunā, the Confluence, the Godāvarī, Sindhu, and Sarasvatī as well as the meritorious holy sites reside where there are magnificent discussions about Acyuta.⁵⁶

Now here one may wish to ask: “How is it possible for all of the rivers like the Gaṅgā and all of the holy places such as Kurukṣetra to come into a limited and small place like those where the discussions of Hari are flowing from the mouths of the saintly? And why is that not seen by others?” In reply it must be said that all of the rivers and holy places do not go to places where discussions of Hari are taking place in their bodies. They come in the form of the overseeing spirits [of those rivers and places] and by the influence of their invisibility powers they are not visible to ordinary sight. The invisibility powers of even the demi-gods is well known in scripture.

From our previous discussion it has been established that discussions of Hari from the lips of the saintly, that is, discussions of Hari’s names, forms, qualities, and sports, are non-different from Hari. Nevertheless, since they are especially germane, we shall now discuss in greater detail only the lack of difference between the holy named and the holy name. It is said:

[The Lord himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, says to Nārada:] I do not live in Vaikuṇṭha nor in the hearts of the yogīs. Wherever my *bhaktas* sing, there I am present, Nārada.⁵⁷

⁵⁶?

तत्रैव गङ्गा यमुना च वेशी गोदावरी सिन्धुसरस्वतीश्च ।
पुण्यानि तीर्थानि वसन्ति तत्र यत्राच्युतोदारकथाप्रसङ्गः ॥

⁵⁷ *Padma Purāṇa*:

The intended meaning of this verse is: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person himself. He does not reside in his own form in *Vaikuṇṭha*. His expansions and partial forms reside there. He also does not appear in the hearts of the *yogīs* because in the hearts of all living beings is the residence of his partial form, the *Paramātmān*. That is understood from his statement in the *Gītā*:

I am the *ātmān* situated in the hearts of all beings, Guḍākeśa.⁵⁸

Even though Bhagavān resides in the form of his partial manifestation, the *Paramātmān*, in the hearts of all living beings, that is not visible to ordinary living beings who face outwards. *Yogīs* who practice the eight-limbed yoga are able to see him as their object of worship. As it is said:

Some remember through concentration the person (*puruṣa*), measuring only the span between the thumb and forefinger, sitting in the space of their hearts in their own bodies. He has four arms holding a lotus, a discus, a conch shell, and a club.⁵⁹

But from the previous statement: “wherever my *bhaktas* sing, there I am present, Nārada,” it is made known that he is present in his own form where his names are being sung by his *bhaktas* with *bhakti*. Since the named and the name are a non-different principle, there is no mention of his being present in his partial *Paramātmān* form. Moreover, he is not present there to attain purification by destroying his own impurities like the presiding spirits of the holy places mentioned before. Because, in him who is Bhagavān himself, full of the six opulences, faults like pollution and so forth cannot exist even in the least degree. Therefore,

नाहं वसामि वैकुण्ठे योगिनां हृदये न च ।
मङ्गला यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद ॥

⁵⁸*Bhagavad-gītā*, 10.20:

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।

⁵⁹*Bhāg.*, 2.2.8:

केचित् स्वदेहान्तर्हृदयावकाशे प्रादेशमात्रं पुरुषं वसन्तम् ।
चतुर्भुजं कञ्जरथाङ्गशङ्खगदाधरं धारणाया स्मरन्ति ॥

there is no question of his having to rid himself of pollution. Since the named and the name are not different, wherever the name is, the named in his own form should also be understood to be present. Also from the statement of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: “Kṛṣṇa’s resting place is always in the heart of the *bhakta*,”⁶⁰ it is understood he is not only in the mouth of the *bhakta* in the form of discussions of Hari. In the heart of the *bhakta* Kṛṣṇa always experiences the happiness of repose—in his own form.

One in whose heart flows a bubbling stream of *bhakti* in the form of discussions of Hari, whose heart-temple is pure, free of the dust and smoke of inclinations for the objects of the senses, and in whose heart, since it is free of all the hullabaloo of self interest and completely absent of desire, it is silent, quiet, and solitary and apart from being for Kṛṣṇa alone, there is not even a speck of self consideration, such a pure, cool, peaceful *bhakta*’s heart-temple is a place suitable for Kṛṣṇa’s repose. Repose does not mean sleep. It means the experience of happiness alone without any effort or strain. The hearts of ritualists, pursuers of knowledge, and yogins are not places of repose for him. In place of his [Kṛṣṇa’s] interest exists selfishness or self interest in the form of desire for sense enjoyment, liberation, and the supernatural accomplishments (*siddhis*). In his form as the witness-superself (*sākṣī-paramātmā*), when he resides in the hearts of all living beings, though himself unaffected, he has to perceive all their auspicious and inauspicious unconscious trace-desire resulting from their past actions and their experience of the results of that. As it says in the *Gītā*:

Because of being beginningless and without [material] thread,
this superself is imperishable. Though situated in the body,
Kaunteya, he does nothing and is not affected.⁶¹

In the hearts of desire-filled living beings, which are always full of the bad odors of sensual impressions and a cacophony of screams for self-interest whether it be for liberation in the case of those who pursue knowledge or for supernatural powers in the case of yogins or for something else, he [the Lord] cannot find repose in his form as the unaffected, beginningless, thread-less superself. Therefore, for the pleasure

⁶⁰Cc., ?

⁶¹*Bhagavad-gītā*, 13.31:

अनादित्वान्निर्गुणत्वात्परमात्माऽहमव्ययः ।
शरीरस्थोऽपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते ॥

of uninterrupted repose, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has chosen the heart-temple of the *bhakta* who is pure because of being free from the subconscious impressions of desire and because of having rejected all forms of self interest for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and whose heart is clean, supremely beautiful, and secluded. Not only that, in the way that two *vīṇās*, matching each other string by string, produce one melody—reveal a harmony, the heart strings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes harmonious with the heart strings of his devotee and in both hearts one melody is sounded. He has said this with his own lips:

The saintly are the heart for me and of the saintly I am the heart. They know nothing other than me nor do I know anything other than them in the least.⁶²

When there is oneness in the hearts of the devotee and Bhagavān in this way, through the harmony of the melodies in each of their hearts, their hearts develop a oneness of intention. But, because of the foul odor of sensual inclinations in the hearts of ritualists, pursuers of knowledge, and yogins and the cacophony of their being intent on achieving their own other purposes, not only is there no question of their reaching a oneness of heart with him, their hearts are unfit to be places of repose for Bhagavān. One can understand from his own words that apart from *bhakti* Bhagavān cannot be attained directly by any other means such as rites, yoga, knowledge, and so forth:

Uddhava, yoga does not achieve me, nor does Sāṅkhya, nor Dharma, nor study of the Veda, nor austerity, nor renunciation the way that *bhakti*, strengthened in me, does.⁶³

In relationship to the cause for this it is therefore said in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

⁶²*Bhāg.*, 9.4.68:

साधवो हृदयं मह्यं साधूनां हृदयस्त्वहम् ।
मदन्यत्ते न जानन्ति नाहं तेभ्यो मनागपि ॥

⁶³*Bhāg.*, 11.14.20:

न साधयति मां योगो न साङ्ख्यं धर्म उद्धव ।
न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्त्यागो यथा भक्तिर्ममोज्ज्वला ॥

Kṛṣṇa's *bhakta* is desireless
 and therefore is at peace.
 Wishers for enjoyment, liberation, and siddhis
 are all lacking in peace.⁶⁴

⁶⁴Cc., 2.9.132:

kṛṣṇabhakta niṣkāṁ ataeva śānta
bhukti-mukti-siddhikāṁī sakali aśānta

Chapter Three

According to the hierarchy of *bhaktas*' longing to serve Kṛṣṇa, the limit of excellence reaches its highest point in Śrī Rādhikā. Therefore, the highest limit of the happiness of Bhagavān's repose is also found in the heart of Śrī Rādhikā, the great queen of *bhakti* whose very essence is *mahābhāva*.⁶⁵ Rādhikā's heart is full of the experience of only the happiness of serving Kṛṣṇa. In her case there is no independent experience of any happiness. In her heart, in the condition of intense relishing of the joy of serving Kṛṣṇa that relishing becomes expanded and when that internal experience boils over and manifests externally in hundreds and thousands of streams then that one Rādhārāṇī takes the forms of millions of cowherd girls and gives Śrī Hari, who sports in the bower of the heart, the happiness of repose. Externally, too, she creates unlimited bowers for that purpose. This is the bower-service of the cowherd girls of Vraja and Kuṅjavihārī's [Kṛṣṇa's] love-sports in secluded bowers. Just as it always shines in the hearts of the devotees, so is it also always performed externally as well. It never ceases in either place [in the hearts or externally] at any time. One drop from that ocean of the experience of service bursting forth, overflowing in a thousand streams and inundating the heart of the *bhakta* is found the following words of a *bhakta*:

I feel as if my heart, bobbing in a river, is spread wide
and on it golden Gaurāṅga dances.⁶⁶

⁶⁵The great emotion.

⁶⁶?

mane kari nade juri hrday vichāi
tāhār upare sonār gaurāṅga nācāi

Nothing can be greater in excellence than a saintly *bhakta* of Hari in whose heart is the permanent abode of Bhagavān's repose and who has become thoroughly identified, as it were, with both *bhakti* and Bhagavān. And among them again there is no limit to the greatness of those who are wholeheartedly sheltered in Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, in the scriptures, the superiority of the *bhakta* or Vaiṣṇava over the ritualist, the pursuer of knowledge, the yogin and so forth is proclaimed. And among the *bhaktas* the superiority of the wholehearted ones is acclaimed in particular. Take for instance:

Better than thousands of performers of sacrificial rites is one who has mastered all the Vedānta and better than millions of masters of Vedānta is one *bhakta* of Viṣṇu. Out of thousands of Vaiṣṇavas one who is wholehearted is superior. Those persons who are wholehearted go to the highest abode.⁶⁷

In this way, out of a thousand *bhaktas* one who is single-purposed (*ekānta*) [or wholehearted] is established as the best of all in the *Gītā*, the Lord's own words. Pointing to himself he said: "one who thinks of me alone." By this statement the superiority of the wholehearted *bhakta* of Kṛṣṇa is confirmed. For instance:

The yogin is considered greater than performers of austerity and greater than possessors of knowledge, too. The yogin is greater than ritualists as well. Therefore, become a yogin, Arjuna. Among all the yogins, the one who worships me with faith, his heart having flown to me, is in my opinion the best.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ *Garuḍa Purāṇa*, cited in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* at 10.117:

सत्रयाजिसहस्रेभः सर्ववेदान्तपारगः ।
सर्ववेदान्तवित्कोट्या विष्णुभक्तो विशिष्यते ॥
वैष्णवानां सहस्रेभ्य एकान्त्येको विशिष्यते ।
एकान्तिनस्तु पुरुषा गच्छन्ति परमं पदं ॥

⁶⁸ *Bhagavad-gītā*, 6.46-7:

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥
योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धवान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥

In this verse *mad-gatena* means “in me”—in Śrī Kṛṣṇa—and *antarātmā* means “with the whole mind.” Together they mean “attached to me in all respects.” By this, it is established that those whose minds or hearts are “made of Kṛṣṇa” (*kṛṣṇa-maya*), they are the wholehearted or single-purposed *bhaktas*.

In another place in the *Gītā*, it is also found stated in this way:

Those who fix their minds in me and being constantly connected worship me, they possessing the highest faith I consider the highest yogins.⁶⁹

Single-minded *bhakta*-saints are “made of Hari” and Hari, too, becomes made of those kinds of *bhaktas* and enjoys the pleasure of repose in their hearts. The *bhaktas*, too, do not care for any pleasure for themselves other than the pleasure of perceiving the pleasure of the Lord. In the hearts of both, there is but one life; that is the meaning here. In this kind of situation the experiences in the hearts of Hari-made *bhaktas* are echoed in the heart of the Lord and the experiences in the heart of the Lord are echoed in the hearts of the *bhaktas*.

The meaning of the previously cited verse: “The saintly are my heart and I am the heart of the saintly,” is that the *bhakta* and the Lord share but one life. We are also able to understand this clearly in the following verse in the Lord’s own words:

I am equal towards all living beings; I have neither enemy nor favorite. But those who worship me with *bhakti*, they are in me and I am in them.⁷⁰

Śrī Bhagavān, who is the resting place of the delight-power, though by nature pleasure himself enjoys pleasure and causes his *bhaktas* to enjoy pleasure by means of his delight-power. As it is said:

⁶⁹ibid., 12.2:

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
अद्भुता परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥

⁷⁰ibid., 9.29:

समोऽहं सर्वभूतेषु न मे द्वेष्योऽस्ति न प्रियः ।
ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम् ॥

Though Bhagavān is the very form of delighting, that by which he delights and causes delight is the delight-power. (*hlādinī*).⁷¹

This delight when it resides in Bhagavān is called “power” (*śakti*) and when it is in the *bhakta* it is called *bhakti*. By *bhakti* we generally mean being fond of or loving the Lord and by *bhakta* we mean the one who has fondness or love. When the *bhakti* in the heart of the *bhakta* makes the Lord its object or becomes focused on him, it goes to him and touches him and then the Lord’s delight appears. That pleasure of the Lord comes back to the *bhakta* and in turn gives her pleasure or bestows the joy of service on her. Just as by the soft touch of the evening breeze the budding tuberose blossoms and rubs its own sweet aroma on the breast of the breeze, and then the breeze turns around and returns carrying that fragrance in its heart, so, being touched by the *bhakti* in the heart of the *bhakta*, the sleeping delight in Bhagavān is awakened and gives him (Bhagavān) pleasure. Then it returns carrying the pleasure of serving the Lord. By the touch of the fragrance of that pleasure the heart of the *bhakta* becomes filled to overflowing. Therefore, how can there be anything equal or superior to the magnificence of a great *bhakta* in whom the three: *bhakta*, *bhakti*, and Bhagavān have become united with each other and have reached a state of sharing one life with each other in their absorption in the experience of the each other’s delight?

Previously I said that even places of pilgrimage become purified by contact with great *bhaktas*. Among all of the gods Brahmā and Rudra are the best. The might of the *bhaktas* and the devotees of the Lord is greater than even that of Brahmā and Rudra. This is proved by what the king of the gods, Indra himself, said:

In the Age of Kali, the rare name “*bhāgavata*” [devotee of the Lord] is not attained.⁷² It is higher than the estate of Brahmā

⁷¹Śrī Jīva, *Bhagavat-sandarbhā*, para. 117: ह्लादकरूपोऽपि भगवान् यया ह्लादते ह्लादयति च सा ह्लादिनी

⁷²Apart from the present Age of Kali in which Gaura has appeared, in all the other Kalis even the names “*bhāgavata*” and “*bhakta*” are very rare. Therefore, saying that *bhaktas* themselves are rare is unnecessary. The reason is that even though the Holy Name is the religious observation for all Kali-yugas, the humans in all those ordinary Kali-yugas are not inclined to take to it. “The people in Kali will not honor that” (Bhāg., 12.3.44: यक्ष्यन्ति न तत्कलौ जनतः). For this reason, since they are without religious cultivation, *bhaktas* and association with the saintly are rare. But, on the subject of the present Age of Kali in which

and Rudra. This my guru told me.⁷³

Therefore, what joy in the worlds of humans and gods can be compared with the greatness of association with the great *bhaktas*? Even the joys of liberation or of heaven cannot be compared with a small particle of their greatness. As it is said:

We cannot compare even the briefest association of the companions of the Lord with going to heaven or even not being reborn again. What more [need be said about the possibility of comparing it] with the desired objectives of mortals?⁷⁴

As a result of visiting the holy places and worshipping the gods one attains heaven and liberation. When that attainment of heaven and liberation cannot be compared to even the briefest association with the saintly then to what can the greatness of association with the saintly be compared? The greatness of *bhakti*, the *bhakta*, and Bhagavān is more than even Brahma-loka which is the highest plane of all. With what else can the highest reaches of the greatness of those three joined together in the person of the *bhakta* be compared? By its absense the great

Gaura has appeared, an independent characterization is found in scripture. In this Age of Kali it is said that many people will become devotees of Nārāyaṇa or *bhaktas* of Hari. "In Kali, indeed, there will be many devoted to Nārāyaṇa" (Bhāg., 11.5.38: कलौ खलु भविष्यन्ति नारायणपरायणाः)

Moreover, in this Kali, the age's religious observance of repetition of the Holy Name is willingly accepted by all people. This is by the grace of the Lord. Therefore, even though there is no shortage of saintly *bhaktas* in the present condition of Kali, because of an abundance of Kali-instigated offenses to the Holy Name, *bhakti* is seen at present to arise in very few cases. This is due to the Holy Name's displeasure.

In this age, since the Holy Name is accepted and since, provided offenses to the Holy Name do not persist, there is a good opportunity for the appearance of the the highest form of love of all, the people of the Satya-yuga and the other ages beg to be born in this special Kali-yuga in which Gaura appeared. This also is understood from a verse of the *Bhāgavata*: "O King, the living beings born in the Kṛta and the others ages wish to be born in Kali" (Bhāg., 11.5.38: कृतादिषु प्रजा राजन् कलाविच्छन्ति सम्भवम्).

⁷³Cited in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, 10.65:

कलौ भागवतं नाम दुर्लभं नैव लभ्यते ।
ब्रह्मरुद्रपदोत्कृष्टं गुरुणा कथितं मम ।

⁷⁴Bhāg., 1.18.13:

तुलयाम लवेनापि न स्वरं नापुनर्भवं ।
भगवत्सङ्गिसन्ध्यास्य मर्त्यानां किमुताशिषः ॥

respectability of Brahma-loka becomes less than insignificant. That is revealed by the following verse:

A place where there are no streams of delight from stories about Vaiṣṇava, no saintly *bhāgavatas* who are sheltered by him, and no great festivals celebrating that Lord of Sacrifice, even if it is the world of the chief of the gods [Brahmā], it is not fit to be inhabited.⁷⁵

Where can one find anything that can be compared with the greatness of association with great, saintly devotees who incorporate in themselves *bhakti*, Bhagavān, and *bhakta*, gathered together in unity? Only the greatness of Bhagavān himself remains shining above all else. A clear indication that Bhagavān chooses that sort of *bhakta* as his own representative is understood from the following verse:

One who has mastered the four Vedas is not dear to me, but a dog-cooker who is my *bhakta* is dear to me. Things [meant to be offered to me] should be offered to him and [things that should be received from me] should be received from him and he is to be honored just like me.⁷⁶

Therefore, for those who are the representatives of Bhagavān, where will one find anything to equal their greatness? Thus, his own single-minded *bhaktas*, who are bound to him by their shared heart and shared life-breath, are dearest to him. Śrī Bhagavān, therefore, said with his own lips concerning Uddhava, one of the best of that sort of *bhakta*:

They are not as dear to me as you, [Uddhava,] not Brahmā nor Śaṅkara nor Saṅkarṣaṇa nor Śrī nor even myself.⁷⁷

⁷⁵Bhāg., 4.19.23:

न यत्र वैकुण्ठकथासुखापगा
न यत्र साधवो भागवतस्तदाश्रयाः ।
न यत्र यज्ञेशमखा महोत्सवाः
सुरेशलोकोऽपि न वै स सेव्यताम्

⁷⁶Hbv., 10.92:

न मे प्रियश्चतुर्वेदी मङ्गलः श्वपचः प्रियः ।
तस्मै देयं ततो ग्राह्यं स च पूज्यो यथा ह्यहम् ॥

⁷⁷Bhāg., 11.14.15:

How deep Bhagavān's pleasure is with his single-minded *bhaktas* can be understood from that forceful statement which bursts from the inner core of his heart. Therefore, it is not just a matter of representation or of being dear, Bhagavān's own subjugation by the *bhakta* is well-known topic, too.

That Bhagavān, though independent, is dependent on the *bhakta*, though the overlord of all is submissive to the *bhakta* and though self-manifesting his appearance depends only on the *bhakti* of the *bhakta*; this fact he himself reveals with great delight in his own words:

I am dependent on my *bhakta*, twice-born, as if I were not independent at all. My heart is captured by my saintly *bhaktas*. I am fond of my *bhaktas*. I do not want myself without my saintly *bhaktas*, nor do I want unsurpassed affluence without those for whom I am the highest goal. Those who give up their wives, homes, sons, elders, lives, this world and the next and seek shelter in me, how dare I reject them? Those saintly ones whose hearts are bound to me, who look upon all things as equal, bring me under their control through their *bhakti*, like a chaste wives do a chaste husband.⁷⁸

The tremendous, heart-filling force of the pleasure that the Lord of All experiences in being dependent on his *bhaktas* is proclaimed in the following verse:

Though ever liberated, I am bound to my *bhaktas* by the ropes of affection. Though unconquered, I am conquered by them;

न तथा मे प्रियतम आत्मयोनिर्न शङ्करः ।
न च सङ्कर्षणो न श्रीर्नैवात्मा च यथ भवान् ॥

⁷⁸Bhāg., 9.4.63-6:

अहं भक्ताधीनो ह्यस्वतन्त्र इव द्विज ।
साधुभिर्ग्रस्तहृदयो भक्तैर्भक्तजनप्रियः ॥
नाहमात्मानमाशासे मद्भक्तैः साधुभिर्विना ।
श्रियञ्चात्यन्तिकीं ब्रह्मन् येषां गतिरहं परा ॥
ये दारागारपुत्रासप्राणान् वित्तमिमं परम् ।
हित्वा मां शरणां याताः कथं तांस्त्यक्तुमुत्सहे ॥
मयि निर्वद्धहृदयाः साधवः समदर्शनाः ।
वशे कुर्वन्ति मां भक्त्या सत्स्त्रियः सत्पतिं यथा ॥

though uncontrollable I am controlled by them. For one who, having given up affection for friends and family, loves me, I am his one and only and he is mine; nor do we two have any other friend (*suhṛt*).⁷⁹

The meaning of the word “friend” (*su-hṛt*) is “one whose heart is beautiful” or “a companion who is always in accord with one.” Therefore, the heart of the *bhakta* which is free of lust, free of impurities, peaceful, and dispassionate, is the only place of repose for Bhagavān.

⁷⁹*Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*, :

सदा मुक्तोऽपि बद्धोऽस्मि भक्तेषु स्नेहरज्जुभिः ।
 अजितोऽपि जितोऽहं तैरवश्योऽपि वशीकृतः ॥
 त्यक्तबन्धुजनस्नेहो मयि यः कुरुते रतिं ।
 एकस्तस्यास्मि स च मे न चान्योऽस्त्यावयोः सुहृद् ॥

Chapter Four

Though Bhagavān himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, reposing in the heart of the *bhakta*, as previously described, remains immersed in the experience of effortless happiness and though there is none of the dust of desire and impulse nor the noise of self-interest, there is another kind of dust that he greatly treasures. That is the dust of the feet of the *bhakta* or *bhakta-pada-reṇu*. Therefore, since that kind of dust is not obtained by merely residing in the *bhakta's* heart, he also follows after them, while remaining in their hearts, wishing to rub himself with the dust of their feet. Just hearing about his submissiveness to his *bhaktas* strikes at the hearts of and awakens goose-flesh in the bodies of the *bhaktas*: “Our Lord is so subservient to his *bhakta*!”

Now, a question might arise: since Bhagavān eternally rests in the heart of the *bhakta*, in order to attain the dust of the feet of the *bhakta* he must leave that place and come outside. How can he in one form and at one time both rest in the *bhakta's* heart and follow after the *bhakta*, too? In reply it must be said that Bhagavān is the possessor of all powers — he is the seat of all, inconceivable, contradictory and uncontradictory powers. Just as *śruti* says: “Seated he travels far; lying down he moves everywhere.”⁸⁰ Since all difficult-to-accomplish, contradictory characteristics coexist in him simultaneously, he is Bhagavān — he is the regulator of all — the possessor of all powers. This inconceivable possession of all powers demonstrates the Bhagavān-ness of Bhagavān [of the godhood of God]. Therefore, although he relaxes and lies down in the heart of the *bhakta*, following after a *bhakta* out of a desire for the dust of the feet of the *bhakta* is not at all impossible for him. That is because while remaining in one form he is able to reveal many forms⁸¹ and while re-

⁸⁰ *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.21: आसीनो दूरं व्रजति, शयानो याति सर्वतः

⁸¹ *Śruti*: एकं सन्तं बहुदा दृश्यमानम्

maining in one place he is able to go everywhere — through his possession of inconceivable power. What more can be said? Śrī Bhagavān wants to decorate his body with the ornament of the dust of the feet of that sort of [pure-hearted] *bhakta*. He is more infatuated with desire for the dust of the *bhakta*'s feet than he is with desire for the Sāmantaka, Kaustubha, and other precious jewels.

Therefore, the topic of the Lord's innate desire for the dust of the feet of the *bhakta* under the control of his subservience to the love of the *bhakta* is mentioned in the *Bhāgavata* in the following manner from the Lord's own lips:

I always follow after the independent, peaceful, enmity-less,
sage who sees all as equal so that I may be purified by the
dust from his feet.⁸²

His activity of following after the *bhakta* is practiced without their knowledge in the greatest secrecy. This most compassionate and subservient Bhagavān does not want, by his pursuit of the *bhakta*, to be a cause of pain to the mind or of the shying away of the *bhakta*. Therefore, this play of the dust is secret so that the *bhakta*'s mind is not disturbed. For this reason this sport is carried out without the knowledge of the *bhakta*.

The words "I may be purified" [from the verse above] are glossed in Śrīdhara Svāmī's commentary in this way: "the meaning is that this is done with the feeling 'let me purify all the universes that exist within me.'" In other words, "my following of the *bhakta* is done with the purpose of purifying all the universes inside me with the dust of his feet."

Just as the *bhaktas* possess *bhakti* for Bhagavān, Śrī Bhagavān possesses *bhakti* for his *bhaktas*. That, too, is clearly stated in the *Bhāgavata*: "Thus, o king, Bhagavān has *bhakti* for his *bhaktas*."⁸³ The external manifestation of the internal, mutual affection between Bhagavān and his *bhakta* takes form in the unlimited sports of the Lord.

⁸²*Bhāg.*, 11.14.15:

निरपेक्षं मुनिं शान्तं निर्वैरं समदर्शनम् ।
अनुव्रजाम्यहं नित्यं पूयेत्यङ्घ्रिरेणुभिः ॥

⁸³*Bhāg.*, 10.86.59: एवं स्वभक्तयो राजन् भगवान् भक्तभक्तिवान्

Apart from fulfilling the wishes of the *bhakta*, Śrī Bhagavān has no other inclinations. The highest expression of Śrī Bhagavān's desire for the dust of the feet of the *bhakta* is found in the dust-game of the sports of Vraja. After herding the cows, at the cow-dust time [the time of the return to the village of the herds], after adorning his curl-circled face and sacred body with the dust of Vraja kicked up by the hooves of the cows, Śrī Hari, the son of Nanda, returns to his house. In the dust of Vraja the dust of the feet of all the *bhaktas* of Vraja is present. Among those again there is a hierarchy and the more desirable dust is the dust of the feet of the cowherd girls. Although the dust of the feet of all the *bhaktas* is dear to him, the highest satisfaction of his desire is found in the dust of the feet of cowherd girls headed by Śrī Rādhā. Therefore, in the words of the Vaiṣṇava poet it has been suggested: "It is not dust, it is not dust — the dust of the feet of the cowherd girls. That dust, Kānu, the son of Nanda, rubbed on himself."⁸⁴ The zenith of the game of dust is found here — in being sprinkled with the dust of the feet of Śrī Rādhā.

Brahmā's austerities lasting for for sixty thousand years, performed out of desire to obtain the dust of the feet of the cowherd women so highly prized by Bhagavān himself, was fruitless. He did not obtain it:

Previously, I practiced austerities for sixty thousand years to
obtain the dust of the feet of cowherd women of Nandagopa.
Still, the dust of their feet was not obtained by me.⁸⁵

Therefore, even the best of *bhaktas*, Uddhava, praises the dust of the feet of the cowherd girls:

I praise in all respects the dust of the feet of Nanda's women
of Vraja whose singing of the story of Hari purifies the three
worlds.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *dhūlā naya dhūlī naya gopīpadareṇu; ei dhūlā mekhechila nandasūta Kānu*

⁸⁵ Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta*, 2.31:

षष्टिवर्षसहस्राणि मया तप्तं तपः पुरा ।
नन्दगोपव्रजस्त्रीणां पादरेणुपलब्धये ।
तथापि न मया पाप्मास्तासां वै पादरेणवः ॥

⁸⁶ *Bhāg.*, 10.47.63:

वन्दे नन्दव्रजस्त्रीणां पादरेणुमभीक्ष्णशः ।
यासां हरिकथोद्गीतं पुनाति भुवनत्रयम् ॥

Just as that dust is the highest desire of every *bhakta* when he recalls that there exists in this dust of Vraja of the dust of the feet of Bhagavān along with the dust of the feet of *bhaktas*, so is it for Bhagavān in his desire for the dust of the feet of the *bhakta*. Therefore, the highest limit of Śrī Bhagavān's desire for the dust of the feet of the *bhakta* and the greatness of the dust of the feet of the *bhakta* is culminates in the dust of the feet of the cowherd girls, or rather, in the dust of Śrī Rādhā's feet.

This dust of the feet of the *bhaktas* has for a long time been the Lord's most dear adornment. Therefore, in the Nadiyā sport the golden body of Śrī Gaura was seen to be covered with that dust again and again. For that reason, there was so much rolling on the ground in the dust with his followers. This was not for the insignificant earthly dust; it was because of Bhagavān's desire to be adorned by the dust of the feet of his *bhaktas* and it was also because of the desire of the *bhaktas* to be ornamented by the dust of the feet of Bhagavān that this rolling on the ground occurred.

Therefore, the *bhakta*, *bhakti* and Bhagavān — wherever these three are united and are of one mind, one life, and in full harmony, dancing in joy together, there is no way to tell which is greater and which is less great in conduct. Thus:

Love makes Kṛṣṇa dance;
the *bhakta*, too, it makes dance;
it itself dances too;
together the three dance.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, one must remember that in the seed *dharma* (religious observance) placed the *bhakta* saints, the holy name and the holy named are present in their real form as the cause of all causes. Since in one and the same person all that has been previously said is joined together in the great *bhakta*: "in determining the source of the birth of *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa, association with the saints is the chief of all."⁸⁸ Therefore, it has been said:

The dust of the feet of the *bhakta*,
the *bhakta*'s foot-wash, too,

⁸⁷ Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Kavirāja, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya 18.17:
kṛṣṇere nācāi premā bhaktere nācāi

āpane nācaye, tīne nāce ek thāñi

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, Madhya 22.48.

the remnants of the *bhakta*'s food,
these three have great strength.⁸⁹

Now we shall reflect on the freedom and independence of the saintly ones. Association with the saints and the attaining of their grace is spontaneous or causeless. In glossing the words *yad-ṛcchayā* [spontaneously] or *yādṛcchika* [spontaneous], Śrī Jīva has said: "by means of some kind of emergence of good fortune born of association with the most independent *bhakta* of the Lord or of that *bhakta*'s grace."⁹⁰

Morover, since *bhakti*, too, is independent and self-established, it is capricious. For this reason, attaining the grace and association of the *bhakta*, the support or substrate of *bhakti*, is also spontaneous. For the attainment of *bhakti*, there is no regard for whether someone is a fit or unfit recipient, whether it is the right place or wrong place, whether it is the right time or wrong time or anything like that. Then, too, because of its extreme rarity, there is no certainty about who will get it, who will not get it. For that reason, a manifestation of pure *bhakti* is transmitted sometimes to a man and sometimes to a woman, sometimes to a child and sometimes to an old person, and sometimes to humans and sometimes to plants and animals. Since attaining association with the great ones is rare, pure *bhakti*, too, is very rare.

By the influence of pure *bhakti*, Śrī Bhagavān becomes attainable. Again, since association with saints is the source of the emergence of pure *bhakti*, only by the influence of association with the saintly is Śrī Bhagavān captured. As it is said:

Yoga does not capture me, nor does Sāṅkhya [cultivation of knowledge], Dharma [good works], study of Veda, penance, renunciation, rites, charity, vows, sacrifices, hymns, pilgrimage, nor restrictions and injunctions, the way I am captured by association with the holy, which dispels all attachments.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Ibid., Antya 16.55:

bhaktapadadhūli āṛ bhaktapadajala
bhakta bhuktaśeṣe ei tina mahābala

⁹⁰ केनापि परमस्वतन्त्रभगवत्भक्तसङ्गतकृपाजातमङ्गलोदयेन

⁹¹ Bhāg., 11.12.1-2:

न रोधयति मां योगो न साङ्ख्यं धर्म एव च ।
न स्वाध्यायस्तपस्त्यागो नेष्टापूर्तं न दक्षिणा ॥
व्रतानि यज्ञश्छन्दांसि तीर्थानि नियमा यमाः ।

If that is so, Śrī Bhagavān is arrested only by association with the saintly. This arrest or being caught in a trap is not a cause of distress for him. Like for a bee which by its own wish becomes stuck in the pod of a lotus, it is the cause of the greatest joy.

Therefore, the establishment of *dharmaśālās* (pilgrimage hotels), guest houses, nursing homes, roads to holy places, ponds and so forth and especially for householders the service of guests is recommended for this reason: to set traps to catch saintly persons in order ultimately to capture Bhagavān. If among the general populace who come to such places some saintly person is also in some way caught, then this is the main and hidden objective of the meritorious actions recommended in scripture. If that does not happen, at least one obtains some merit as a secondary result of those acts. Still, since the grace of a great saint is random and causeless, once in a while a *bhakta*-saint will allow himself to be caught. Therefore, it is often seen that they are willing to travel on well-traveled or current paths. Then, too, sometimes, they leave aside those well-traveled paths according to their own wills and independent desires and travel the forest paths—paths which have no connection with *dharmaśālās*, ponds and so forth. Take for instance the journey to Vṛndāvana on the forest path running through the Jhārikhaṇḍa of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu, who is Bhagavān himself immersed in the feelings of the *bhakta*, or Nārada's journey on the forest path towards Prayāga and his saving of that hunter, or Śrī Dāsa Gosvāmin's rejection of the royal path, the highway, for a lonely, less well known path on his journey to Purī; all of these examples demonstrate the saint's independence. So, too, the hidden objective of the householder's service to guests is said to be the possibility of attaining in some way association with the saintly. As scripture says:

Since from the mere recollection of such [saints] the houses of humans are made immediately pure, what more [needs be said about] actually seeing them, touching them, washing their feet, offering them places to sit and so forth.⁹²

यथावरुद्धे सत्सङ्गः सर्वसङ्गापहो हि माम् ॥

⁹²Bhāg., 1.19.33:

येषां संस्मरणात्पुंसां सद्यः शुध्यन्ति वै गृहाः ।
किं पुनर्दर्शनस्पर्शपादशौचासनादिभिः ॥

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin has given a lengthy discussion of this subject of association with the saintly in his *Bhakti-sandarbha*. The following subjects are recorded here very briefly from that. The accomplished or perfected *bhakta* is of three types: one whose impurities or sins are inactive (that is, *mūrchita*, fainted, unconscious, present but inactive), one whose impurities have been thoroughly cleansed away, and one who has obtained the body of a companion of Bhagavān.

One with inactive impurities is one in whom some semblance of inclinations for the sense objects remain, but they are like someone who has completely lost consciousness and thus they no longer have active nature.

One cleansed of impurities is one in whom the inclinations for sense objects in the mind have been completely washed away.

One who has obtained the body of a companion of Bhagavān is one who has rejected his current body and attained companionship with the Lord in a consciousness body in the world of Bhagavān.

Among them, from association with saints of the first and the second types, pure *bhakti* is infused into the hearts of living beings. As a result of that:

1. The beginninglessly obstructed looking forward to Kṛṣṇa becomes revealed in the heart of the living being and along with that, the conceit of being the enjoyer, the doer, the master, the placing of one's identity in the body and the investing of one's sense of possession in one's house and other things is eliminated, faith arises, and gradually one's taste for sense objects begins to diminish. Other than in this way, the living being's timeless aversion towards Kṛṣṇa is not destroyed in any other way.
2. By listening to the showers of the nectar of pure *bhakti* in the form of presentations of stories about Hari (that is, discussions of his names, forms, qualities, and sports) from the mouths of saintly *bhaktas*, practical *bhakti* (*sādhana-bhakti*) is infused into the hearts of living beings. That brings about the rise of the highest goal, the *bhakti* of love, starting with faith, association with the saintly, active engagement in worship, and so forth.

If one has association with other kinds of saintly persons, apart from the primary and very rare association with saints of the two types de-

scribed above, it is possible to attain good results their association according to the degree to which fondness for sense objects has diminished and *bhakti* for Bhagavān has developed in them.

Previously, we discussed the thread-possessing *bhakti* (*saguṇa-bhakti*) that is the true cause of success in the practices of ritualism, cultivation of knowledge, and so forth, which are undertaken out of some selfish desire or out of self interest. That kind of *bhakti* (received from the mouths of people other than the accomplished saint), being easily attainable, is spread throughout the world in many forms. From the mouths of reciters, singers, actors in traveling plays, in the descriptions of professional storytellers, in the songs of alms-beggars, in the performances of priests and in the instructions of teachers—the current of this thread-possessing *bhakti* flows unbroken throughout social and family life. By the influence of this thread-possessing *bhakti* sins are destroyed, the progression of worldly birth and rebirth is stopped, merit is accrued, and even liberation is achieved. But, without the infusion of pure *bhakti* by the great ones, love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa does not arise.

One in whose mouth is found one name of Kṛṣṇa
is a Vaiṣṇava and I pay that one the highest respect.”⁹³

The understanding of this statement’s meaning depends on a lengthy consideration. One, however, can say this briefly on this subject: this statement is about another age, one that is free of offenses to the holy names or it applies to the time of the salvation of the whole collective of living beings when Śrī Gaura was present. At the present time, however, in a world overrun by offenses to the holy names impelled by the Kali Age, the literal meaning of this statement is not true. When, by the uncaused influence of association with the great, the mental operations of outward-looking living beings are turned within or rather are turned towards Kṛṣṇa, when in place of thread-possessing faith thread-free faith in Lord arises, then such persons because of that condition can be referred to by the words *bhakta* or Vaiṣṇava. Therefore, in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it has been said: “One who has faith is a candidate for *bhakti*,

⁹³Cc., 2.15.107:

*yār mukhe eka Kṛṣṇanām
si vaiṣṇava — kari tār parama samān*

according to the highest, the middlemost, and the lowest faiths.”⁹⁴

In other words, from the time that faith related to the Lord arises a person is qualified for *bhakti*, or, is called a *bhakta*—which quality of being a *bhakta* rises, according to the hierarchy of kinds of faith, from lowest to highest in a *bhakta*. From the moment of becoming the lowest kind of *bhakta*, defined as having faith related to the Lord, one is a *bhakta* or a Vaiṣṇava. When one is in a state of offense to the holy names, though, even though reciting the holy names, since the Name is displeased it is not possible to reach easily the stage of being even the lowest kind of *bhakta*. Previously, though, that was possible by reciting the name of Kṛṣṇa just once.

What more than this can be said: it is heard that by offenses to the holy name even a *bhakta* falls into hell. As Śrī Jīva says:

And from the regulation that even someone who possesses
bhakti for the Lord but who has an offense to the holy name
must experience the result in the form of falling below.⁹⁵

At the present time those offenses to the holy name, caused by the Age of Kali, are spread practically everywhere. On this subject, a lengthy discussion in another book is required.

Therefore, that from which emerges faith related to the Lord and as a result of that faith pure *bhakti* or the mode of being or existence (*vr̥tti*) that is related to the Lord, that gaining of association with the great thread-free *bhaktas* is by its very nature very rare. Thus, statements like “among billions of liberated beings rare is one who is a *bhakta* of Kṛṣṇa” are found, on the subject of which we have spoken previously.

⁹⁴ibid., 2.22.38:

śraddhāvān jan hay bhaktye adhikārī
uttam, madhyam, kaniṣṭha śraddhā anusāri

⁹⁵Śrī Jīva, *Śrī Krama-sandarbha*, 2.1.11: नामापराधयुक्तस्य भगवद्भक्तिमतोऽपि
अधःपातलक्षणभोगनियमाच्च ।

Chapter Five

Even the revealed scriptures (*śruti*) praise in an indirect manner (*paro-kṣa-bhāva*) the magnificence of the superb desirelessness of the *bhakta*. All the subjects established by the revealed scriptures are covered by the veils of the highest secrecy, since the seers are esoteric speakers (*parokṣa-vādin*), as for instance: “the seers are indirect speakers and indirection is dear to me.”⁹⁶ Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself favors the indirect or esoteric approach. And to please him the seers resort to esotericism in establishing him. In other words, for particular purposes that are for the ultimate benefit of living beings, they concealed their descriptions by not speaking very clearly. Now on the subject of the desirelessness of the *bhakta* there are indirect statements of scripture like:

When all the desires that are sheltered in the heart of the living being are released, then the mortal becomes immortal and reaches Brahman even here.⁹⁷

Because of the reference to Brahman in the statement cited from revelation, one considers it to be on the subject of the liberation of the “knower” (the *jñānin*, that is, those on the path of knowledge). But, if one analyzes the meaning of this verse in a calm way one can understand it as a reference to the *bhakta*. That immortality is obtained by

⁹⁶ *Bhāg.*, 11.21.35:

परोक्षवादा ऋषयः परोक्षं मम प्रियम् ।

⁹⁷ *Kāthaka Upaniṣad*, 6.14:

यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः ।
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥

means of the direct experience of Brahman and Paramātman is agreed upon in scriptures such as the Vedas and so forth. But, if one grasps the expanded meaning of the words, for the *bhakta* the meaning of “becoming immortal (*amṛta*)” does not just mean the knower’s liberation from worldly existence. Beyond that it communicates the attaining of the ocean of nectar (also signified by *amṛta*) in the form of the service of Bhagavān. In the verse cited from revelation, in the meaning of the words *sarve kāmā* (“all desires”) is understood all selfish goals or devotion to one’s own purposes, upto and including the [desire for] liberation. In other words they mean being intent on one’s own purposes. In the word *pra-mucyate* (“are released”), the use of the prefix *pra* means “to the highest degree.” It means more than just [letting go of] desire for enjoyment. Thus, those for whom even the desire for liberation is destroyed, the desire-free *bhaktas*, have been described—under the covering of indirect or secret speech.

Now, in the opinion of the “knowers,” karma that is already in motion (*prārabdha-karma*) is not destroyed without experiencing it. For instance,

Of necessity it must be experienced, the results of karma that has been done, both good and bad. Karma that is not experienced is not destroyed even in a hundred billion ages.⁹⁸

In the opinion of Śrīpāda Śaṅkarācārya, too, “Karma that already in motion is destroyed by experiencing it alone.”⁹⁹ The end of karma that has begun to manifest occurs at the time of death, the end of the body; and at the time of death one liberated by reaches or becoming united with Brahman.

In the quotation from revelation given above, however, reaching Brahman in this world, even before the end of the body, is mentioned.

It is known that, by means of *bhakti*, karma that has started to appear is destroyed even without having to experience it. Take for instance:

⁹⁸Source unknown.

अवश्यमेव भोक्तव्यं कृतकर्मशुभाशुभम् ।
माभुक्तं चीयते कर्म कल्पकोटिशतैरपि ॥

⁹⁹Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, *Tattva-bodha*: प्रारब्धकर्मणां भोगादेव क्षयः

That incipient results of karma which are not destroyed even by being established in the direct experience of Brahman, except through enjoying or suffering them, are destroyed by the appearance of your holy name. So roars out the Veda.¹⁰⁰

Not only is the incipient result of karma destroyed; it is possible for the *bhakta* in this world and in his or her present body to meet Bhagavān and to come and go in the eternal sports in Bhagavān's world. That is known from the behavior of the best of *bhaktas*, Śrī Uddhava. His absorption in trance at the time he was discussing Śrī Kṛṣṇa with Vidura is described in the *Bhāgavata* like this:

Slowly he returned from the world of Bhagavān to the world of humans. Opening his eyes, Uddhava, smiling, spoke to Vidura with affection.¹⁰¹

From this one learns that for the *bhakta* going to and returning from the world of Bhagavān is possible even while in the present body itself. News of the going to and returning from the sports of Bhagavān by *bhaktas* who are absorbed in recollection in their present bodies themselves while they are in trances of deep feeling is well known from the lives of many *bhaktas*, in connection, for instance, with lives of great realized Vaiṣṇavas like Śrīnivāsācārya, Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja, Śrī Narottama Thākura and so forth and as well as with the lives of many other *bhaktas*, too. In the following pages a few examples will be given briefly just to give an indication of this subject matter.

Śrīnivāsa Ācārya Prabhu at some time passed some days in a state of absorption in recollection in the house of King Vīrahāmvira, the king of Viṣṇupura. His servants, fearing that Prabhu had passed away, became

¹⁰⁰Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Śrī Kṛṣṇanāmāṣṭaka*, 4:

यद्गृह्णसाचात्कृतिनिष्ठयापि
विनाशमायाति विना न भोगैः ।
अपैति नामस्फुरणो तत्ते
प्रारब्धेति विरौति वेदः ॥

¹⁰¹*Bhāg.*, 3.2.6:

शनकैर्भगवत्लोकान्नृलोकं पुनरागतः ।
विमृज्य नेत्रे विदुरं प्रीत्याहोदव उत्समयन् ॥

worried and were tormented by feelings of separation. Receiving this news Śrī Rāmacandra Kavirāja quickly came to Viṣṇupura. Sitting by Ācārya Prabhu's side, he, too, became absorbed in *bhāva* like him and entering into the eternal sport he saw that because one of Śrī Rādhā's jewel earrings had fallen into some water and disappeared, all of her girlfriends were searching for it together. Śrī Ācārya Prabhu, too, in his own identity as a *mañjarī*-servant, at the order of his own guru in the form of a girlfriend *mañjarī*, was also intent on searching for it. But, since no one had found it yet everyone was distressed. Then Śrīpāda Rāmacandra Kavirāja began to search for that in his *mañjarī* identity and in a short time after it was found underneath a lotus leaf it was returned to Śrī Rādhikā by means of the girlfriends of the guru succession. Then Ācārya Prabhu and Śrī Rāmacandrapāda returned to the external state and everyone was astonished and overjoyed when they understood what had happened. From that example one can understand that *bhaktas* can go and come from the eternal sports in the world of Bhagavān even while they are in their physical bodies.

On another occasion at his own place of private worship, Śrīla Ācārya Prabhu in a state of recollective absorption he was busy fanning Śrīman Mahāprabhu after decorating him with different kinds of flower garlands. His cakora-like eyes were filled with joy drinking in the ambrosia of the moon-like face of Mahāprabhu. All of the autonomous reactions, like tears, gooseflesh and so forth, were beautifying his body. Seeing the travail of Śrīnivāsa's service, Śrīman Mahāprabhu had one his servants put one of the garlands from his neck on the neck of Śrīnivāsa. The garland's beauty and fragrance suddenly filled the atmosphere:

Ācārya at that time returned to consciousness
and saw the garland given by the Master on his neck.¹⁰²

On another occasion like this, Śrīla Ācārya Prabhu was lost in recollection watching the fun of the Holī sports of Śrī Rādhāmādhava. The bodies of the loving couple was reddened by the powders thrown by the girlfriends. Śrīla Ācārya Prabhu, too, with the permission of his guru in

¹⁰²Narahari Cakravartin, *Bhakti-ratnākara*, Sixth Wave:

*ācāryer bāhyajñāna haila hena kāle
prabhu-datta mālā dekhe āpanār gale*

his form as a girlfriend *mañjarī*, was with great joy throwing powders at the girlfriends in his *mañjarī*-identity.

The service was over
and in external consciousness
he saw his body covered with powder
and unable was he to hide it.¹⁰³

Where is entering into eternal sports and playing with colored powders; and where is seeing that clearly on his physical body?

Here is another incident. Śrīla Narottamadāsa Ṭhākura entered into eternal sport in a state of recollective absorption and was watching the love sports of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in their bower cottage. Śrī Rādhā becoming playful asked her girlfriends to bring treats for Śrī Śyāmasundara to eat. Everyone was busy with that. Śrī Ṭhākura Mahāśaya, at the request of his guru who was in the form of one of Śrī Rādhā's girlfriends, was engaged in stirring the milk in his *mañjarī*-servant form.

Seeing the milk about to boil over he became anxious
and removed the milk-pot from the stove
with her [his] bare hands.
That his hands were burned, he hardly noticed.
Stirring the milk he gave it to a girlfriend;
she with joyful heart fed it to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.
As soon as she received their leftovers,
external awareness returned.
He hid them as soon as
he saw his burned hands.
But someone nearby knew the truth.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ibid:

*haila sevā samādhāna, bāhya jñāna haite
dekhe phāgumaya deha, nāre lukāite*

¹⁰⁴ibid.

*uthali paṛaye dugdha dekhi vyasta hailā
cūllī haite dugdhapātra haste nāmāiyā
hasta dagdha haila tāhā kichu smṛti nāi
dugdha āvartana kari dilā sakhi ṭhāi
maner ānande rādhākṛṣṇa bhuñjāila
avaśeṣa labhya mātṛe bāhyajñāna haila*

One can discern on basis of the evidence of the experiences of the learned many incidents like this of many other *bhaktas* who go to and return from the eternal sports.

Now the esoteric meaning of the statement of revelation (*śruti*) that was cited above, which was not easily understandable because it was hidden by a lack of clarity, is clearly revealed in the *Śrī Bhāgavata* which is an expansion of the meanings of the Vedas. That the statement of revelation refers to the *bhakta* who is free from desire can be easily seen:

One in whose mind the seeds of past action issuing in desire are not born is indeed the highest of *bhaktas*, the only dwelling of Vāsudeva.¹⁰⁵

Since in meaning “abode of Vāsudeva” (*vāsudevaikanilaya*) one understands a dwelling or house, or in other words, the resting place of Śrī Bhagavān in the heart, that such a person, the best of *bhāgavatas*, is the intended meaning of that aforementioned hidden statement of revelation—this is understood from the *Śrī Bhāgavata* which expands the meanings of Vedas.

Therefore, only by the influence of pure *bhakti* are all past karma, upto and including incipient karma, and all subtle subconscious desires for enjoyment (*bhoga-vāsanā*) destroyed, even without their being experienced. Thus, it is possible to have a direct experience of the Highest Truth even in this world and while still in this present body. On the other hand, by the other means like knowledge and so forth incipient karma is destroyed by experiencing it and one has a direct experience of Brahman only at the end of the body. Quality-less Brahman is only an object of knowing; whereas Bhagavān, possessed of qualities, is an object visible to the *bhakta*’s senses which have been purified and infused with *bhakti*. By the clear mention of there being a vision or attainment in this life itself in that statement of revelation, it is established that it refers to the *bhakta*.

*dagdha hasta drṣṭi mātra kailā samgopana
jānīlen marma antaraṅga kona jana*

¹⁰⁵Bhāg. 11.2.50:

न कामकर्मबीजानां यस्य चेतसि सम्भवः ।
वासुदेवैकनिलयः स वै भागवतोत्तमः ॥

In speaking before about *bhaktas* who had fainted and whose stains were cleansed away, this kind of pure, desireless *bhakta* was meant. And apart from association with that kind of rare, great-souled *bhakta*, one cannot achieve a true turning back towards Kṛṣṇa and a condition of complete absence of desires for enjoyment, liberation, and magical powers.

Bhakti, the *bhakta*, and Bhagavān are completely free of the threads. Therefore, apart from a divine faith that is thread-free, a faith that is affected by threads such as clarity (*sattva*), and so forth, cannot produce an inclination towards a thread-free object. The gnostic (*jñānī*) and the yogī are not inclined towards threadless Brahman or the Superself (*paramātmān*) either; they are inclined towards their own purposes—liberation. The desire of the gnostic to obtain Brahman—is out of a desire for his own liberation. The yogī’s desire to obtain the Superself—is out of a desire to for his own liberation along with the eight supernatural powers (*siddhis*). However, the *bhakta*’s desire to obtain Bhagavān is out of a desire to serve Bhagavān and please him. It is not for his own enjoyment or liberation.

For *bhaktas* who are intent on *bhakti*, a divine mental operation arises that is completely aimed at the happiness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and completely free of concern for their own happiness. In all other cases, because of the subtle traces (*vāsanā*) of desire for enjoyment or liberation, there remains a deceit or ignorance that aims at one’s own happiness. *Bhakti* alone is untouched by the fraud of desire to please one’s own senses. Therefore, except in dharma related to Bhagavān, one does not find an absence of deceit in the form of seeking one’s own happiness, in its fullest expression, in any other dharma. Therefore, at the beginning of the definition of dharma related to Bhagavān or *bhakti*, the just stated uniqueness of *bhakti* is praised in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* (1.1.2) unabashedly and full-throatedly: “Dharma, completely free of deceit, is here [described], the highest [dharma] of holy ones who are without envy” (*dharmah projjhita-kaitavo’tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām*). In other words, in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* the highest dharma of the saintly who are without envy has been described. And what kind is that? In reply to this question it is said: “it is [dharma] in which deceitfulness, or fraud in the form of self-interest, has been completely rejected.” In the commentary’s elucidation of the *pra* prefix of the word *projjhita* (*pra + ujjhita*), Śrīdhara Svāmīn says: “because of the *pra* prefix not only the desire for enjoyment is rejected;

even deceit in the form of the desire for liberation is rejected.”¹⁰⁶ That supreme dharma is described in this *Śrī Bhāgavata*.

In the word “service” (*sevā*) is understood the intention of only bringing about the happiness of one’s object of worship. For this reason the words “service of Bhagavān” are used only for non-deceitful *bhaktas* and thus the claim of oneness of the life force of *bhakta* and Bhagavān is proven. But on the subject of the objects of worship of other worshipers the word “service” is never found is to be used. One doesn’t hear anywhere of “service of the demigods,” “service of Brahman,” “service of the Superself,” and so forth. Moreover, Bhagavān is heard to be praised as “fond of his *bhaktas*” (*bhakta-vatsala*). But, in relation to other worshipers, it is never heard that he is “fond of selfless actors,” “fond of the gnostics,” “fond of the yogīs,” and so forth. Therefore, pure *bhakti* towards Śrī Bhagavān, who is the object of worship of pure enthusiasts (*bhāgavatas*), since it is purely free of deceit, or absent of any desire for one’s own benefit, is worthy of being self-evident as the highest form of desirelessness.

On attaining the happiness of serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, there is no longer any need or longing for one’s own happiness in some separate way in the heart of the desireless *bhakta*. The heart of the desireless *bhakta* itself is the only recreation place for the happiness of service to Śrī Bhagavān. As long as the subtle urges (*vāsanā*) for sense enjoyment and liberation, whose purposes are the happiness of one’s self, are present in the heart, one is not able to find in that heart any indication of the happiness of *bhakti*. Therefore, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin has written:

As long as the witch of desire for sense enjoyment and liberation exists in the heart, how can the happiness of *bhakti* arise in it?¹⁰⁷

Therefore, *bhakti* is weightier than selfless action, gnosis (knowledge, insight), and yoga. As it is said: “it [*bhakti*] is greater even than selfless action, gnosis, and yoga,”¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶Śrīdhara Svāmīn, *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* on 1.1.2: प्रशब्देन मोक्षामिसन्धिरपि निरस्तः

¹⁰⁷Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 1.2.22:

भुक्तिमुक्तिस्पृहा यावत् पिशाची हृदि वर्तते ।
तावद्भक्तिसुखस्यात्र कथमभ्युदयो भवेत् ॥

¹⁰⁸*Nārada-bhakti-sūtras*, 25: सा तु कर्मज्ञानयोगेभ्योऽप्यधिकतरा

More specifically, without connection with *bhakti* selfless action, gnosis, yoga, and other spiritual disciplines are not completed. This was demonstrated earlier.

Again, although Brahman and the Superself are essentially threadless (*nirguṇa*), the practices to attain them, gnosis and yoga, are connected with the thread of clarity (*sāttvika*). As it is said: “from the thread of clarity is born gnosis.”¹⁰⁹ In the cultivation of gnosis and yoga, there exists a connection with threaded (*saguṇā*) *bhakti* as a part of them. When gnosis is renounced, that is, when gnosis is rejected just prior to the stage of full accomplishment, then only *bhakti* remains. That then becomes pure or threadless and by providing a connection to threadless Brahman and Superself, it becomes the cause of their attainment. But, the main result of pure *bhakti*, the appearance of divine love for Kṛṣṇa, is not given. The reason for that is that *bhakti* has been accepted into gnosis and the rest in a secondary way or as a mere part of them. If *bhakti* is accepted as primary, its result is the appearance of divine love; if it is accepted as secondary or as a mere part then *bhakti*’s secondary results, the four goals of human life (piety, wealth, pleasure, and liberation), are given. In order to obtain the joy of serving Kṛṣṇa, it is necessary to accept only threadless or pure *bhakti* as the main or dominant thing—that *bhakti*, which is the best of all, makes as its main result the appearance of divine love possible and as its secondary result it makes, after the destruction of sins and the stopping of the process of rebirth, liberation possible.

Bhakti is the inseparable union of the essential cores of Śrī Bhagavān’s pleasuring-giving and consciousness powers.¹¹⁰ Therefore, even though *bhakti* is a personal possession of Śrī Bhagavān, the possessor of all powers, one has to receive it by means of *bhakti* itself. Apart from that it is not available from Bhagavān directly. The reason is that the living is bound up by *māyā* and has no direct connection with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His flow or stream of *bhakti* is transported by the great ones (*mahat*) who are his own people and thus descends into the world. And then the grace of some

¹⁰⁹ *Bhagavad-gītā*, 14.17: सत्त्वात् संजायते ज्ञानम्

¹¹⁰ Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, *Siddhānta-ratna*, : ह्लादिनीसारसमवेतसम्बित्साररूपेति, [Literally, “[*Bhakti* has the form of] the essence of consciousness inseparably united with the essence of the pleasure-giving power.” This characterization is interesting because it makes the core of *bhakti* the *samvit* or consciousness power of Bhagavān. To that core by the relationship of inherence (*samavāya*) is joined the core of the pleasure-giving power. The relationship of inherence signals a connection that is inseparable. This explains and supports Baladeva’s interesting claim, given earlier in the same text, that *bhakti* is a form of knowledge or awareness (*jñāna*). Translator.]

supremely independent person who dear to Bhagavān infuses it directly into a living being and with the appearance of *bhakti*, anticipated by faith and such, in that living being Kṛṣṇa's grace is also obtained. Therefore it is said: "by means of *bhakti* obtained by association with holy ones."¹¹¹ In other words "without the grace of the great ones there is no *bhakti* in any action."¹¹²

It was previously said that when *bhakti* in the form of the pleasure-giving power exists in Śrī Bhagavān, who is the possessor of power, it is called *śakti*. When it appears outside him and illumines the heart of the *bhakta* it is called *bhakti*. That outside-manifesting *bhakti* situated in the heart of the *bhakta* becomes decorated with many feelings, excitants, and so forth and gives joy to Śrī Bhagavān whose very essence is joy. This is one of *bhakti*'s most astonishing glories. Even though a child in the womb is perceived to be a tremendous joy to its mother, after it is born, it gives its mother even greater joy when it plays and moves about as an infant on her lap. In the same way *bhakti*, which is a form of the pleasure-giving power, appears outside of Śrī Bhagavān in the heart of the *bhakta*. That *bhakti* manifests itself in many varieties of efforts on the part of the *bhakta* to bring about Hari's satisfaction and after accomplishing the happiness of Śrī Bhagavān through service, the *bhakta* himself also experiences joy by tasting grace-happiness (*prasādi sukha*).¹¹³

Again, although honey is the possession of the flower, it cannot be obtained directly from a flower—there is no way. Rather, the only way to obtain honey is by means of the honey bee. In the same way flow streams of honey in the form of talks about Hari, oozing from the honeycomb hearts of honey bee-like *bhaktas*. It is not possible to attain pure *bhakti* apart from having a fortunate connection with them. As it is said:

Even though the sun has the power to burn, without the medium of a burning glass (a lens) fire is not produced. So, too, only through the medium of the holy man is *bhakti* for Hari instilled.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹Bhāg., 11.11.24: सत्सङ्गलब्धया भक्त्या

¹¹²Cc., 2.22.32: mahatsaniga vinā kono karme bhakti naya

¹¹³Grace-happiness, like grace-food, is happiness left for the enjoyment of the *bhakta* by Śrī Bhagavān [Trans.]

¹¹⁴Source unknown:

सूर्यकान्तरविर्योगाद्बहिस्तत्र प्रजायते ।
एवं वै साधुसंयोगाद्धरी भक्तिः प्रजायते ॥

Because of the tremendous rarity of association with great *bhaktas* of that calibre, it is extremely difficult for the living being to obtain pure *bhakti* through good fortune. And, in connection with the causes of this tremendous rarity, basically four reasons are cited:

1. The independence or uncontrollable nature of the arrival of *bhakta*-saints.
2. The complete absense of any cause for such association.
3. The extreme rarity of that kind of desireless *bhakta*.
4. Unrecognizability (that it, the mundane intellects inability to recognize a saint)

Therefore in scripture it is said: "Association with the great ones is rare, unrecognizable and not without result."¹¹⁵

As, by contact with the exceedingly rare water of the constellation of Svātī, a pearl is sometimes infused into the hidden interior of one clam out of millions and millions, so, into the heart of someone, through an extraordinary stroke of good fortune, is infused pure *bhakti* which is born of the grace of some great one and that person becomes endowed with qualities like greatness and so forth in the form of a *bhakta*.

Both association with great ones and talks about Hari are self-manifesting things beyond the three threads. Therefore, they are very rare. And again the combination of those two things in one place is an even rarer matter.

Therefore, since pure *bhakti* appears in the above mentioned way, obtaining it is extremely rare. Therefore, it has been said in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

Out of millions of selfless actors one gnostic is best. Out of
millions of gnostics only one is liberated. Out of millions of
those who are liberated one rare one is a *bhakta* of Kṛṣṇa.¹¹⁶

I have followed the Bengali version of Kanupriya Goswami rather than translate directly from the Sanskrit. His Bengali brings out implications in the verse that a straight translation would not.

¹¹⁵*Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*, 39: महत्सङ्गस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च

¹¹⁶Cc., 2.19.131:

koṭi karmī madhye eka jñānī śreṣṭha
koṭi jñānī madhye ekajana mukta
koṭi mukta madhye durlabha eka kṛṣṇabhakta

Therefore, since *Bhāgavata-dharma* or *bhakti*, which is free of threads, produced by association with great ones, and obtained by chance, is so rare, engagement in the four goals of life which are favored by the natural thread-woven faiths of embodied beings is helpful for living beings in general. As it has been said in scripture:

Liberation is easily obtained from cultivation on the path of gnosis; sense enjoyments such as going to the heavens is easily obtained from pious acts like the sacrificial rites and such that are described in the scriptures. But, this self-manifesting, threadless *bhakti* for Hari is extremely difficult to obtain even by thousands of thread-influenced practices.¹¹⁷

For this reason it is said that as long as the extremely good fortune of the acquisition of *bhakti* from association with the great ones does not occur, or in other words, as long as a divine faith does not arise in the hearts of the living beings, being infused in them by the grace of the great ones, and, as a result of that, the inclination to cultivate *bhakti*, with a sense of ultimate respect for it and the feeling that it is the best of all, is not born, the four goals of life, which are not as elevated or as good as *bhakti*, are established in scripture as alternative paths. They prevent living beings from falling downwards and according to their qualifications bring about gradual improvements in them. Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān has expressed a similar intention when he spoke to Śrī Uddhava:

As long as you do not become indifferent to world things or as long as faith in listening to stories about me and such practices does not arise in you, you should perform your appropriate actions.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷Cited in Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* as a statement from an unidentified tantra:

ज्ञानतः सुलभा मुक्तिर्भुक्तिर्यज्ञादिपुण्यतः ।
सेयं साधनसाहस्रैर्हरिभक्तिः सुदुर्लभा ॥

¹¹⁸Bhāg., 11.20.9:

तावत्कर्माणि कुर्वीत न निर्वेद्येत यावता ।
मत्कथाश्रवणादौ वा श्रद्धा यावन्न जायते ॥

The Bengali translation in the original book adds a good deal of commentary: “As long

If people give up their own *dharma* or actions in accord with their own faiths and qualifications, they do not obtain gnosis or *bhakti*. However, when by the performance of desire-free action, as enjoined by scripture, disinterest in the enjoyment of the objects of the senses arises, then qualification for following the path of gnosis is produced and one automatically gives up action. Or, when *bhakti*, preceded by faith, obtained by causeless association with the great ones, arises one automatically gives up one's all one's own *dharma*. Therefore, it has been written in the Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, in the context of beautifully analyzing different instructions of the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

His previous orders were
the *dharma* of the Vedas,
action, yoga, and gnosis.
After discussing them all,
his final order has more force.
On the strength of this order,
if faith in *bhakti* has arisen,
then give up all other actions
and worship Kṛṣṇa.¹¹⁹

as your mind is not purified by desireless action and indifference on the path of gnosis does not arise, or, as long as threadless faith in my stories, produced by association with the great ones, does not arise in you, you should perform the actions enjoined by the Vedas."

¹¹⁹Cc., 2.22.35-36:

pūrva ājñā veda-dharma, karma, yoga, jñāna
saba sādhi avāśeṣa ājñā balavān
ei ājñā bale bhaktye śraddhā yadi haya
sarva karma tyāga kari se kṛṣṇa bhajaya

Even after Śrī Bhagavān gave that instruction to give up all action and *dharma* and only worship him (in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 18.66: सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्येत्यादि), many people are still found to be engaged in action and such. From this one can understand that without the most rare association of great ones and the stories and instructions about Hari that arise from that, faith in *bhakti* cannot be produced, even if it is taught by Śrī Bhagavān himself. For this reason, Śrī Bhagavān sometimes has to come himself into the universe as a great, great one to bestow *bhakti* in a grand fashion. Therefore, if faith in *bhakti* is infused into one by the unpredictable influence of association of the great ones, then one can give up all other actions and become engaged in the worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Part II

Appendices

On the Author (by Rasikamohana Śarmā)

After a long period of inactivity and apathy or of the sleep of illusion in some society, when a sign of awakening is perceived, in most cases its first appearance is noticeable in its literature. At such times literature has to reshape itself by means of many different states or conditions. Through many blows and counter-blows, actions and counter-actions, creatings and breakings, the life of a literature can be unfolded and nourished. At the present time one can perceive signs of a new awakening of Vaiṣṇava literature in Bengali. Even though many deficiencies are visible at this time,¹²⁰ it is a subject of hope and joy that now the body of society is being stirred by vibrations of life and is blossoming again. Life has begun; a living self has entered the body of society. It is natural that some deficiencies are seen at this energetic, uncontrollable time.

It is an occasion for even greater happiness that the descendents of all those great beings, who at the time of the appearance of the Lord himself, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyadeva, surrounded him on all sides like stars in the evening sky and who brightened the life-force of society with the light of *prema-bhakti* (sacred love), now have been revived through the memories of who they are and their senses of their duty have blossomed. In the flood of the nectar of sacred love, their pure ancestors created on the dry bones of a dead society a magnificent flowering garden possessed of the sweetness and beauty of sacred love. With the wealth of Vṛndāvana poetry those ancestors gave dead Bengali literature a new life, a new beauty, a new sweetness and drew the eyes of the world to it. Those ancestors raised Bengali poetic literature to a position of respect and honor in world literature. Now their descendents, realizing

¹²⁰This essay is dated 1340 Bangābda or 1933 C.E.

their hereditary responsibilities, have descended onto the field of action. Among the writers of this order the name of Śrīmat Kānupriya Gosvāmī Mahāśaya is particularly noteworthy. Before starting any discussion of this book¹²¹ by him I think it necessary to give a bit of an introduction to him.

Five hundred years ago, even before the appearance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, from time to time in certain villages of Bengal many deeply experienced, great souls used to descend into the world and adorn the breast of mother earth, the nurse of living beings. They used to illumine the hearts of men and women with the shining light of their sharp knowledge. They used to sprinkle the hearts of men and women who were scorched by the heat of the three types of suffering with a Yamunā-Jāhnavī-like current of sacred love (*prema-bhakti*). They used to establish the power of all kinds of good instruction in the hearts of men and women by the affectionate and warm glow of their own good examples. This author is a virtuous, fortunate descendent of one of those great souls.

Of all the names, that have been received with *bhakti*, of the great souls who were eternally perfected companions of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya Mahāprabhu, who descended to purify this Age of Kali, the names of three persons have been specially honored in the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava society as eternally perfected companions: Śrī Sadāśiva Kavirāja, his son Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa, and his son Śrī Kānu Ṭhākura or Ṭhākura Kānāi. They are introduced in Vaiṣṇava texts like the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the *Caitanya-bhāgavatā* and so forth:

Śrī Sadāśiva Kavirāja was a truly great one
And Śrī Puruṣottamadāsa was his son,
Who from birth was immersed in Nityānanda's feet.
He ceaselessly performed childhood sport with Kṛṣṇa.
His son was the great soul Śrī Kānu Ṭhākura.
In whose body stayed the nectar of love for Kṛṣṇa.¹²²

In the *Śrī Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (Smaller Nectar of Things Relating to the Lord), Section Two entitled *Bhaktāmṛta* (Nectar of the *Bhakta*) it is determined: among all of the *bhaktas* of Hari, Prahlāda is the best; but

¹²¹This introduction was writtend for Śrī Kanupriya Goswami's previous book called *Jīver Svārūpa o Svadharmā, The True Nature and True Duty of the Living Being*.

¹²²Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, 1.11.35-37

even better than Prahlāda are the Pāṇḍavas and even better than the Pāṇḍavas are some of the Yādavas; once again, among all of the Yādavas Uddhava is the best and yet even better than Uddhava are the ladies of Vraja since even Śrī Uddhava begs for the dust from the feet of the ladies of Vraja; moreover, among those ladies of Vraja Śrī Rādhikā and Śrī Candrāvalī are the best of all. That is made known in the *bhakti* scriptures:

There, too, the two best (group leaders) in all respects are Rādhā and Candrāvalī. Moreover, in their two groups are millions of doe-eyed ladies.¹²³

Between those two, once again Śrī Rādhikā is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's dearest lover. Only Śrī Rādhikā is the crown-jewel of all *bhaktas*.

We can see in the works of Vaiṣṇavas that Śrī Sadāśiva Kavirāja is determined to be that Candrāvalī in the previous sport:

Candrāvalī, who is equal to his life-breath, is Kavirāja Sadāśiva.¹²⁴

She who was previously Candrāvalī in Vraja, foremost beloved of Kṛṣṇa is now in Gauḍa Kavirāja Sadāśiva.¹²⁵

Śrī Sadāśiva Kavirāja's son, Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa, was like his father famous in the Vaiṣṇava world as a repository of *bhakti*. In the sport of Śrī Gaura companions of Śrī Nityānanda—the great souls known as the twelve Gopālas—brought a flood of holy names and divine love to Bengal. Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa Ṭhākura was one of those great beings. He has been described in the Vaiṣṇava texts as the famous Stokakṛṣṇa among the dear friends of Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, the supreme person.

¹²³Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Ujjava-nīlamanī*, 4.1:

तत्रापि सर्वथा श्रेष्ठे राधाचन्द्रावलीत्युभे ।
यूथयोस्तु ययओः सन्ति कोटिसङ्ख्या मृगीदृशः ॥

¹²⁴*Ananta-saṃhitā*: चन्द्रावली प्राणतूल्या कविराजः सदाशिवः ।

¹²⁵Kavikarṇapūra, *Śrī Gaura-gaṇoddeśa-dīpikā*, 156:

पुरा चन्द्रावली यासीद्व्रजे कृष्णप्रियापरा ।
अधुना गौडदेशेऽसौ कविराजः सदाशिवः ॥

The friend StokaKṛṣṇa before was Dāsa Śrī Puruṣottama.¹²⁶

He who was Stokakṛṣṇa became Dāsa Puruṣottama.¹²⁷

The famous author of *Praise of Vaiṣṇavas*, Śrī Devakīnandana took shelter (became a disciple) of this Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa and became most pure and fortune. This the author himself has related in his book.

The son of Śrī Puruṣottama Dāsa, Śrī Kānu Ṭhākura, was respected, like his father and grandfather, in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society as an eternally accomplished companion of Bhagavān. When he was very young his name was “Baby Kṛṣṇadāsa.” At a very early age the sweetness of transcendent divine love appeared in his heart. Among the friends of Śrī Kṛṣṇa the dear playmates occupy the highest place and among them Subala and Ujjvala are determined to be the foremost: “Among the dear playmates the chief are Subala and Ujjvala.”¹²⁸ Śrī Vṛndāvana Dāsa Ṭhākura in his book named the Śrī Caitanay-candrodaya¹²⁹ describes him as the friend Ujjvala of Vraja:

The son of Puruṣottama was Baby Kṛṣṇadāsa Gosvāmī. He perceived the shining true nature; this much I know.¹³⁰

He as a youth went to Vṛndāvana with Śrīmtī Jāhnavā Devī. At that time, perceiving the sweetness of him playing the flute along with his supernatural beauty and unparalleled dancing expressions, Śrīpāda Jīva Gosvāmin and the other teachers then residing in Vraja were astonished. From that time forth he became known as “Śrī Kānuṭhākura.” This event was witnessed personally by the author of the *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata*, Śrī Vṛndāvanadāsa Ṭhākura and recorded as follows:

When he was a teenager then in Vṛndāvana I saw his great realization with my own eyes. In saṅkīrtana he was like

¹²⁶ibid., 130: स्तोककृष्णः सखा प्राग्यो दासः श्रीपुरुषोत्तमः ।

¹²⁷*Bhaktamāla*: स्तोककृष्ण येहो तेहो दास पुरुषोत्तम

¹²⁸Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, : प्रियनर्मवयस्येषु प्रवरौ सुबलोज्ज्वलौ

¹²⁹The *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya* by Śrīmat Vṛndāvanadāsa Ṭhākura was edited and published in CA 429 (1915 CE) from a handwritten manuscript by the late Śrī Surendranath Goswami. Later (1962) Sundarānanda Vidyāvinoda Mahodaya published another edition of it.

¹³⁰Vṛndāvana Dāsa, *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya: puruṣottama-suta śiṣu kṛṣṇadāsa gosvāmī—ujjvala svarūpa anubhave jāni āmi*—

a second Madanagopāla. With a pearl necklace swinging from his neck and a garland of forest flowers, the sound of his flute stole everyone's minds. The Vrajavāsī's said he was Kṛṣṇa become visible. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmin and the rest of the Vrajavāsīs seeing his beauty offered praise. From that time on his name became Śrī Kānuṭhākura. What more can I say about his vast greatness? Whomever that Friend Ujjvala showed his grace that person easily attained Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.¹³¹

It is said that when he danced the anklebells on his swift moving feet broke and landed in Bodhkhānā in the district of Yaśohar. For that reason, he later selected Bodhkhānā as his home. There, the sacred images established by him, Śrī Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Prāṇavallabha are still present¹³² and in honor of his fifth swing, every year in that place there is a festival. On that day, an amazing kadamba tree blossoms.

Some of the Gosvāmīs descendants of Kānāi Ṭhākura came from Bodhkhānā to the village of Bhājanaghāṭa in the District of Nadiyā to live. There the sacred images named Śrī Śrī Rādhāvallabha, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-vṛndāvanacandra, and Śrī Śrī Rādhāgovinda were revealed and established and are being served by them to this day. Śrīla Ṭhākura Kānāi was the last eternally accomplished person in that family which is pure and possesses the highest form of the *bhakti* of divine love. For that reason, they are known in the society of Vaiṣṇavas as Gosvāmīs of the family of Ṭhākura Kānāi.

The Vaidya community of Bengal is famous for its genius from ancient times. Learning, intelligence, discrimination, renunciation, knowledge, concentration, *bhakti*, and divine love, for these and other spiritual virtues they have been objects of respect in society at large for a long time. Beyond this, from time to time, many accomplished persons (*siddha-puruṣa*) have appeared. Not just in the Vaiṣṇava community, in the Śākta and Śaiva communities, too, many renunciant Vaidya practitioners and accomplished persons's names have come to our attention. Among the hagiographers of Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya Mahāprabhu many great beings like Śrīla Murārigupta, Śrī Narahari Ṭhākura, Śrīla

¹³¹Śrī Vṛndāvanadāsa Ṭhākura, *Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya*, 2.115-120.

¹³²In the turmoil of the creation of Pakistan, the images were moved and at present is in Kolkata, in Barāhanagar, at 1/2 Pāṭhabārī Lane, in the temple established by Śrīmat Gaurahari Gosvāmī Prabhu.

Kavikarṇapūra, Śrīla Locana Dāsa, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, and others have by their appearance brought fortune to the Vaidya community. By the appearance of three eternally accomplished persons in a row, from Śrīla Sadāśiva Kavirāja to Ṭhākura Kānāi, the excellence of the Vaidya community has been illuminated.

After the time of Śrī Kānu Ṭhākura many pious, learned, and saintly persons have been born in this family. Many of them have been respected in society for the excellence of their learning and the power of their *bhakti*. Among those pious and learned persons born in this family, the names of Śrī Bihārīlāla Gosvāmī, author of the book *Śrī Kānutattvanirṇaya* (Determination of the Truth About Śrī Kānu), and Śrī Hārādhana Gosvāmī, who had an uncommon expertise in *bhakti*-scriptures such as the *Bhāgavata*, are specially worthy of note. Nearly half a century ago someone created a massive flood of joy with *bhakti-rasa* in Eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) through his songs and poetry. That celebrated and deeply faithful person was Śrī Kṛṣṇakamala Gosvāmī Mahodaya who was born in this same, pure family at Bhājanaghāṭa. I met him personally in Dhaka. I was then a young man and he was elderly. My mind was drawn by his poetic genius; I had memorized many of the songs from his *Svapna-vilāsa*, *Vicitra-vilāsa*, *Rāi Unmādinī*, and *Bharata Milana*. Even now those songs are in my memory. I myself perceived in him the good habits, honest modes of interaction, civility, and humility of those Vaiṣṇavas possessed of good behavior of the days of old.

The author of this book's late father, the most honorable and sage-like Śrī Surendranātha Gosvāmī Mahāśaya (BA., L.M.S.), was an special object of my affection. From the time we first met, a deep feeling of friendship was born between us. In age he was much junior to me, but because of his stolidness, profundity, sweetness, passion for knowledge, acceptance of renunciation, firmness in truth, measured speech, straightforwardness, and above all his Vaiṣṇavism I always had faith in him. I loved him—had deep affection for him, but that affection was not exactly like the affection one has for someone who is younger; it was an affection mixed with deep faith. I, with deep faith in my heart, felt affection for him. When he entered the eternal home, I experienced the flames of intense grief for a long time.

I have known the author of this book, Śrīmān Kānupriya Gosvāmī, since he was a child. His firmness in the truth, purity of character, passion for *dharma*, and concern for maintaining proper etiquette developed in childhood. I had noticed those traits in him then, too. But,

that he would attain the proficiency to increase the honor of his already universally honored family by becoming so highly regarded and respected in Vaiṣṇava society and by attaining such eminence in the world of Vaiṣṇava literature, that I could not foresee. Control over the senses, self-control, life-long celibacy, rejection of desire for enjoyment and other fine virtues developed in special measure in him from his early youth. Just as in the tiniest Banyan seed all the qualities of being a huge tree are hidden and just as in time in the bosom of the earth the gradual development of those traits becomes visible and enlarged in a regular fashion, so too from his very childhood I perceived the unfolding of his limitless fine qualities. But, that the current of this accomplished family would become so much more highly developed in him, that was beyond my ability to infer back then. He was not educated in any school, college or traditional school (*catuspaṭhi*), but the kind of excellence in sagacity and learning and in the *bhakti* and gnosis that he attained by the power of his keen intelligence, which he accrued from previous births, and by the grace of the Lord, all those qualities are rarely seen even among well-educated people. The current of the force of his oratorial eloquence is immense like the currents of the Gaṅgā or Yamunā and is full of both purity of word and purity of feeling. In his oratory nothing like irrelevant speech, loss of direction, harshness to the ear, pointless use of language, and so forth are even in the slightest degree noticeable. Even after hearing many of his lectures, there remain in the ears of his well-educated listeners, those who are sensitive to feelings and *rasa*, the emotionally packed, sweet resonances of his words.

Now I shall talk about his writing ability. In this connection, this book is a shining example.¹³³ People in general think that writing essays on Vaiṣṇava scripture is easy, but in actually it is completely the reverse. All the works written by his eternal companions, the Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana, by the grace of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya Mahāprabhu are vast treasure troves of settled teaching filled with the most subtle analyses. Without the grace of the Lord we lack qualification to enter into that treasury of settled teaching on the strength of our own laboriously accumulated intellects and learning. Works on the settled teachings of *bhakti* by those who write only on the strength of their keen intellects may have skillful writing in them. They may be pleasant to read because of the clever choice of words and charming use of language, but in the reading of those kinds of books by writers who do not practice

¹³³This essay appeared as a preface to Kānupriya Goswami's *The True Nature and Function of the Living Being (Jīver Svārūp o Svādharma)*, first published in 1934.

bhakti, bhakta readers do not find even a drop of enjoyment.

In this little book¹³⁴ extremely difficult philosophical issues have been discussed. The author, by the divine eye of his bhakti, has seen the hidden, secret essence of all of those truths and in a natural and simple way made those easy to read for the general public. His language is lucid and well polished. Each and every subject reveals his thoughtfulness and because of his skillful writing even women with little education can easily understand him. The essays are filled with philosophical thinking and yet because of the beauty and sweetness of their poetry and the charm of their language they are attractive to readers in general. One other special feature of this book is that whenever the author takes up whatever work, the freshness of his feelings and the fundamental nature of his thinking are extremely clearly noticeable. Freshness and fundamentalmentality of line of thought are quite rare in others. Even those settled teachings that contain extraordinarily subtle truths have become comprehensible to the general public through his skillful explanations. One of his major distinguishing traits is in making his essays attractive to the general reader by use of similes, examples and such forth, and by the beauty of his quite charming and sweet language.

In some specific places and for some specific topics, there is a need for repetition. For some readers this may seem unjustified. But, if one is going to make some of those hidden, profound truths capable of being comprehended by general readers, they have to be reflected into the budlike minds of readers whose intelligences are soft in many ways, in many manners, by many methods and with many examples. In certain circumstances the method of "[repeatedly] pounding the post" is not to be regarded as a fault but instead as an ornament. Critics must keep all subjects in their gazes in order to reveal the author's intention. Just as human being's physical appearance and type is a matter of individual independence, independence in one's mental vision, one's assessment of arguments and one's operation of intellect and analysis is also natural. I am expressing my own individual opinion here. I think that among all of the books that are available at the present time in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature, this book will attain a very high standing. Its language is pure, its taste is highly refined, its conception is elevated, it is decorated with clarity and skillfulness of explanation and with use of similes and examples, and it is filled with the settled teachings of the Vaiṣṇava scriptures. The language of this book is charming throughout, its feeling and

¹³⁴*The True Nature and Function of the Living Being (Jīber Svārūp o Svadharmā)*

flavor are sweet, and its clear demonstration of expertise in explaining the genuine teachings shines most brightly.

I pray at the tips of the feet of the most compassionate Śrī Śrī Gaurāṅgasundara that, by his grace, this author obtains a healthy body, a peaceful mind, and a long life, that he shine in human society as an example of the condition of the *bhakta*, and that, becoming an eternal resident of his (Śrī Gaurāṅga's) home world, which is illumined by the light of the bliss of his sweet nectar as though scattered everywhere through the rays of moonlight from his toe nails, he sprinkles nectar, through his explanations of the bhakti scriptures, on all living beings who are scorched by the three sufferings. *alamiti vistāreṇa* ("Enough said on this subject.")

1340 Sāla (1934 C.E.)
12th Agrahāyaṇa, Mahādvādaśī

Śrī Rasikamohana Śarmā (Vidyābhūṣaṇa)
25 No. Bagbazar Street,
Kolkata

The Importance of the Guru and Divine Name

In the context of association with great ones or saints, the question of the importance and role of the *guru* or spiritual teacher naturally arises. While association with the saints of a tradition, when it can be had, is certainly indispensable for one who wants to advance on the path to sanctity envisioned by that tradition, in India this association most often occurs in the context of finding, testing, asking for acceptance by, and then living under the protection and guidance of a religious teacher who belongs to the tradition. Thus, it is important to understand the role of the guru as understood in the Caitanya tradition as an extension of belief in the sacred power of association with the great *bhaktas*.

Surprisingly perhaps, while the position of the guru is discussed in sections of many books, there is only one book that I am aware of that is devoted entirely to the subject of the guru. That is Sundarananda Dasa's (a.k.a., Sundarananda Vidyavinode) book in Bengali called *The Nature of the Guru in Vaiṣṇava Teaching (Vaiṣṇava-sidhānte Śrīgurusvarūpa)*. The learned author discusses many of the important issues relating to the guru in the twelve chapters of his book: (1) The Necessity of the Guru, (2) The Mantraguru and Initiation (*dīkṣā*), (3) The General Characteristics of the Guru, (4) The Suitableness of the Guru and the Disciple, (5) The Testing of the Guru and the Disciple, (6) The Temporal, Family, and Lineage-perfected Gurus, (7) The Collective and Distributive Gurus, (8) The Non-difference of the Guru from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, (9) Offences to the Guru, (10) The Rejection of the Guru, (11) The Duties of the Initiated Disciple, and finally (12) Service of and Association with the Guru. This thorough treatment of the principle of the guru is too detailed for inclusion in this book. It really requires a separate monograph and it is my hope that at

in the future I will be able to translate and document Sundarananda's fine work. For the present book, however, I decided to include a chapter from an early Caitanya Vaiṣṇava text, little known outside the tradition, that discusses briefly, in the scope of some twenty-five verses with occasional commentary, the role of the guru.

The text presented here in both Sanskrit and English is the third chapter of a work called the *A Collection of the Essentials of Bhakti for the Lord* (*Śrī Bhagavad-bhakti-sāra-samuccaya*) by Lokānandācārya, a disciple of Narahari Sarkar, who was an important and close companion of Śrī Caitanya.¹³⁵ When the book was written is not known, but we can assume that it was composed within a generation of Śrī Caitanya's time. There is a story told about the author in a work devoted to praising the initiation lineage of Narahari Sarkar called *The Discernment of the Branch of Narahari* (*Narahari-śākhā-nirṇaya*) by a Gopāladāsa. The date and authenticity of this text are uncertain, but the following account has become part of the tradition of Lokānandācārya:

I call the branch of Narahari the victor of all directions.
I now describe a learned man named Lokānandācārya.
He once told Śrī Gaurāṅga, "I have this certain bug.
Whoever shall defeat me, I will take shelter of him."¹³⁶
He was defeated by Ṭhākura [Narahari];
therefore, he took shelter of him in Nīlācala.
His book is the *Bhakti-sāra-samuccaya*,
which explains the doctrines of Gaurāṅga in [on the basis of]
the Purāṇas.¹³⁷

¹³⁵There are three editions of the work in my possession, two by Haridas Sastri (1979 in Devanagari and with Hindi translation and again in 1979 in Bengali script and with Bengali translation) and that of Haribhaktadas (1982 in Bengali script with a Bengali translation).

¹³⁶That is, I will accept him as my uru and become his disciple.

¹³⁷As cited in both Haridas Sastri's and Haribhakta Das' introductions:

digvijayī nāma kari ṭhākurer śākhā
lokānandācārya nāma paṇḍite kari lekḥā
śrīgaurāṅge kahe mor ei kīṭa haya
ye more jīmibe tāre kariba āśraya
ṭhākurer sthāne teṇho hailā parājayā
nīlācale kailā tāṁr caraṇa āśraya
bhaktisāra samuccaya grantha yāmhār
gaurāṅger siddhānta purāṇe vyākhyā tāṁr

The work of Lokānandācārya contains eight chapters: (1) Determining the Nature of the Object of Worship, (2) Determining the Nature of Bhakti, (3) Taking Shelter With a Guru, (4) The Greatness of the Holy Name, (5) The Characteristics of Worship of Bhagavān and of the Bhāgavata [the follower of Bhagavān], (6) Determining the Nature the Greatness of the Grace, (7) Determining the Nature of Aversion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas, (8) Determining the Nature of Detachment. The book is not a long one. It contains only two hundred and seventy-six verses, mostly culled from the Purāṇas and the *Bhāgavata*. Between the verses are connecting passages introducing the verses and in addition some of the verses have a commentary on them. These commentarial passages appear to be the work of the author and it may be that some of the unidentified verses are also his. Thus, the work appears to be a concise presentation of the essentials of the beliefs and practices of the early Caitanya movement, from a source other than the companionship of the Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. It represents the viewpoint of bhaktas of Bengal as distinct from the viewpoint of the Vṛndāvana school.

The first verse makes it clear that this is the work of an avid follower of Śrī Caitanya and the second verse recognizes the author's indebtedness to Narahari Sarkar:

A pure lotus-like face, golden-skinned,
eyes like lotus petals as well,
the sweetest of sweet laughs,
charming cupid-like his attire,
praised by god, man and sage,
the moon-like Kṛṣṇacaitanya,
possessed by the power of the dance,
him, image of love, do I worship.¹³⁸

I, blinded by the darkness of ignorance,
take shelter in the moon of the ocean

¹³⁸Lokānandācārya, *Bhagavad-bhakti-sāra-samuccaya*, 1:

अमलकमलवक्त्रं गौरमम्भोजनेत्रं
मधुरमधुरहासं चारुकन्दर्पवेशम् ।
सुरनरमुनिवन्द्यं कृष्णचैतन्यचन्द्रं
कलितनटनशक्तिं तं भजे प्रेममूर्तिम् ॥

of knowledge, Śrī Narahari,
my guru, who is so kind to the fallen.¹³⁹

After seeking shelter with his guru, Lokānandācārya describes the power of associating with the *bhaktas* of the Lord, revealing how closely connected association with great ones and surrendering to a guru are:

I praise the two feet of the *bhakta*
which counteract all obstacles;
by the mere hearing of a *bhakta*'s name
all the worlds are immediately purified.¹⁴⁰

Anticipating a question from prospective readers, Lokānanda in his fifth verse raises the question himself: “why should inquisitive people put their efforts into reading this book when they could busy themselves with studying the many Purāṇas headed by the Bhāgavata?” In response, he wrote a little verse that identifies and describes the audience he had in mind for his book. It is an interesting and realistic characterization of the community Lokānanda saw before him at a time shortly after the disappearance of Śrī Caitanya, a snapshot of the some segments of Bengali society in the middle and last part of the 16th century:

Those whose minds are confused by attachment
arising from unhealthy past impressions
and who are lazy about listening to
and studying the many Purāṇas,
yet curious about the lotus-like feet of Kṛṣṇa
and above all good-hearted, they will make
the best effort in [reading] this book.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ibid., 2:

अज्ञानतिमिरान्धोऽहं ज्ञानार्णवसुधाकरम् ।
आश्रये श्रीनरहरिं श्रीगुरुं दीनवत्सलम् ॥

¹⁴⁰ibid., 3:

वन्दे भक्तपदद्वन्द्वं सर्वविघ्ननिवारकम् ।
यन्नामश्रुतिमात्रेण लोकाः सद्यः पुरान्ति च ॥

¹⁴¹ibid., 5:

दुर्वासनासक्तिविमूढबुद्धयो नानापुराणाश्रवणोत्थालसाः ।
जिज्ञासवः कृष्णपदारविन्दयोः कुर्वन्ति यत्नं परमत्र साधवः ॥

Lokānandācārya's audience was ordinary people involved in or attached to the world, society, and their families, their spiritual visions, in his opinion, clouded by karmic results called *samskāras* or *vāsanās*, subtle, surviving impressions left by experiences undergone in past existences which manifest in present lives as desires for or wishes to avoid certain things or actions. Another characteristic that Lokānandācārya recognizes in his audience is a certain lack of enthusiasm for studying and listening to the various Purāṇas, especially to the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. This is understandable, perhaps, since the Purāṇas are vast and parts of the them are difficult to understand. Moreover, the *Bhāgavata* is no doubt one of the most challenging of them. Thus, in the following short paragraph in which Lokānandācārya unpacks the name of his book, "A Collection of the Essentials of Bhakti for the Lord," he says his work is "a collection of statements in the form of verses that are essential to the awakening of *bhakti*." The last two characteristics of his audience are that its members have some interest in or curiosity about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that they be *sādhū*, essentially virtuous people.

With this brief introduction to the *A Collection of the Essentials of Bhakti for the Lord* of Lokānandācārya, let us now turn to the third chapter which focuses on seeking shelter with an authentic guru. In addition, since one of Kanupriya Goswami's major areas of reflection was the theology of the divine name, I also include the fourth chapter of Lokānandācārya's book which is entitled "The Greatness of the Holy Name." It is perhaps the earliest treatment of the beliefs and practices surrounding the divine names in the Caitanya tradition.

Taking Shelter With a Guru

अथ श्रीगुरुचरणाश्रयणम्

अथ तावद्भगवद्भजने गुरुरेव प्रधानकारणमित्येव दर्शयितुमाह
भगवद्वाक्येन —

नृदेहमाद्यं सुलभं सुदुर्लभं स्रवं सुकल्पं गुरुकर्णधारम् ।
मयानुकूलेन नभस्वतेरितं पुमान्भवाब्धिं न तरेत्स आत्म-
हा ॥ १ ॥¹⁴²

एवं कीदृशो गुरुरुपासनीय इत्याह भगवद्वाक्येन —

यमानभीक्षां सेवेत नियमान् मत्परः क्वचित् ।
मदभिज्ञं गुरुं शान्तमुपासीत मदात्मकम् ॥ २ ॥¹⁴³

एतदेव स्पष्टयन्नाह —

तस्माद्गुरुं प्रपद्येत जिज्ञासुः श्रेय उत्तमम् ।
शाब्दे परे च निष्णातं ब्रह्मण्युपशमाश्रयम् ॥ ३ ॥¹⁴⁴

तत्र प्रयोजनमाह —

तत्र भागवतान् धर्मान् शिच्चेद्गुर्वात्मदैवतः ।
अमाययानुवृत्त्या यैस्तुष्येदात्मात्मदो हरिः ॥ ४ ॥¹⁴⁵

¹⁴²भाग्. ११.२०.१७

¹⁴³भाग्. ११.१०.५

¹⁴⁴भाग्. ११.३.२१

¹⁴⁵भाग्. ११.३.२२

Now, taking shelter with a blessed guru:

Now, first, to show that the guru is the chief cause of the worship of Bhagavān he says by means of a statement of Bhagavān:

The human body is primary, easily attained, and yet very rare; it is like a boat with the guru at the helm that I push along with a favorable wind. If a person does not cross the ocean of becoming under these conditions, that person is like a killer of the self.¹⁴⁶ (1)

Now what sort of guru should be worshiped? To this is replies with another statement of Bhagavān:

One who is devoted to me should observe constantly the *yamas* and *niyamas*¹⁴⁷ at some point and worship a guru who is knows me well, who is peaceful, and who thinks of me as the very self.¹⁴⁸ (2)

He makes this even more clear:

Therefore, one who is inquisitive about the highest good should resort to a guru who is deeply immersed in the sacred texts and in supreme brahman [Śrī Kṛṣṇa] and whose shelter is tranquility.¹⁴⁹ (3)

And the purpose in that is—

One whose guru is his very self and deity should learn from him the characteristics of the Lord by which through sincere cultivation Hari, who gives himself, is pleased.¹⁵⁰ (4)

¹⁴⁶Bhāg., 11.20.17.

¹⁴⁷The *yamas* and *niyamas* are the first two limbs of the eight-limbed practice of yoga. The *yamas* or restraints are: nonviolence, truthfulness, no stealing, celibacy, and non-acquisitiveness (*Yoga-sūtra*, 2.30). The *niyamas* or obligations are: cleanliness, being satisfied, austerity, study, and devotion to God. (*Yoga-sūtra*, 2.32).

¹⁴⁸Bhāg., 11.5.5.

¹⁴⁹Bhāg., 11.3.21.

¹⁵⁰Bhāg., 11.3.22.

एवं तत्फलमाह—

इति भागवतान् धर्मान् शिष्यन् भक्त्या तदुत्थया ।
नारायणपरो मायामञ्जस्तरति दुस्तराम् ॥ ५ ॥¹⁵¹

ननु तावदाचार्यस्य वेदपाठनद्वारा, पितुर्जनकत्वात्, मातुर्गर्भ-
धारणपोषणत्वाच्च गुरुत्वमस्ति । तत्र कुत्र भक्तिः कार्येत्याह—

गुरुर्न स्यात्स्वजनो न स स्यात्
पिता न स स्याज्जननी न सा स्यात् ।
दैवं न तत् स्यान्न पतिश्च स स्यात्
न मोचयेद्यः समुपेतमृत्युम् ॥ ६ ॥¹⁵²

ननु तावद्भगवान् श्रीकृष्ण सर्वेषामीश्वरः स्वतन्त्रः तस्य साक्षा-
त्सेवया भक्तिर्भविष्यति । तत्कथं भक्ताश्रयणं कार्यमित्यत्राह वैकुण्ठ-
नाथवचनेन—

अहं भक्तपराधीनो ह्यस्वतन्त्र इव द्विज ।
साधुभिर्ग्रस्तहृदयो भक्तैर्भक्तजनप्रियः ॥ ७ ॥¹⁵³

ननु देवतान्तराराधनेन भगवान् प्राप्तव्यः, किं भक्तैः इत्यत्राकुरं
प्रति भगवद्वचनमाह—

भवद्विधा महाभागाः निषेव्या अर्हसत्तमाः ।
श्रेयस्कामैर्नृभिर्नित्यं देवाः स्वार्था न साधवः ॥ ८ ॥¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹भाग्. ११.३.३३

¹⁵²भाग्. ५.५.१८

¹⁵³भाग्. ९.४.६३

¹⁵⁴भाग्. १०.४८.३०

Now, he describes the result of that—

Thus, as one learns the truths relating to Bhagavān by the *bhakti* that arises from that, one who is intent on Nārāyaṇa quickly crosses over *māyā* which is difficult to get beyond.¹⁵⁵
(5)

Now then, the vedic teacher (*ācārya*) by teaching the Vedas, the father by begetting one, the mother by carrying one in her womb and raising one are all gurus. Towards which of them should one perform *bhakti*? To this he replies—

One is not a guru, one is not a relative, one is not a father, one is not a mother, one is not a god, nor is one a husband who cannot free one from approaching death.¹⁵⁶ (6)

Here is another doubt. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of All, fully independent. By direct service of him *bhakti* arises. Therefore, why must one seek the support of a *bhakta* of his? To this he replies with a statement of the Lord of Vaiṣṇava (Nārāyaṇa)—

I am under the control of my *bhaktas*, as if I, o twiceborn, were not independent. My heart is held by my good *bhaktas* and I am dear to them.¹⁵⁷ (7)

Now, too, Bhagavān can be obtained by worshiping the gods. What need is there for his *bhaktas*? To this he replies with a statement of Bhagavān to Akrūra—

Greatly fortunate ones like you, who are most noble and good, are to be constantly served by human beings who desire the supreme good. The gods are only interested in their own goals, but not the holy ones.¹⁵⁸ (8)

¹⁵⁵Bhāg., 11.3.33.

¹⁵⁶Bhāg. 5.5.18.

¹⁵⁷Bhāg., 9.4.63.

¹⁵⁸Bhāg. 10.48.30.

देवताराधनापेक्षया सद्यः फलत्वाच्च सत्सङ्ग एव श्रेयानिति मुचु-
कुन्दवचनेनाह —

भवापगो भ्रमतो यदा भवेत्
जनस्य तर्ह्यच्युत सत्समागमः ।
सत्सङ्गमो यर्हि तदैव सद्गतौ
परावरेण त्वयि जायते मतिः ॥ ९ ॥¹⁵⁹

अतएव सद्यः फलत्वं स्पष्टयति —

न ह्यम्मयानि तीर्थानि न देवा मृच्छिलामयाः ।
ते पुनन्त्युरुकालेन दर्शनादेव साधवः ॥ १० ॥¹⁶⁰
वैष्णवल्लभते भक्तिं भक्त्या मां लभते नरः ।
तस्मात्तु वैष्णवो विष्णुः कलेर्मध्ये विशेषतः ॥ ११ ॥¹⁶¹

एवं प्रकरणार्थभगवद्वचनमाह चतुर्भिः —

अन्नं हि प्राणिनां प्राणा आर्तानां शरणं त्वहम् ।
धर्मो वित्तं नृणां प्रेत्य सन्तोऽर्वाग्विभ्यतोऽरणम् ॥ १२ ॥¹⁶²
सन्तो दिशन्ति चक्षुषि बहिरर्कः समुत्थितः ।
देवता बान्धवाः सन्तः सन्त आत्माहमेव च ॥ १३ ॥¹⁶³
प्रायेण भक्तियोगेन सत्सङ्गेन विनोद्धव ।
नोपायो विद्यते सम्यक्प्रायणं हि सतामहम् ॥ १४ ॥¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹भाग्. १०.५१.५३

¹⁶⁰भाग्. १०.४८.३१

¹⁶¹ ?

¹⁶²भाग्. ११.२६.३३

¹⁶³भाग्. ११.२६.३४

¹⁶⁴भाग्. ११.११.४८

And, because it produces an immediate result in comparison to worshipping the gods, associating with the holy is better. This he says through a statement of Mucukunda:

When release from material existence is to occur for someone spinning in the cycle of rebirth, then, o Acyuta, that person meets someone holy and when there is association with someone holy faith in you, lord of the higher and lower, goal of the holy, is born.¹⁶⁵ (9)

Therefore, he makes clearer its immediate results:

Not places of pilgrimage on the banks of sacred streams, nor gods made of mud and stone, they only purify one after a long time. Holy ones purify one on sight.¹⁶⁶ (10)

From a Vaiṣṇava one obtains *bhakti*. By *bhakti* a person obtains me. Therefore, a Vaiṣṇava is Viṣṇu, especially in this Age of Kali.¹⁶⁷ (11)

Thus, he cites four statements of Bhagavān that are relevant to the topic:

Food is indeed the life-breath of living beings and I am the shelter of those who suffer. *Dharma* is the livelihood of humans after they pass on and the holy ones are the shelter of one who fears while in this world.¹⁶⁸ (12)

The holy ones give eyes. Outside only the sun rises. The holy ones are [your real] gods and friends. Holy ones are [your] Self and me as well.¹⁶⁹ (13)

As a rule, apart from the yoga of *bhakti* and associating with holy ones, o Uddhava, no way [to freedom] exists. I am the complete shelter of the holy ones.¹⁷⁰ (14)

¹⁶⁵Bhāg., 10.51.53.

¹⁶⁶Bhāg. 10.48.31.

¹⁶⁷Source unknown.

¹⁶⁸Bhāg. 11.26.33.

¹⁶⁹Bhāg., 11.26.34.

¹⁷⁰Bhāg., 11.11.48.

इष्टापूर्तेण मामेवं यो यजेत समाहितः ।
लभते मयि सद्भक्तिं मत्स्मृतिं साधुसेवया ॥ १५ ॥¹⁷¹

तस्माद्गुरुत्वेन भगवद्भक्ताश्रयणमेव भगवद्भक्तिप्राप्तौ मूलं कारण-
मिति । अत्र केचिदाहुर्गुरुभक्तिरेव कृष्णभक्तिः, तस्याः अपृथगाया-
ससाध्यत्वात् । अथ तावद् गुरुभक्तिरेव किं नाम । उच्यते काय-
वाङ्मनोभिः सद्यः शक्याशक्याविचारेणाज्ञापालनपूर्वकगुरुचित्तबोधनं
गुरुभक्तिरिति । एतदपि शरणापन्ने सति भवति । तत्र शरणापन्नस्य
लक्षणमाह प्रथमतो गुरोर्गोप्तृत्वस्वीकार आनुकूल्यकरणं प्रातिकू-
ल्यपरित्यागः सर्वस्वनिःक्षेपस्तत्प्रसादलेशग्रहणमात्मनो निरभिमा-
नित्वाचरणम् । एतेन सर्वं निरवद्यम् । यद्येवं भगवन्नामादिश्रवण-
कीर्तनस्मरणपादसेवनादिकं कर्तव्यं न वेत्याशङ्के मैवम्, यतः तदा-
ज्ञावशादेव भगवत्परिचर्यातन्नामादिश्रवणवैष्णवसेवादिकं कर्तव्यमि-
ति गुरुचित्तबोधनमुपपन्नमिति साधूक्तम् । एवं गुरोः सर्वमयत्वमाह
भगवद्वचनेन —

आचार्यं मां विजानीयान्नावमन्येत कर्हिचित् ।
न मर्त्यबुद्ध्यासूयेत सर्वदेवमयो गुरुः ॥ १६ ॥¹⁷²

एवं प्रपञ्चयति —

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुर्गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मादादौ तमर्चयेत् ॥ १७ ॥¹⁷³

¹⁷¹भाग्. ११.११.४७

¹⁷²भाग्. ११.१७.२७

¹⁷³गुरुगीता ?

Whoever may worship me with a concentrated mind in order to fulfill his desired aims obtains true *bhakti* for me, [but] by service to the holy ones one obtains remembrance of me.¹⁷⁴

Therefore, the primary cause of obtaining *bhakti* to the Lord is taking shelter with a *bhakta* of the Lord in the form of the guru. Here some say that *bhakti* for the guru is *bhakti* for Kṛṣṇa. Now then, what exactly is *bhakti* for the guru? It is said that *guru-bhakti* is knowing the mind of the guru as a result of observing the guru's orders with one's body, words, and mind, without considering whether or not one is able to do it. This too occurs when one has surrendered to the guru. Here the characteristics of one who is surrendered are: first of all, accepting the guru as one's protector, acting favorably to the guru, rejecting unfavorable things, giving up one's possessions, accepting a little of the guru's grace, and behaving without conceit or egotism. In this way everything becomes free of blemish. If one wonders whether things such as hearing, repeating, remembering, serving and the rest of the Lord's names and so forth are to be performed or not, have no doubt. By the very force of the guru's orders, the service of Bhagavān, hearing his names, serving the Vaiṣṇavas and the rest are to be performed. Therefore, defining *guru-bhakti* as "knowing the mind of the guru" is appropriate.

Thus, he states that the guru is everything with a statement from Bhagavān—

One should know me to be the teacher and should never disrespect the teacher. One should not envy him as if he were an ordinary mortal. The guru is made up of all the gods.¹⁷⁵

And this he makes more clear:

The guru is Brahmā; the guru is Viṣṇu; the guru is the god Maheśvara. The guru is supreme Brahman. Therefore, one should worship him first.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴Bhāg., 11.11.47.

¹⁷⁵Bhāg., 11.17.27.

¹⁷⁶Guru-gītā: ?

गुरौ प्रसन्ने सति फलमाह—

प्रसन्ने तु गुरौ सर्वसिद्धिरुक्ता मनीषिभिः ॥ १८ ॥¹⁷⁷

अप्रसन्ने फलमाह—

हरौ रुष्टे गुरुस्त्राता गुरौ रुष्टे न कश्चन ।
तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन गुरुमेव प्रसादयेत् ॥ १९ ॥¹⁷⁸

पूजाकरणोऽमङ्गलफलमाह—

गुरौ सन्निहिते यस्तु पूजयेदग्रतो न तम् ।
स दुर्गतिमवाप्नोति पूजा च विफला भवेत् ॥ २० ॥¹⁷⁹

विद्याद्यभावेऽपि स एव परमेश्वदेव इत्याह—

अविद्यो वा सविद्यो वा गुरुरेव तु दैवतम् ।
मार्गस्थो वाप्यमार्गस्थो गुरुरेव सदा गतिः ॥ २१ ॥¹⁸⁰

अत्र विमुखेऽनिष्टमाह—

प्रतिपद्य गुरुं यस्तु मोहाद्विप्रतिपद्यते ।
स कल्पकोटीं नरके पच्यते पुरुषाधमः ॥ २२ ॥¹⁸¹

177 ?

178 ?

179 ?

180 ?

181 ?

He describes the result when the guru is pleased:

The wise say that when the guru is pleased all things are successful.¹⁸² (18)

And he describes the result when the guru is not pleased:

When Hari is angered the guru is one's savior; when the guru is angered no one can save one. Therefore, one should make every effort to make the guru happy.¹⁸³ (19)

He describes the inauspicious result of not worshipping the guru:

But one who does not worship the guru first when he is present obtains a bad end and his worship too becomes fruitless.¹⁸⁴ (20)

He now adds that even if one's guru does not have knowledge, the guru is still highest desired deity:

Whether without knowledge or with knowledge, the guru is one's deity. Whether on the path or not on the path, the guru is always one's goal.¹⁸⁵ (21)

Now the unwanted result when one turns against one's guru:

One who, after having surrendered to a guru, then out of delusion turns against him is the lowest of humans and burns in hell for a billion ages.¹⁸⁶ (22)

¹⁸²Unknown source.

¹⁸³Unknown source.

¹⁸⁴Unknown source.

¹⁸⁵Unknown source.

¹⁸⁶Unknown source.

तत्सन्निधौ व्यवहारमाह —

आयान्तमग्रतो गच्छेद्गच्छन्तं तमनुव्रजेत् ।
 आसने शयने वापि नो तिष्ठेदग्रतो गुरोः ॥
 अनुज्ञां प्राप्य यस्तिष्ठेन्नैवं पापमवाप्नुयात् ॥ २३ ॥¹⁸⁷

गुरौ दूरस्थे निकटस्थे च भोजनव्यवहारमाह —

यत्किञ्चिदन्नपानादि प्रियं द्रव्यं मनोरमम् ।
 समर्प्य गुरवे पश्चात्स्वयं भुञ्जीत प्रत्यहम् ॥ २४ ॥¹⁸⁸

प्रकरणार्थमुपसंहरति —

महान्धकारमध्येष्वादित्यश्च प्रकाशकः ।
 अज्ञानतिमिरान्धेषु गुरुरेव प्रकाशकः ॥ २५ ॥¹⁸⁹

श्रीभक्तिसारसमुच्चये गुरुचरणाश्रयनं तृतीयं विरचनम् ॥

187 ?

188 ?

189 ?

He describes proper behavior when the guru is near:

When guru is coming one walk before and when the guru going one should walk behind. In sitting or in lying down one should not sit or lie down in front of the guru. One who has received the guru's permission may do so and thus obtains no sin.¹⁹⁰ (23)

He describes proper behavior for eating when the guru is far away and when the guru is nearby:

Whatever food and drink and any object dear to one that is pleasing each one one should offer first to one's guru and then later enjoy it oneself.¹⁹¹ (24)

He wraps up the subject of this section:

And in the great darknesses the sun is the bearer of light. In the darknesses of ignorance the guru is the bearer of light.¹⁹²

Thus ends the Third Chapter entitled "Taking Shelter with a Guru" in the Collection of the Essentials of Bhakti for the Lord of Lokānandācārya.

¹⁹⁰Unknown source.

¹⁹¹Unknown source.

¹⁹²Unknown source.

The Greatness of the Divine Name

अथ नाममाहात्म्यम्

अथ तावत्सर्वधर्मसाध्यत्वात्परममङ्गलरूपं भगवन्नामैव सर्वश्रेष्ठ-
तममिति तन्महिमानं दर्शयितुमाह —

नाम्नोऽस्य यावती शक्तिः पापनिर्हरणे हरेः ।
तावत्कर्तुं न शक्नोति पातकं पातकीजनः ॥ १ ॥
वर्तमानञ्च यत्पापं यद्भुतं यद्भविष्यति ।
तत्सर्वं निर्दहत्याशु गोविन्दानलकीर्तनात् ॥ २ ॥

एवं परममङ्गलत्वं दर्शयति त्रिभिः —

कृष्णोति मङ्गलं नाम यस्य वाचि प्रवर्तते ।
भस्मीभवन्ति राजेन्द्र महापातककोटयः ॥ ३ ॥
गायन्ति वैष्णवाः सर्वे कृष्णोति नाममङ्गलम् ।
सर्वत्र मङ्गलं तेषां कुतस्तेषाममङ्गलम् ॥ ४ ॥

सकृदुच्चारणेऽपि परममङ्गलमाह —

मधुरमधुरमेतन्मङ्गलं मङ्गलानां
सकलनिगमवल्लीसत्फलं चित्स्वरूपम् ।
सकृदपि परिगीतं हेलया श्रद्धया वा
भृगुवर नरमात्रं तारयेत्कृष्णनाम ॥ ५ ॥

Now the Greatness of the Divine Name:

Now, first of all, in order to show that since it is the goal of all *dharma*, the name of the Lord, which is the very form of the highest benefaction, is the best of all, he says:

No sinner is capable of committing as much sin as there is power in the divine name of Hari to remove it. (1)

The sin that currently exists as well as that which is past and that which will be, all of it is quickly burned up by the repetition of the fire-like [name of] Govinda. (2)

Now he demonstrates how the divine name is the highest benefaction:

Of one in whose speech is found the beneficent name “Kṛṣṇa” all great sins are turned into ashes, O King of Kings. (3)

All Vaiṣṇavas sing the auspicious name “Kṛṣṇa.” For them there is always good. Where is there ever anything inauspicious for them? (4)

The highest good comes even when the divine name is pronounced only once:

Sweet among things sweet is this, auspicious among things auspicious. It is the real fruit of the vine of all the Vedas, consciousness in its essence, which if sung even once, neglectfully or with faith, the name of Kṛṣṇa causes any human to cross beyond the best of Bhṛgu!¹⁹³ (5)

¹⁹³*Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa*, ?. Also cited in the *Haribhakti-vilāsa* at 11.451

एतत्सदृशं किमपि नास्तीत्याह —

न नाम सदृशं ज्ञानं न नाम सदृशं व्रतम् ।
 न नाम सदृशं ध्यानं न नाम सदृशं फलम् ॥ ६ ॥
 न नाम सदृशस्त्यागो न नाम सदृशं तपः ।
 न नाम सदृशा मुक्तिर्न नाम सदृशः प्रभुः ॥ ७ ॥

एवं नाम ग्रहणमात्रेण भगवत्प्रीतिर्जायते —

कामादिगुणसंयुक्ता नाममात्रैकबान्धवाः ।
 प्रीतिं कुर्वन्ति ते पार्थ न तथा जितषड्गुणाः ॥
 ये गृह्णन्ति हरेर्नाम त एव जितषड्गुणाः ॥ ८ ॥

एवं तस्य विशेषफललाभमाह —

मम नाम सदाग्राही मम नाम प्रिय सदा ।
 भक्तिस्तस्मै प्रदातव्या न च मुक्तिः कदाचन ॥ ९ ॥

एवं विशेषफलमाह —

श्रद्धया हेलया नाम वदन्ति मम जन्तवः ।
 तेषां नाम सदा पार्थ वर्तते हृदये मम ॥ १० ॥
 मानवाः ये हरेर्नाम सेवन्ते नित्यमेव च ।
 भक्त्या सह गमिष्यन्ति यत्र योगेश्वरः प्रभुः ॥ ११ ॥

To demonstrate that there is nothing similar to this [divine name], he says:

Sacred knowledge is not equal to the divine name, nor are vows; meditation is not equal to the divine name, nor is any other result. Renunciation is not equal to the divine name, nor is austerity; liberation is not equal to the divine name, nor is any other master. (6-7)

Thus, simply by repeating the divine name the pleasure of the Lord is born:

Those whose only friend is the divine name, though they possess the six mundane traits of desire, and so forth,¹⁹⁴ please me more than those who have conquered those traits. Those who repeat the divine name of Hari have indeed conquered the six mundane traits. (8)

And he describes the special result that one [who repeats the divine name] obtains:

One who always repeats my name and to whom my name is dear, to such a one *bhakti* is to be given, never liberation (*mukti*). (9)

Thus, he describes the special result:

The names of my creatures who speak my name whether with either faith or frivolity are always in my heart, o Pārtha. (10)

And humans who regularly repeat the name of Hari will go with *bhakti* to wherever the Master, the Lord of Yoga, is. (11)

¹⁹⁴The six traits are: desire, anger, greed, illusion, pride, and envy.

एवं रामनाम्नो विशेषमहिमाहमाह —

राम रामेति रामेति राम रामे मनोरमे ।
सहस्रनामभिस्तुल्यं रामनाम वरानने ॥ १२ ॥

एवं नामादिप्रसङ्गात्सर्वतीर्थसम्भावना भवतीत्याह —

तत्रैव गङ्गा यमुना च तत्र गोदावरी तत्र सरस्वती च ।
सर्वानि तीर्थानि वसन्ति तत्र यत्राच्युतोदारकथाप्रसङ्गः ॥
१३ ॥

विशेषमाह —

मन्नामस्मरणात्किञ्चित्कलौ नास्त्येव पातकम् ।
मङ्गला यत्र गायन्ति तत्र मे पार्थिव स्थितिः ॥ १४ ॥

जगन्नाथनाम्नो महिमानमाह सप्तभिः वैदिकतन्त्रे इन्द्रद्युम्नं प्रति
ब्रह्मवाक्यम्

पूजयस्व जगन्नाथं सर्वतन्त्रेषु गोपितम् ।
गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं नाम कीरतयस्व निरन्तरम् ॥ १५ ॥
यस्तु संकीर्तयेन्नित्यं जगन्नाथमतन्द्रितः ।
निर्मुक्तः सर्वपापेभ्यो मुक्तबन्धः परं व्रजेत् ॥ १६ ॥

विष्णुयामले कूर्मध्वजोत्तराणप्रस्तावे महादेवं प्रति भगवद्वाक्यम् —

जगन्नाथेति नाम्ना ये कीर्तयन्ति च ये नराः ।
अपराधशतं तेषां क्षमिष्ये नात्र संशयः ॥ १७ ॥

Thus, he describes the special greatness of the name of Rāma:

O mind-pleasing Rāmā [Pārvatī], “Rāma, Rāma, and Rāma, and Rāma,” the name of Rāma is equal to a thousand names, O lady with a gorgeous face. (12)

Now he claims that because of connection with the divine names and such all the holy places appear together with them:

There indeed is the Gaṅgā, the Yamunā, the Godāvarī, and the Sarasvatī. All the holy places reside wherever there is connection with the exalted stories of Acyuta. (13)

In particular he says:

Because of remembering my name there is no sin in the Age of Kali. Wherever my bhaktas are singing, there am I present, o king! (14)

In the next seven verses he describes the greatness of the name of Jagannātha. In the *Vaidika-tantra* is found Brahmā’s statement to Indradyumna:

Worship Jagannātha who is hidden away in all the *tantras*. Praise ceaselessly his name which is more secret than secret things. (15)

One who loudly praises Jagannātha constantly and without tiring is liberated from all sins and being freed of bondage goes to the supreme. (16)

In the *Viṣṇu-yāmala* on the topic of the salvation of Kūrmadhvaja, there the Lord’s statement to Mahādeva:

Those humans who sing praise with the name “Jagannātha,” a hundred of their offenses do I forgive. In this there is no doubt. (17)

ब्रह्मरहस्ये शूरशर्मब्राह्मणां प्रति नारदवाक्यम्—

सकृदुच्चारयेद्यस्तु जगन्नाथेति हेलया ।
 ब्रह्महत्यादिपापेभ्यो मुच्यते नात्र संशयः ॥ १८ ॥
 सर्वाअचारविहीनोऽपि तापक्लेशादिसंयुतः ।
 जगन्नाथं वदन् विप्र याति ब्रह्मसनातनम् ॥ १९ ॥

मेरुतन्त्रे ब्रह्मणो नामकीर्तनप्रस्तावे वैष्णवान् प्रति नारदवा-
 क्यम्—

नाम्नां मुख्यतरं विष्णोर्जगन्नाथमुदीरितम् ।
 नातः परतरं नाम त्रिषु लोकेषु विद्यते ॥ २० ॥
 न गङ्गास्नानमेतादृङ् काशीगमनं तथा ।
 जगन्नाथेति सङ्कीर्त्य नरः कैवल्यमाप्नुयात् ॥ २१ ॥

एवं विशेषमहिमानमाह—

विष्णोर्नामैव पुंसः समलमपहरत्पुण्यमुत्पादयच्च
 ब्रह्मादिस्थानभोगाद्विरतिमथगुरोः श्रीपदद्वन्द्वभक्तिम् ।
 तत्त्वज्ञानञ्च विष्णोरिहमृतिजननभ्रान्तिबीजञ्च दग्ध्वा
 सत्यञ्चानन्दबोधे महति च पुरुषे स्थापयित्वा निवृत्तम् ॥
 २२ ॥

There is the following statement of Nārada to Śūraśarma, the *brāhmaṇa*, in the *Brahmarahasya*:

But one who once says “Jagannātha” even frivolously is liberated from sins like the killing of a *brāhmaṇa* and so forth. Of this there is no doubt. (18)

A person afflicted by sufferings, pains, and so forth, even though lacking all good behavior, by saying “Jagannātha” goes to eternal Brahman, O Brāhmaṇa. (19)

In the *Merutantra*, in the section praising the recitation of the names of Brahman, Nārada tells the Vaiṣṇavas:

It is said that more primary among the names of Viṣṇu is “Jagannātha.” No higher name than this exists in the three worlds. (20)

Bathing in the Ganges is not comparable to this, nor is visiting Kāśī. By saying loudly “Jagannātha” a person can reach ultimate singularity (*kaivalya*, liberation). (21)

Thus does he describe the special magnificence [of the divine names]:

Viṣṇu’s name itself removes a person’s sins and creates for that person merit, detachment from the pleasures of abodes like that of Brahmā and others, *bhakti* for the two lotus-like feet of the guru, and knowledge of the truth. Then, after burning up the seeds of one’s roaming from birth to death in this world and after truly establishing one in the experience of bliss of the great person (Mahāpuruṣa, Bhagavān), it rests. (22)

तस्माद्गुरुसन्निध्यात्कृष्णोपदेशं गृहीत्वा भक्तिसाधनं कार्यमिति ।
नन्वत्र गुरोरुपदेशे कर्तव्ये दक्षिणादीक्षापुरश्चरणाविधिनियमोऽस्ती-
ति कथं न स्यादित्यत्राह भगवद्वाक्येन —

आकृष्टिः कृतचेतसां सुमहतामुच्चाटनं चाहसाम्
आचण्डालममुकलोकसुलभो वश्यश्च मोक्षश्रियः ।
नो दीक्षां न च दक्षिणां न च पुरश्चर्या मनागीक्षते
मन्त्रोऽयं रसनास्पृगेव फलति श्रीकृष्णनामात्मकः ॥ २३ ॥

यथा पादे —

कृष्णाय नम इत्येष मन्त्रः सर्वार्थसाधकः ।
भक्तानां जपतां भूप स्वर्गमोक्षफलप्रदः ॥ २४ ॥

एवं स्मरणादौ कालदेशादिनियमो नास्तीत्यत्राह भगवच्छ्रीकृष्ण-
चैतन्याज्ञाया द्वाभ्याम् —

नाम्नामकारि बहुधा निजसर्वशक्ति-
स्तत्रार्पिता नियमितः स्मरणे न कालः ।
एतादृशी तव कृपा भगवन्ममापि
दुर्दैवमीदृशमिहाजनि नानुरागः ॥ २५ ॥
न कालनियमस्तत्र न देशनियमस्तथा ।
नोच्छिष्टादौ निषेधः स्यात्कृष्णनामानुकीर्तने ॥ २६ ॥

Therefore, after accepting instruction about Kṛṣṇa from one's guru, one should perform the practices of *bhakti*. Now, at this point someone may ask: when the instruction of the guru is necessary, rules concerning guru-gift, initiation, and rites of purification are required. Why is this not so here? To this he replies with a statement of Bhagavān:

It attracts great ones whose minds are pure, irradiates sins, is easily available to small folk upto and including Caṇḍālas, and controls the good fortune of liberation. It does not depend on initiation, nor donations, nor preparatory rites. This mantra made of the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa produces results as soon as it touches the tongue.¹⁹⁵ (23)

As in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

The *mantra*, “*kṛṣṇāṅgāya namaḥ*,” accomplishes all objectives and gives to those *bhaktas* who chant it, o king, the results: heaven and liberation. (24)

Thus, he says here that there are no rules concerning time, place, and so forth in the remembering [of the holy names] with two stanzas of the order of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇacaitanya:

Many are your names and all of your own power was placed in them. There is no restriction on the time for remembering them. So great is your grace, o Bhagavān, and yet such is my misfortune that my love for them was not born. (25)

In the repetition of the names of Kṛṣṇa, there is no rule regarding proper time nor one regarding proper place and no prohibition in matters of impurity caused by contact with leftovers and such. (26)

¹⁹⁵Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmin, compiler, *Padyāvalī*, 29.

इदानीं प्रकरणार्थमुपसंहरति शुक्राचार्यवाक्येन —

मन्त्रतस्तन्त्रतश्छिद्रं देशकालार्हवस्तुतः ।
 सर्वं करोति निश्छिद्रं नामसङ्कीर्तनं हरेः ॥ (८.२३.१६)
 २७ ॥
 श्रवणं कीर्तनं ध्यानं विष्णोरद्भुतकर्मणः ।
 जन्मकर्मगुणानाञ्च तदर्थेऽखिलचेष्टितम् ॥ (११.३.२७)
 २८ ॥

कोऽयं नामापराध इत्याह —

सतां निन्दा नाम्नः परममपराधं वितनुते
 यतः ख्यातिं यातं कथमुत्सहते तद्विगरिहाम् ।
 शिवस्य श्रिविष्णोर्य इह गुणानामादिसकलं
 धिया भिन्नं पश्येत्स खलु हरिनामाहितकरः ॥ २९ ॥
 गुरोरवज्ञा श्रुतिशास्त्रनिन्दनं
 तथार्थवादो हरिनाम्नि कल्पनम् ।
 नाम्नो बलाद्यस्य हि पापबुद्धि-
 र्न विद्यते तस्य यमैर्हि शुद्धिः ॥

अथ यमाः —

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयमसङ्गो ह्रीरसञ्चयः ।
 आस्तिक्यं ब्रह्मचर्यञ्च मौनं स्थैर्यं क्षमाभयम् ॥ (११.१९.
 ३३) ३१ ॥

Now, he wraps up the content of this section with a statement of Śukrācārya:

All the flaws arising from mantra, rites, the appropriateness of time, place, and material the repetition of the the names of Hari removes.¹⁹⁶ (27)

Hearing about, praising, and meditating on Viṣṇu, whose actions are wondrous, and on his births, actions, and qualities and performing all actions for his sake [with bhakti produced by bhakti one maintains one's ecstatic body]. (28)

Thus, by the repeating, hearing, and so forth of the the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* arises. This is its meaning. If there is offense it does not arise.

What are these offenses towards the divine names? To this he replies:

Defamation of holy ones causes the most serious offense to the divine name. How can he tolerate the defamation of those from whom the name is made famous. One who sees with his intellect all the qualities, names, and so forth of Śiva and Viṣṇu as different is indeed an offender of the divine names. (29)

Disrespect for the guru, defamation of revealed and reasoned texts, as well as considering [the greatness of] the divine names to be mere praise, and one who intends to sin on the strength of the divine names is not made pure even by the restraints (*yama*).¹⁹⁷

Now the restraints—

Non-violence, truth, not stealing, not associating, modesty, non-accumulation, faithfulness, celibacy, silence, steadfastness, tolerance, and fearlessness.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶Bhāg., 8.23.16.

¹⁹⁷Lokānandācārya gives the following example of *arthavāda* with regard to the divine names: “*arthavāda* is thinking: ‘is it really possible that repeating the divine name only once destroys sins accumulated over many births? It does not have the power to destroy all sins.’”

¹⁹⁸Bhāg., 11.19.33

प्रसङ्गान्नियमा लिख्यन्ते —

शौचं जपस्तपोहोमः श्रद्धातिथ्यं मदर्चनम् ।
 तीर्थाटनं परार्थेहातुष्टिराचार्यसेवनम् ॥ (११.१९.३४) ३२ ॥
 धर्मव्रतत्यागहुतादिसर्वशुभक्रियासाम्यमपि प्रमादतः ।
 अश्रद्धधाने विमुखेऽप्यशृन्वति यश्चोपदेशः शिवनामापरा-
 धः ॥ ३३ ॥

श्रुत्वापि नाममाहात्म्यं यः प्रीतिरहितोऽधमः ।
 अहं ममादिपरमो नाम्नि सोऽप्यपराधकृत् ॥ ३४ ॥

ननु नामापराधयुक्तानां केन निस्तारः स्यादित्याह —

नामापराधयुक्तानां नामान्येव हरन्त्यघं ।
 अविश्रान्तं प्रयुक्तानि तान्येवार्थकराणि च ॥

इतिश्रीभक्तिसारसमुच्चये नाममाहात्म्यं नाम चतुर्थं विरचनम् ॥ ४ ॥

Because of the context the obligations are written down:

Cleanliness, silent recitation, austerity, ritual offerings, faith, hospitality, worship of me, visiting the holy places, effort for the sake of others, satisfaction, and serving the teacher.¹⁹⁹
(32)

Mistakenly [thinking the divine names are] the same as auspicious actions like dharma, vows, renunciation, fire offerings, and so forth [is the seventh offense.] And instruction of someone who is faithless, hostile, or not listening is an offense to the auspicious name. (33)

After hearing of the greatness of the divine name one who has no attraction for it is vile. One who is intent on himself and what belongs to him is also an offender of the divine name. (34)

Now, to the question “how might an offender of the divine name be saved?” he says:

The divine names themselves remove the sin of those who are offenders of the names. They themselves when repeated without ceasing bring about the goal. (35)

Thus ends the Fourth Chapter, called the “Greatness of the Divine Name,” in the *Śrī Bhakti-sāra-samuccaya*.

¹⁹⁹Bhāg., 11.19.34.