

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭāka

Emanated from the lotus mouth of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
With the Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Verses related to Śrī Śikṣāṣṭāka cited from Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta
Śikṣāṣṭākam songs from Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Gītāvalī
With the Vivṛti (commentary) by Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī
Ṭhākura
Relevant verses cited from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Bhajana Rahasya
illuminating comments by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

Preface to the first Hindi edition

Not only in Śrī Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava literature, but in the *Śruti*, *Smṛti*, *Purāṇas*, and in the entirety of Indian literature, *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭāka*, issued from the mouth of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, shines as a supremely radiant transcendental jewel. It is a source of boundless happiness to me that today, by the inspiration and causeless mercy of my most revered Śrī Śrī Gurudeva, Nitya Lilā Praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara Śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, this *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭāka* is presented to the reading audience for the first time in the Hindi language.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation who delivers the fallen conditioned souls in the age of *Kali* (*Kali Yuga Pāvanāvatarī*), is directly the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Vrajendra Nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, overwhelmed with an intense desire to relish a particular sentiment, assumed the bodily lustre and temperament of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the embodiment of His *Hlādinī* potency, and bestowed upon the entire world the gift of *Kṛṣṇa nāma* and *Kṛṣṇa prema*. By His deep scholarship, matchless renunciation, humility, supremely radiant spotless character, and His pre-eminent transcendental devotional sentiment, He astounded renowned pandits and scholars. In addition, He very easily attracted ordinary religionists and enraptured devotees to the religion of unadulterated love (*Viśuddha prema*).

Due to the distinctive and magnanimous characteristics, not only of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but of His followers as well, from Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rāya Rāmānanda, and the six Gosvāmīs up to present day *ācāryas* and devotees, the waves of devotional service to the Supreme Lord have spread to every town and village of the world. Everywhere, the sound of *Hari nāma saṅkīrtana* is resounding, accompanied by *mṛdaṅga* and *karatāls*.

It is truly a source of great honour and happiness for us that today extensive literature of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas and propagation of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism has spread in many major languages of the world. Nevertheless, it is a matter of great astonishment that, in spite of being unlimitedly qualified, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu did not personally write any books like *ācāryas* who propounded

other opinions. Instead, He inspired His followers to write books. Only eight verses are famous as having been composed by Him. Some other verses are said to have been composed by Him, but up till now this has not been substantiated.

This *Śikṣāṣṭaka* is the essence of all the Vedas. Although its Sanskrit language is quite simple, its import is so profound that even if one studies it throughout his life, his study will not come to an end. Each time one reads and deliberates on this subject, newer and newer meanings come to light. Therefore, it remains eternally fresh. This *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* is a necklace for all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the eternal associate of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the modern age and author of many sacred texts expounding the glories of *bhakti*, has again initiated the flow of the *Bhāgīrathī* (Ganges) of devotional service, inundating the entire world in the flood of *Kṛṣṇa prema*. He has written a heart-rending commentary to these eight verses, filled with many important philosophical conclusions.

This commentary is famous by the name of '*Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣya*.' Without a careful study of this commentary, the hidden truths of the original verses is not only difficult, but impossible. Beholding, with the help of this captivating commentary, the paramount emotion of full blown *ujjala prema rasa* (*Śṛṅgāra rasa*) within the heart of the *prema avatāra* Śrī Śacīnandana Gaura Hari, which is hidden in these verses, one is sure to be astonished at every step. Furthermore, one's heart is deeply overwhelmed with transcendental pleasure, and unprecedented faith and devotional sentiment develop toward *Śrī Kṛṣṇa nāma*.

The greatness of this subject is unlimited. It is itself highly important. Moreover, the commentator has illuminated this subject in summary yet in a very significant manner. Therefore, to write more is like holding a lamp to illuminate the sun.

The truths of *sambandha*, *abhidheya* (*sādhana*), and *prayojana* (*sādhya*) are very nicely included in *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*. Although instructions regarding *abhidheya tattva* are inherent within all eight verses, the first five verses deal with *sādhana bhakti*, verses six and seven deal with *bhāva bhakti*, and verses seven and eight describe *prema bhakti*.

In the seventh and eighth verses, in particular, is found a pre-eminent example of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's deep emotional anguish due to love in separation (*vipralambha prema vaicittya*), instigated by Her own *adhirūḍha mahābhāvā*. (*Prema vaicittya* refers to a state in which even in the beloved's presence, the lover, out of intense love, fails to perceive the presence of the beloved and is thus aggrieved with feelings of separation).

Jagad Guru Nityalīlā Praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, in the year 442 Gaurābda (1929), edited and published *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* in the Bengali language within a book entitled '*Sādhana Patha*', with the *Sānmodana Bhāṣya* and songs composed by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and a short commentary of his own known simply as '*Vivṛti*' (commentary). However, its non-availability in Hindi literature was acutely felt by me. It was the desire of my most revered Śrī Śrī Gurudeva that these Bengali bhakti literatures of unparalleled benefit be published in the Hindi

language as well. He kindly inspired me to fulfil this purpose.

Lastly, I am especially obliged to the present day head and *ācārya* of the *Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti*, my fellow religious student, Parivrājakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He is a very influential *ācārya*, deeply immersed in spiritual knowledge. Moreover, he is an object of great affection of our Śrī Gurudeva. At this time, he himself is engaged in preparing and editing *Gauḍīya Bhakti* literature in the Bengali language. This edition of our society (in Hindi language) is being published by his special enthusiasm and inspiration. May he kindly deliver this precious *Śikṣāṣṭaka* into the lotus hands of our most revered Śrī Gurudeva and thus fulfil his inner heart's desire. This is our fervent prayer at his respectful feet.

Special thanks are owing to Tridaṇḍi Svāmī Śrī Bhaktivedānta Urdhvamanthi Mahārāja, and blessings upon our beloved Śrīmān Śubhānanda, for their help especially in the translation of the Sanskrit portions of this book.

The honourable service rendered by Tridaṇḍi Svāmī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Padmanābha Mahārāja, Śrī Om Prakāśa (Vrajavāsī) M.A., L.L.B., our beloved Śrīmān Śyāmasundara (Vrajavāsī) B.S.C., B.A., Śrīmān Nandanadana Brahmācārī, Śrīmān Navīna Kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī, Śrī Sāndīpani (Vrajavāsī), and others, in the production of the manuscript, proof-reading, and various other tasks associated with this book, are highly commendable. May the merciful blessings of the lotus feet of Sri Gurudeva be upon them.

In the publication of this book, the deeply faithful and beloved Śrī Yuta Sudhāmsu Śekhar Caudhurī has served Śrī Śācīnandana Gaura Hari by providing economic assistance. May Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga Deva bestow abundant blessings upon him. This is our prayer at his feet.

I have complete faith that this book will certainly be respectfully received by faithful practicing devotees (*sādhakas*) possessed of yearning for *bhakti* and by learned circles as well. By studying this book, such persons may enter into the spotless *prema dharma* made prevalent by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This is our desire.

Being aggrieved at the distress of others, may Śrī Śācīnandana Gaura Hari and our most revered Śrī Gurudeva, who is the direct embodiment of the Lord's mercy, be pleased and bestow upon us the privilege of serving their inner heart's desire—this is our sole anguished prayer at their lotus feet. Now enough has been said.

On the occasion of the appearance
day of Śrī Gaurāṅga,
Dola Pūrṇimā (Holī)
1905 by the Indian calendar
(17th March, 1984)

An aspirant for a particle of mercy
of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas,
Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu-Śrī Bhaktivedānta
Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja,
Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha

Mathurā, U.P.

Prayers to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

*anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ purāṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hṛdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanah*

"May Śrī Śacīnandana Gaurahari, resplendent with the radiance of molten gold (having adopted the splendour of the limbs of Śrīmatī Rādhikā), ever manifest Himself within your hearts. He has descended in the age of Kali out of His causeless mercy to bestow upon the world that which had not been given for a long time, the most confidential wealth of His *bhakti*, the highest and most radiant *madhura rasa* (*unnata ujjvala prema rasa*)."

—Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmi; *Vidagdha Mādhava Nāṭaka*

*rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmanāv api bhuvī purā deha-bhedam gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakāṣam adhunā tad-dvayam caikyam āptam
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitam naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*

"Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one (*ekātma*) in identity (*svarūpa*), They perpetually exist in two forms because of the eternality of the principal of exchanging amorous pastimes (*vilāsa tattva*). This is brought about by the *hlādinī śakti* which exhibits itself in the form of the transformation of Their love. At this time these two Personalities have manifested as one Person in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I offer my respectful obeisances unto Him who has assumed the form of Lord Gaura, but who is the very same Lord Kṛṣṇa, covered with the sentiment (*bhāvā*) and bodily splendour (*kānti*) of Śrīmatī Rādhikā."

—Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī *Kaṣācāyām*

Śloka One Nāma Tattva

What is the most excellent form of spiritual practice (*sādhana*)?

*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahādāvāgni-nirvāpanam
śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitaranam vidyāvadhū-jīvanam
anandāmbudhi-varধানam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*

ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam—cleansing the mirror of the heart; *bhava*—of material existence; *mahā-dāvāgni*—the blazing forest fire; *nirvāpaṇam*—extinguishing; *śreyah-kairava-candrikā-vitarāṇam*—spreading the moonshine of *bhāva* for the blooming of the white lotus of good fortune for the *jīvas*; *vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam*—the life and soul of the wife in the form of transcendental-knowledge; *ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam*—expanding the ocean of transcendental bliss; *prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsṵādanam*—enabling one to taste complete nectar at every step; *sarvātma-snapanam*—cleansing and cooling the self (*ātmā*), one's nature (*svabhāva*), determination (*dhṛti*), and the body both inside and out, by a thorough bath; *param*—only, or supreme; *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtanam vijayate*—may *śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* be especially victorious.

Translation

"Let there be supreme victory for the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone, which cleanses the mirror of the heart and completely extinguishes the blazing forest fire of material existence. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* diffuses the soothing moon rays of *bhāva* which causes the white lotus (*kumudini*) of good fortune for the *jīvas* to bloom. The holy name is the life and soul of transcendental knowledge, which is here compared to a wife (*vadhū*). It continuously expands the ocean of transcendental bliss, enabling one to taste complete nectar at every step. The holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa thoroughly cleanses and cools the self (*ātmā*), one's nature (*svabhāva*), one's determination (*dhṛti*), as well as the body both internal and external."

Maṅgalācaraṇa (opening invocation) by Śrīla Narāyaṇa Mahārāja

namaḥ om viṣṇupādāya gaura preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrīmad bhaktiprajñāna keśava iti nāmine

namo bhaktivinodāya sac-cid-ānanda-nāmine
gaura-śakti-svarūpāya rūpānuga-varāya te

namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ

“In spite of being exceedingly poor and wretched, and thoroughly incompetent, I am engaged in translating this *Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣya* by the mercy of my most revered Śrī Gurudeva, Nitya Līlā Praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara Śata Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī; Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the eternal associate of Śrī Gaurasundara and writer of the *Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣya*; and the original author of *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation who delivers the fallen conditioned souls of *Kali*

yuga (Kali Yuga Pāvanāvatārī), and who is the very self-same Personality known as Śrī Nandanandan. Holding in my heart their lotus feet which grant all desires, I am engaged in this work in order to fulfil their inner heart's longing."

Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam

*pañca-tattvānvitam nityam praṇi-patya mahāprabhum
nāmnā sanmodanam śikṣāṣṭaka-bhāṣyam praṇīyate*

Offering my humble obeisances at the lotus feet of the original Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the bestower of *Kṛṣṇa nāma* and *Kṛṣṇa prema*, and who is eternally associated with the *pañca-tattva*, I am writing a commentary named 'Śrī Sanmodana' of the *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka* which issued from the lotus mouth of the Lord.

*bhagavān brahma kārtsnyena trir anvīksya manīṣayā
tad adhyavasyat kūṭa-stho ratir-ātman yato bhavet*

—Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 2.2.34—

How can there be any benefit for the living entities who are averse to the Lord, having fallen into the cycle of repeated birth and death in material existence? Pre-occupied with this question, Śrī Brahmajī, the knower of the absolute truth, thought long to find its solution. With one-pointed attention, he scrutinized all the Vedas three times and by his intelligence, he concluded that the topmost perfection of religion is that by which one can obtain exclusive devotion (*prema*) unto the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is the Supersoul of all existence.

This conclusion of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.2.34) clearly establishes that only devotional service unto the Supreme Lord is the topmost process of religion bestowing ultimate good for the living entities. *Karma* (fruitive activities), *jñāna* (acquisition of knowledge), *yoga* (meditation), *tapasyā* (austerities), and other processes do not bestow the ultimate good and therefore they are not the topmost religious process. But this devotional service is extremely rare. It is obtainable only by transcendental faith (*pāramārthika Śraddhā*).

Transcendental faith is of two kinds: (1) *Śāstrārtha avadhāraṇamayī śraddhā*—faith which is inspired by the governing principles of scripture, and which thus brings about engagement in devotional service, and (2) *Bhagavat Līlā Mādhurya Lobhamayī śraddhā*—faith, arising on account of some extreme good fortune, which is based on intense longing (*lobha*) to hear the sweet pastimes of the Lord, and which thus brings about engagement in devotional service.

Even if one of these two kinds of *śraddhā* arises, unalloyed devotion

(*śuddhā bhakti*) can develop only by continuous engagement in hearing and chanting pure descriptions of the Lord (*śuddha Hari kathā*) in the association of unadulterated pure devotees. If one does not regularly engage in such hearing and chanting in the association of saintly persons, his *śraddhā* will gradually dwindle and then vanish altogether.

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.25.25), the Lord Himself has said: *satām prasaṅgān mama vīryasamvido bhavanti hṛt karṇa rasāyanāḥ kathā*—"In the association of saintly persons, the descriptions of My glories is very pleasing to both the ear and the heart. By such engagement in hearing and chanting saturated with love, ignorance is immediately destroyed and *śraddhā* (faith), *rati* (*bhāva bhakti*), and *prema bhakti* develop one after another." Therefore, by faithfully hearing and chanting the transcendental name, form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord in the association of pure devotees, pure *saṅkīrtana* is possible—otherwise not.

The glories of pure *saṅkīrtana* are the very first thing spoken of in the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Because *Śrī Kṛṣṇa kīrtana* is all auspicious, the word '*param*' has been used in the fourth line of the verse under discussion. The word '*param*' here specifically indicates pure *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, which is obtained in progressive stages beginning with *śraddhā* (faith), followed by *sat saṅga* (saintly association), and leading to *bhajana kriyā* (execution of the items of devotional service). It does not refer to the reflection (*pratibimba*) of pure chanting which is within the jurisdiction of a semblance of *bhakti* (*bhakti abhāsa*).

In this *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*, the ocean of mercy Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, appearing like a practitioner of devotional service (*sādhaka*), is singing the glories of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, which is non-different from the person Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*Śrī Kṛṣṇa Svarūpa*), in order to enlighten the living entities with the truths of *sambandha* (one's relationship with the Supreme Lord), *abhidheya* (the means by which that relationship can be revived), and *prayojana* (attainment of the ultimate goal-love of God). In this commentary, the very same truths of *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana* are being discussed in summary fashion.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the Supreme Lord of all and whose lotus feet are constantly served by pure devotees, says, "*Param Vijayate Śrī Kṛṣṇa Saṅkīrtanam*." In other words, let there be supreme victory for the chanting of the Holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The question may be raised here whether or not there can be all victory for the chanting of the transcendental name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in this material world created by the external energy (*māyā śakti*). The answer is that even in this illusory material world, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* can be thoroughly victorious. Please hear how this is possible.

(A) The Absolute Truth:

(i) Prominence of the Personal feature of the Absolute Truth

From the statement of the *Śrutis* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1)—"Ekam evādvitīyam" (oneness without duality)—the oneness (*ekatva*) of the absolute truth is established. From another statement of the

Śrutis (*Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 4.4.19)—"*Neha nānāsti kiñcana*" (other than the one non-dual absolute truth, *advaya brahma*, there is no existence of any separate forms)—the impersonal feature (*nirviśeṣatva*) of the absolute truth is established. From yet another statement of the *Śrutis* (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 3.14.1)—"*Sarvam khalvidam brahma*" (this entire creation is the form of the absolute truth)—the form of the absolute truth possessing eternal attributes and qualities (*saviśeṣatva*) is established. Therefore, according to the *Śrutis*, the absolute truth is simultaneously personal (*saviśeṣa*—possessing attributes) and impersonal (*nirviśeṣa*—undifferentiated). The impersonal feature, however, is imperceptible. Due to the complete absence of perception of the impersonal feature and the eternal perceivability of the personal feature, it is the personal feature which is prominent and superior.

(ii) Four features of the Absolute Truth

Śrīmad Jīva Gosvāmī, our *ācārya* on such philosophical conclusions, has stated (*Bhagavat Sandarbha, Anuccheda* 16.16) that by the influence of His inherent inconceivable potency (*svabhāvikī acintya śakti*) the one absolute truth eternally exists in four features: (1) His original form (*svarūpa*), (2) His personal splendour (*tad rūpa vaibhava*—this includes His abode, His eternal associates, His expansions such as Lord Nārāyaṇa, etc.), (3) the living entities (*jīvas*), and (4) the unmanifest state of the three modes of material nature (*pradhāna*).

These four features are compared to the four aspects of the sun; namely, (1) the effulgence situated at the very core of the sun planet (*suryāntar maṇḍala sthita teja*), (2) the sun globe (*maṇḍala*), (3) the atomic particles of sunlight emanating from the sun planet (*raśmi paramāṇu*), and (4) the reflected rays of the sun (*pratibimba raśmi*). Although the sun is one, it exists in these four forms.

(iii) The Absolute Truth as the Supreme potent (Sarva Śāktimān) and His potencies (Śakti)

In the above mentioned description, the absolute truth is being further explained. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who possesses all opulences, is the absolute truth. He is the possessor of all potencies (*sarva śāktimān*). According to the statement of the Brahma Sūtra—"*Śakti Śāktimātor abhedah*"—there is no difference between potency (Śakti) and the possessor of potency (Śāktimān). But the same superior potency (*parā śakti*) is perceivable in different forms—*Parāsyā śaktir-vividhaiva śrūyate*" (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8).

From this Vedic mantra it is proved that the Lord's inconceivable potency (*Acintya śakti*) is adept in the accomplishment of the unattainable (*aghaṭana-ghaṭana paṭiyasī*). In other words it makes possible even that which is impossible. Therefore the eternal difference between potency and

the possessor of potency is also inevitable. This conclusion establishes that the opinion of the monists (Kevalādvaita-vādis) that the absolute truth, Brahma, is impersonal, formless, and divested of potencies, is contrary to scripture and reasoning.

(B) The Lord's potencies:

(i) Antaraṅgā Śakti

The one superior potency (Parā śakti), above stated, is manifest in three forms: as the internal potency (antaraṅgā śakti), as the marginal potency (taṭasthā śakti), and as the external potency (bahiraṅgā śakti). By the Lord's internal potency (antaraṅgā svarūpa śakti), the Supreme Absolute Truth eternally exists as the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His fully accomplished original form, which is faultless, supremely auspicious, and the basis of all transcendental qualities. In addition to this, the Lord's personal splendour (tad rūpa vaibhava) or, in other words, His transcendental abode, Vaikuṅṭha dhāma, His eternal associates, and His various manifestations such as the expansions of Lord Nārāyaṇa are eternally established by the same all accommodating internal potency for the accomplishment of His transcendental pastimes.

(ii) Taṭasthā Śakti

The same Absolute Truth, when endowed with the marginal potency (taṭasthā śakti), exists as the innumerable spiritual atomic particles (cid paramāṇu), the living entities (jīvas), who are separated expansions of the Lord (vibhinnāṁśa svarūpa). Just as innumerable tiny molecular particles of light continuously shimmer in the rays of the sun, similarly in the rays in the form of the Lord's marginal potency (taṭasthā śakti) or, in other words, in the taṭasthā śakti in its transformed or developed state (pariṇata), the aggregate of living entities (jīvas) eternally exist as innumerable spiritual atomic particles.

The tiny molecular particles within the rays of sunshine have no independent existence from the sun, nor can they ever be equated with the sun. Similarly, the spiritual atomic jīvas have no separate existence from the Lord—neither can they ever be addressed as the Lord, nor become the Lord.

(iii) Bahiraṅgā Śakti

Again, the Supreme Absolute Truth, Bhagavān, has manifested this entire material world, the display of His external splendour (bahiraṅgā vaibhava rūpa), by His external potency (bahiraṅgā māyā śakti). This

material world is a transformation of the external potency (māyā śakti) or, in other words, a transformation of the sum total of material existence (pradhāna). Just as the rays of the sun, when reflected, create a colorful rainbow, the Lord's external potency (māyā śakti) or pradhāna manifests this fascinating material world. The material world is a shadow of the spiritual world which is manifested by the Lord's internal potency. As such, the material world is also not separate from the Absolute Truth.

(iv) Simultaneous oneness and difference of the Lord and His potencies

From the above discussion, it is proved that the living entities (jīvas), the material world (jaḍa jagata), and the Lord's personal splendour as regards His Vaikuṅṭha existence (tad rūpa vaibhava) are inconceivably one and different from His original spiritual form (svarūpa). The spiritual atomic living entities, on account of being dependent on the Lord, are His separated parts and parcels (vibhinnāṁṣa)—in this is found their non-distinction from the Lord (abheda). However, due to a deficiency in knowledge of the Supreme Lord, they become indifferent to Him—in this lies their difference (bheda).

(C) The process by which Hari Kīrtana becomes successful for the Jīva:

(i) The meaning of the Jīva as marginal potency

Just as the sun's rays are covered by the clouds, the living entities are covered by the influence of māyā (ignorance). In this we see application of the principle of the impossible being rendered possible (aghaṭana ghaṭana paṭiyasī). The atomic jīva, manifested by the taṭasthā śakti of the Lord, becomes covered by māyā on account of being an instrument for the Lord's pastimes. Otherwise how can the conscious (cinmaya) jīva be covered by inert matter?

Because he is manifested by the taṭasthā shakti, the nature of the jīva is also taṭasthā. In other words, he is situated in the marginal position. On one side is the Lord's internal potency (svarūpa śakti). When the living entity comes under the shelter of the internal potency, he can obtain the happiness of serving the Supreme Lord in the liberated condition. On the other side is the external potency (māyā śakti). When the living entity desires material enjoyment, he becomes covered by māyā.

The living entity, bewildered by māyā, suffers the pangs of material existence. But when he establishes his relationship with the internal potency, the ignorance associated with the external potency is dissipated. Consequently, he is liberated from the material condition and becomes situated in his pure constitutional nature (śuddha svarūpa).

(ii) The process of conquering māyā

The living entity, bewildered by māyā, is crushed again and again by the miseries of material existence. When he becomes exasperated with these miseries, and becoming compelled by some great good fortune, he engages in the service of saintly persons. At that time his faith awakens toward devotional service as being the exclusive goal of the scriptures. Alternatively, he may awaken intense longing for the Lord's sweetness (Bhagavan Mādhurya lobha). (This is a reference again to the two types of faith that one can develop, as mentioned on page 5). At that time, he attains eligibility for bhakti, the inherent characteristic of which is that it is predominated by the pleasure giving aspect (hlādinī) of the Lord's internal potency (svarūpa śakti).

On the awakening of śraddhā, he first of all takes shelter of the lotus feet of a spiritual master by accepting Hari nāma dikṣā from him. Thereafter, in the association of the spiritual master and pure devotees, he obtains an excellent opportunity to hear the truths of the scriptures. When he begins to recite the glories of the holy name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the process of conquering māyā begins. In other words, ignorance and worthless contaminations within the heart (anarthas) begin to vanish. Simultaneously, the pure form of the jīva (śuddha svarūpa) begins to become clear.

This is the process by which Hari kīrtana becomes victorious within the phenomenal world of matter. By this process, Hari kīrtana makes its descent into this illusory world. By performing Hari kīrtana according to this system, one obtains seven excellent results. These seven kinds of results are spoken of in the first verse by the words 'cetodarpaṇa mārjanam', etc. These will now be discussed in various ways.

Seven excellent results of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Saṅkīrtana:

(1) *Ceto darpaṇa mārjanam* (cleanses the mirror of the heart)

By the words 'cetodarpaṇa mārjanam' etc., the truth of the original transcendental form of the jīva is disclosed. The conclusion of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī regarding this subject is that the jīva is the minute part and parcel of the Absolute Truth who possesses the aggregate of energies known as the jīva. Like the atomic particles of sunlight which have emerged from the accumulated effulgence within the sun, the aggregate living entities are spiritual atomic particles emanated from the absolute truth who is eternally situated in His original identity as the personification of undivided spiritual bliss.

(Akhaṇḍa cinmaya rasa vigraha-the word rasa here refers to bhakti rasa. It is the condition when the sthāyi bhāva or permanent emotion is transformed into transcendental bliss by combination with the elements of

vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika bhāva, and vyabhicārī bhāva. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the personification of such transcendental rasa).

Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, who wrote the Śrī Govinda Bhāṣya of the Vedānta Sūtra, has also analyzed the Supreme Lord as the all-pervading consciousness (vibhu caitanya) and the jīva as the infinitesimal consciousness (aṇu caitanya). Unlimited transcendental qualities which bestow all good-fortune eternally exist in the Supreme Lord. In Him pure ego exists both as absolute knowledge and as the knower (pure ego is here defined as the sense of I-ness). Similarly, the jīva also has transcendental qualities in minute quantity and a pure ego which manifests both as knowledge and as the knower. This is not contrary to logic because qualities such as heat and light which can be seen in the sun are also observed in the particles of sunlight.

Out of the two (the Lord and the living entities), the Lord is one, independent, and the embodiment of all potencies (Svarūpa Śaktimān). He enters into material nature and regulates it. He creates the material world and maintains it. He is the concentrated form of spiritual bliss. Being eternally situated in Himself and being the bestower of prema rasa through the medium of devotional service, He causes it to be tasted by others.

But the jīvas are innumerable. They are situated in many conditions of life, both conditioned and liberated. When they are indifferent to the Lord, they become bound by material nature. When they become inclined toward the Lord once again, the covering of māyā, which obscured the qualities and original form of the jīva, is withdrawn. Thereafter, they directly perceive their own original form (sva-svarūpa).

From this conclusion it is clear that the jīvas are atomic spirit (aṇucit). They have a spiritual identity (cinmaya svarūpa) which consists of pure ego (the sense of I), pure consciousness, and a spiritual body. When the living entities become indifferent to the Lord and engrossed in illusory material enjoyment, their pure ego and pure consciousness become contaminated with the filth of ignorance.

Here the heart has been compared to a mirror. Just as one's face cannot be seen in a dirty mirror covered by dust, the living entity cannot see his actual form in the heart which is contaminated by the filth of ignorance. When the practice of devotional service predominated by the Hlādinī potency of the Lord begins, then after engaging in the process of śravaṇam (hearing the descriptions of the Lord's transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes), Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana automatically appears and thoroughly cleanses the filth of ignorance.

At that time the pure consciousness, which is possessed of pure ego, arises. From this, he begins to see factually in the mirror of his pure consciousness the following five truths: (1) the Supreme Lord (Īśvara), (2) the living entities (jīva), (3) material nature (prakṛti), (4) time (kāla), and (5) fruitive activities (karma). When the the mirror of the heart is completely cleansed and purified, the vision of one's own identity and, consequently, his constitutional occupation (svadharma) is made possible. The inherent duty of the jīva is to be a servant of the Supreme Lord and to engage in His service.

(2) *Bhava mahādāvāgni nirvāpaṇam* (extinguishes the forest fire of material existence)

By engaging steadily in the service of the Lord, the materialistic demeanor is transformed into the inclination for rendering service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The purport of the word `bhava' (mundane existence) is that the jīva has to take birth in this material world again and again. Repeated birth and death is compared to a great forest fire (mahādāvāgni). This blazing forest fire cannot be extinguished by any means other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana.

The question may be raised here that upon attainment of the knowledge of one's constitutional duty (sva dharma), does one cease to chant the holy name? The answer is that this never happens. Chanting of the holy name of Lord Hari is the eternal occupational duty of the jīva. The phrase `śreyaḥ kairava candrikā vitarāṇam' has been used in a qualifying sense to point out that the holy name is eternally the natural and characteristic function of the living entity.

(3) *Śreyaḥ kairava candrikā vitarāṇam* (diffuses the moonrays of bhāva bhakti for the highest good of the jīva)

For the living entities ensnared by *māyā*, material enjoyment alone is desirable, and it is on this account that they have to rotate in the cycle of repeated birth and death in this material world, suffering the three-fold miseries. In complete opposition to this, aversion toward *māyā* and constant engagement in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the highest achievement (*śreyaḥ*). This highest achievement (*śreyaḥ*) is compared to the white water lotus (*kumudini*). Just as the soothing rays of the moon cause the white lotus to blossom, Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana, diffusing the moon rays of *bhāva bhakti*, causes the white lotus of good fortune for the *jīvas* to bloom.

According to the statement of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, `bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā' (S.B. 11.3.31)—devotion is born of devotion—one must first continuously engage in the process of *sādhana bhakti* through hearing, chanting, etc. At this stage one's devotion is said to be an *ābhāsa* (shadow) of real *bhakti*. By such practice, *śuddhā bhakti* makes its appearance in the heart of the faithful *jīvas*. Here Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana has been compared with the moon. Just as the nectarine light emitted from the moon causes the white lotus to bloom, Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana causes *bhāva* or *rati*, which is predominated by the hlādinī potency, to appear within the heart of the *jīvas*. All kinds of benedictions arise as a consequence of this.

(4) *Vidyā vadhū jīvanam* (it is the life of all transcendental knowledge)

The question may be raised here about when those who have already attained *śuddhā bhakti* will attain their pure spiritual form (*śuddha*

svarūpa). In reply to this question Śrī Śacī Nandana Gauracandra says, “*vidyā vadhū jīvanam.*” In reality the Lord has but one *śakti*. Its two functions are *vidyā* (knowledge) and *avidyā* (ignorance). The Lord's internal potency known as *yogamāyā svarūpa śakti* is called *vidyā*. The external potency (*mahā māyā*), which is responsible for the creation of the material world and which covers the original spiritual form of the living entities and the qualities associated with that form, is called *avidyā*.

When *śuddha bhakti* arises in the heart of the *sādhaka jīva* by continual practice of hearing and chanting, *Bhakti devī*, dispelling all desires other than that for the service of the Lord, removes the above mentioned ignorance (*avidyā*). By the function of the knowledge potency (*vidyā vṛtti*), *Bhakti* destroys the gross and subtle body of the *jīva*. Simultaneously, *Bhakti devī* manifests the original pure spiritual form of the *jīva*, to the extent that he receives the purely spiritual form of a *gopī*, if by qualification he is fit to taste the *madhura rasa*.

(One may attain a form in any of the four transcendental relationships of *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya*, or *madhura* in accordance with one's eligibility or, in other words, in accordance with the *sthayi bhāva*.)

Thus, it is proved that the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the life of all transcendental knowledge which has been compared to a wife (*vadhū*). The *svarūpa śakti*'s being compared to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's wife is especially notable in context of the description of His sportive amorous pastimes (*Līlā Vilāsa*).

Comment

Bhakti is a function of the Lord's *svarūpa śakti*. *Śuddha sattva* is the essence of the combination of the *hlādinī* and *samvit* potencies of *svarūpa śakti*. When *śuddha sattva* is obtained, *bhakti* is also present. By executing the various practices of *sādhana bhakti* (*śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, etc.), *śuddha sattva* arises in the heart. *Śuddha sattva* is eternally established in the hearts of the Lord's eternal associates. By performing devotional service under their guidance, *śuddha sattva* manifests in the heart.

This *śuddha sattva* is also known as *rati* or *bhāva*. By further execution of devotional service in the stage of *rati*, *bhāva bhakti* is transformed into *prema bhakti*. The essence of *prema bhakti* is *bhāva* (not to be confused with *bhāva bhakti*, but rather a stage which comes in the systematic development of *prema*, i.e. *rati*, *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*, *mahābhāva*) and the essence of *bhāva* is *mahābhāva*. This *mahābhāva* is the form of Śrī Rādhā, or, otherwise stated, Śrī Rādhā Ȧhākuraṇī is the embodiment of *mahābhāva*.

Therefore, where *mahābhāva* is present, the form of Rādhārāṇī is present. Since time immemorial, Śrī Rādhā is the *svarūpa śakti* of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thereafter, the two personalities became one. For the purpose of *līlā-vilāsa*, they again manifest as two personalities. Śrī Rādhā further manifests as all the *gopīs* (in other words, they expand from Her). *Bhakti* as the essential function of *svarūpa śakti* is always present within the hearts of the

gopīs. In particular, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the personification of the *svarūpa śakti* and, consequently, the personification of *bhakti*. Therefore, the *svarūpa śakti* has been compared to the beloved wife of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, *bhakti* has also been compared to the wife of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(5) *Ānandāmbudhi vardhanam* (increases the ocean of bliss)

When the gross and subtle bodies of the *jīva* have been completely destroyed, his infinitesimal nature becomes evident. At that time, on account of the *jīva's svarūpa* being infinitesimal, it may be assumed that his constitutional happiness is also infinitesimal. In order to dispel this apprehension, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu instructs that the holy name is an ever increasing ocean of bliss, “*ānandāmbudhi-varadhanam*.” In other words, Śrī Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana*, performed in the liberated condition (upon the *jīva's* attainment of his pure spiritual form), unlimitedly expands the inherent transcendental pleasure of the *jīva* by virtue of the *hlādinī* potency.

(6) *Pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam* (enables one to taste complete nectar at every step)

In that condition, the *jīva*, being eternally situated in one of the transcendental mellows of *dāsya* (servitude), *sakhya* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental affection), or *madhura* (conjugal love), relishes complete nectar at every step by virtue of the ever increasing freshness of his attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (*nava-navāyamān anurāga*). The Lord's captivating transcendental form (*rūpa mādhurī*), qualities (*guṇa mādhurī*), and pastimes (*līlā mādhurī*) are eternally fresh. The *jīvas* who, having awakened their *prema* toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa, continuously drink the nectar of the Lord's sweetness (*mādhurī*), remain yet unsatisfied and hanker for more. Therefore they unceasingly drink that sweetness in endlessly new varieties.

(7) *Sarvātma snapanam* (*Premānanda* is completely pure)

The apprehension may arise here whether the happiness the *jīva* experiences in the ever fresh bliss of *prema* (*premānanda*) is motivated by a desire for personal enjoyment. Since the longing or endeavor for one's own happiness is opposed to pure love of God (*viśuddha prema*), how could such a condition be called *premānanda*? In order to dispel this apprehension, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the crest jewel of all sannyasis, has used the qualifying statement “*sarvātma snapanam*”—the holy name thoroughly bathes the living entity both internally and externally, leaving him very clean and cool.

The bliss that arises in the state of *Kṛṣṇa prema* is completely pure, being devoid of any selfish motives for personal enjoyment. In one's original form, the *jīva* becomes a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī who is

the embodiment of the *Hlādinī* potency and who is always absorbed in the ecstasy of *mahābhāva*. Obtaining the service of the Divine Couple in their conjugal pastimes, he tastes unlimited spiritual bliss. Therefore, there is no possibility of even the faintest trace of material desire (*kāma*) being present in him, which is completely opposed to the condition of *prema*.

From the use of the two words “*sarvātma śnapanam*,” supreme purity is indicated, completely devoid of the faults of merging into the impersonal existence (that is found within *sāyujya mukti*) and personal sense enjoyment.

The holy name is thus decorated with seven transcendental qualities. It is the embodiment of eternity, bliss and knowledge. May *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* be thoroughly victorious especially in revealing the astonishing pastimes of love (*prema-vicitra-vilāsa*) exchanged between the Divine Couple, *Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa*.

Comment

The holy name is like a new bud of a lotus flower. By constant chanting of *Hari nāma*, the name first makes its appearance within the heart of the practitioner. Thereafter, *Kṛṣṇa*'s form, His transcendental qualities, His pastimes and associates (the *gopas*, *gopīs*, etc.), all become manifest within the heart. The devotee directly perceives all of these within his heart. He also perceives the amorous sports (*vilāsa*) of the Lord. In the end, he gives up this material body and, obtaining his eternal form, enters into the pastimes of the Lord. It is, therefore, said that the holy name which reveals the *prema-vilāsa* of *Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa* should be especially glorified. .

Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā, Ch.20.11,13-14):

*nāma-saṅkīrtana haite sarvānārtha-nāśa
sarva-śubhodaya, kṛṣṇa-premera ullāsa*

*saṅkīrtana haite pāpa-saṁsāra-nāśana
citta-śuddhi, sarva-bhakti-sādhana-udgama*

*kṛṣṇa-premodgama, premāmṛta-āsvādana
kṛṣṇa-prāpti, sevāmṛta-samudre majjana*

“By the performance of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, all kinds of *anarthas* are destroyed and the heart becomes purified. The reactions to many lifetimes of sinful activities are eradicated and along with them, material existence consisting of repeated birth and death which is a by-product of those sins. All kinds of benedictions arise from *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*. All varieties of devotional practices (*sādhana*s) giving rise to *prema bhakti* are instigated by it. *Kṛṣṇa prema* arises and one begins to taste the nectar of *Kṛṣṇa prema*. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* is then obtained. Finally, one obtains spotless purity and is thoroughly cooled and

refreshed by complete immersion in the nectar ocean of service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

Śikṣāṣṭakam: Song 1 (Gītāvalī)

*Pīta varaṇa kalipāvana gorā
gāvaī aichana bhāva-vibhorā*

*citta-darpaṇa parimārjana kārī
kṛṣṇa kīrtana jaya cittavihārī*

*helā bhava dāva nirvāpaṇa vṛtti
kṛṣṇa kīrtana jaya kleśa nivṛtti*

*śreyaḥ kumuda vidhu jyotsnā-prakāśa
kṛṣṇa kīrtana jaya bhakti-vilāsa*

*viśuddha vidyā vadhū-jīvana rūpa
kṛṣṇa-kīrtana jaya siddhasvarūpa*

*ānanda payo nidhi vardhana kīrtti
kṛṣṇa kīrtana jaya plāvana mūrtti*

*pade-pade pīyūṣa svāda pradātā
kṛṣṇa kīrtana jaya prema vidhātā*

*bhaktivinoda svātma snapana vidhāna
kṛṣṇa kīrtana jaya prema nidāna*

Adopting the sentiment (*bhāva*) and golden lustre of the limbs of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Śrī Śacī-nandana Gaura Hari, the supreme deliverer of the fallen conditioned souls of *Kali-yuga*, would chant the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa absorbed in a deep emotional state. By the potency of His *kīrtan*, not only the sinful and materially afflicted people of *Kali-yuga* were delivered, but the birds, beasts, insects, and worms as well. While describing the glories of the holy name, He spoke as follows:

“The chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa thoroughly cleanses the mirror of the heart. It very easily extinguishes the blazing forest fire of material existence and dissipates, once and for all, the three-fold miseries—*ādhyātmika* (miseries arising from one's own body and mind), *ādhibhautika* (miseries arising from other living entities), and *ādhidaiivika* (miseries arising from material nature or the demigods).

As the moon, by its nectarean soothing and cooling rays, causes the white lotus to bloom, the holy name causes the white lotus of *prema bhakti* to bloom, which is the highest benediction for the *jīva* souls. May there be all victory for

the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which is the embodiment of the pastimes (*vilāsa*) of *bhakti*.

Unalloyed devotion (*viśuddha bhakti*) is the embodiment of the highest knowledge and it is like a new wife (*vadhū*). *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* is the life of transcendental knowledge in the form of *bhakti*. May there be all victory again and again for the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which manifests the eternal constitutional form of the living entities.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana expands the unfathomable, unlimited ocean of transcendental bliss. May there be all victory for the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which is an inundation of transcendental bliss. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* enables one to taste ever-increasingly fresh nectar at every step.

May there be all victory again and again for the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which bestows *Kṛṣṇa prema*. The holy name forever bathes and immerses the chanter in *Kṛṣṇa prema*. May there be all victory again and again for the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which is a storehouse of love of God."

Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura's Vivṛti (commentary)

I offer my respectful obeisances unto *Śrī Kṛṣṇa kīrtana*. May there be all victory to Śrī Gurudeva, who is constantly engaged in the performance of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, and to Śrī Gaurasundara, who is the personification of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa kīrtana*.

Out of innumerable different kinds of *sādhana bhakti*, many limbs of devotional service have been described in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and *Śrī Hari Bhakti Vilāsa*. In the practice of *sādhana bhakti* especially, a description of sixty-four limbs of devotional service is given under the headings of *vaidhi bhakti* (devotional service according to rules and regulations) and *rāgānugā bhakti* (spontaneous devotional service). In the statements of Prahāda Mahārāja as well, found in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, we find reference to unalloyed devotion (*śuddha bhakti*). Śrī Gaurasundara has said, "*Śrī nāma saṅkīrtana* is the topmost performance out of all the various limbs of *bhakti*."

Learned scholars of the absolute truth have described the supreme non-dual substance (*advaya jñāna vastu*) in three different stages. When that non-dual substance is realised exclusively by knowledge, or in other words through the function of the *cit* potency, it is referred to as '*Brahma*'. When realised through the combined functions of the *sat* and *cit* potencies, it is referred to as '*Paramātmā*', and when realised through the functions of

all potencies—*sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*—that supreme truth is referred to as '*Bhagavān*'.

When the absolute truth, or in other words *Bhagavān*, is viewed in terms of His opulences or majesty (*aiśvarya*), He is perceived as Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, and when viewed in terms of His sweetness (*mādhurya*), He is perceived as Vrajendra Nandana Śyāmasundara Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the topmost relisher of transcendental pastimes. Śrī Nārāyaṇa is the worshipable object of two and a half rasas. He is served in *śānta*, *dāsya*, *sakhya* and *vātsalya*, but in *sakhya* and *vātsalya*, because the natural feelings of intimacy are somewhat crippled by the sense of the Lord's majesty, they are only counted as half. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is served in all five principal transcendental rasas (*mukhya rasa*).

Vrajendra Nandana Śyāmasundara Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme truth, the original source of all manifestations. His *vaibhava prakāśa* expansion, Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, manifests the abode of mahā-Vaikuṅṭha. He is situated there in His eternal *catur-vyuha* expansions—Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha.

When a *mantra* is uttered only within the mind it is called *japa*. At that time the chanter attains the perfection of the goal upon which he has fixed his mind. When chanting is done audibly with movement of the lips, it is called *kīrtana*. *Kīrtana* is superior to *japa* within the mind, because one derives great benefit by hearing the sound vibration. Simultaneously, others who hear such *kīrtana*, also derive benefit. Thus there is benefit both for the chanter and for the hearers.

The word *saṅkīrtana* means '*sarvatobhāvena kīrtana*'. (*Sarvatobhāvena kīrtana* means complete *kīrtana*, or in other words, *kīrtana* that is performed in full knowledge of *sambandha jñāna* and free from all *anarthas* and *aparādhas*.) This refers to that *kīrtana*, the performance of which requires no assistance from any other method of devotional service. Partial *kīrtana* of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is not called *saṅkīrtana*. When there is partial or imperfect chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the *jīva* does not attain the full effect. As a result, many people fall into doubt about the potency of the holy name. Therefore, let there be all victory for the perfect and complete chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

By discussing material topics, one obtains fragmentary happiness. In the transcendental realm, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only object of attainment. No material objects are to be found there. Therefore, by chanting the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one obtains all kinds of perfections, which are transcendental to material nature. Out of the various types of perfection, seven in particular are certainly obtained by the chanting of the holy name. These seven types of perfection are being described here.

(1) *Ceto Darpaṇa Mārjanam*: (Cleanses the mirror of the heart)

The chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa cleanses the dust from the mirror of the heart of the living entity. The mirror of the heart of the *baddha jīva* is thoroughly covered by the dust of material contamination.

This material contamination is of three types: (1) *anyābhilāṣa*—the living entity who has become averse to the Lord is filled with desires separate from the interest of the Lord, (2) enjoyment of the fruits of worldly activities, and (3) renunciation which is not undertaken for the pleasure of the Lord.

The chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the most effective instrument for cleansing the dirt from the mirror of the heart of the *jīva*. As long as the dirt of material contamination is present, the pure spiritual form of the living entity is not reflected in the mirror of his heart. Therefore, the three kinds of contamination mentioned above are all forms of deceit (*kaitava*) which obscure the true vision of the self. They are obstacles which completely cover the heart of the *jīva*.

By the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, all these obstacles are removed. Finally, when the mirror of the heart is cleansed by complete chanting of the holy name, one's pure spiritual form is reflected in the mirror of the heart and one understands, "I am the servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa."

(2) *Bhava Mahādāvāgni Nirvāpaṇam*: (Extinguishes the blazing forest fire of material existence)

Externally, this material world appears very beautiful, charming, and pleasing. But in reality, it is just like a blazing fire within a forest. This material world is blazing with innumerable sufferings which come under three headings: (1) *ādhyātmika* (miseries arising from the body and mind), (2) *ādhidāivika* (miseries arising from the demigods or material nature), and (3) *ādhibhautika* (miseries arising from other living entities).

As a blazing fire thoroughly destroys all the trees and animals of the forest, the forest fire of material existence in the shape of repeated birth and death constantly burns the living entities who are averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But when one takes up the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa under the expert guidance of a qualified guru and Vaiṣṇavas, then even while residing in this material world, one becomes competent to extinguish the blazing fire of material existence. This is due to one's adopting an attitude which is favorably disposed toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By *Śrī Kṛṣṇa nāma saṅkīrtana*, all these miseries are driven away.

(3) *Śreyah Kāirava Candrikā-Vitaraṇam*: (Spreads the Highest Benediction)

Complete chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa diffuses the radiance of supreme auspiciousness. The word '*śreyah*' means auspiciousness; '*kāirava*' means white lilies (*kūmūda*); and '*candrikā*' means the rays of the moon. Just as the soothing rays of the rising moon cause the white lilies to bloom and thus enhance their whiteness, the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa expands the good fortune of the living entities. Good fortune can not be had by separate desires (*anyābhilāṣa*), *karma* or *jñāna*. But the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa promotes the highest

welfare of the *jīva*.

(4) Vidyā Vadhū Jīvanam:

(The Life of all transcendental Knowledge)

Two kinds of knowledge have been described in the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*: (1) *Laukikī Vidyā* (material knowledge) and (2) *Parā Vidyā* (transcendental knowledge). Indirectly, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana* is the life of material knowledge, but it is primarily the life of transcendental knowledge. By the influence of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, the *jīva* is liberated from the false ego arising from mundane knowledge, and the knowledge of his relationship with *Śrī Kṛṣṇa (sambandha jñāna)* is nourished. The chanting of the holy name of Vrajendra-nandana Syāmasundara *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* is the goal to be obtained by transcendental knowledge. By this, *Kṛṣṇa* Himself is obtained.

(5) Ānandāmbudhi Vardhanam: (Increases the Ocean of Transcendental Bliss)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana expands the ocean of transcendental bliss for the living entities. The word ocean cannot be applied to a small reservoir of water. Therefore, the unlimited bliss which arises from the chanting of the holy name is comparable only with a boundless ocean.

(6) Prati Padam Pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam: (Enables one to taste nectar at every step)

Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana causes one to taste complete nectar at every step. In the relishing of transcendental *rasa*, there is neither deficiency nor incompleteness—only ecstasy. By the performance of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, one relishes the complete and uninterrupted bliss of *rasa* at every moment.

(7) Sarvātma Snapanam: (Completely bathes the body, mind, and *atma*)

Even transcendental objects obtain to a softened state by the chanting of the holy name of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*. In the material realm, the body, mind, and the soul are not only purified by *Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana*, but are undoubtedly softened as well.

The living entity who is engrossed in bodily designations becomes covered with the dirt of the gross and subtle body. By the power of the holy name, all these contaminations are cleansed away. When attachment toward mundane existence is vanquished, the living entity turns his attention toward *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* and obtains the cooling and soothing service of His lotus feet.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī has written in the *Bhakti Sandarbha* (273) and in the *Krama Sandarbha* (quoting from the seventh canto of *Śrīmad*

Bhāgavatam):

*ataeva yadyapyanyā bhaktiḥ kalau kartavyā
tadā kīrtanākhyā bhakti-saṁyogenaiva*

This means that although in *Kali yuga* it is necessary to perform the other eight limbs of devotional service (i.e., *śravaṇam*, *smaraṇam*, *pāda sevānam*, *arcānam*, *vandanam*, *dāsyam*, *sakhyam*, and *ātmā nivedanam*) they must be performed in connection with the chanting of the holy name (*kīrtanam*). By this method, *bhakti* is fully accomplished.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Śrī Bhajana Rahasya

Ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam:

In material existence, the heart is covered by attachment for mundane enjoyment, lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion, and envy. The mirror of the heart is cleansed from all these impurities by the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. This is possible because the holy name is the embodiment of eternity, bliss and knowledge, as described by Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī in the seventh verse of *Nāmāṣṭaka*:

*sūditaśrita-janārttirāśay ramya-cidghana sukhasvarūpiṇe
nāma gokula mahotsavāya tekṣṇa pūrṇa-vapuṣe namo namaḥ*

“O holy name! O Kṛṣṇa! You destroy all the sufferings (arising from offenses to the holy name) of those who have taken shelter of Your holy name. You are constituted of supreme beauty and transcendental happiness, and You are the embodiment of bliss for the residents of Gokula (the *gopas*, *gopīs*, cows, calves, and all other life forms of Gokula). Therefore, I offer repeated obeisances unto You, who are the personification of the complete manifestation of *Vaikuṅṭha*.”

Bhava-Mahā-Dāvāgni-Nīrvāpanam:

The blazing forest fire of material existence in the form of repeated birth and death, and the three-fold miseries arising thereof, is effortlessly extinguished by the chanting of the holy name. This is confirmed in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (6.2.46):

nātaḥ param karma-nibandha-kṛntanam

*mumukṣatām tīrtha-padānukīrtanāt
na yat punaḥ karmasu sajjate mano
rajas-tamobhyām kalilam tato'nyathā*

“Therefore, for persons desiring release from material bondage, there is no method superior to the chanting of the holy name of the Supreme Lord at whose feet all the places of pilgrimage reside. Such chanting destroys the root cause of sinful activity. Consequently, by the performance of *nāma saṅkīrtana*, one will never again become implicated in fruitive activities (*karma khaṇḍa*). This is not the case, however, with material methods of atonement, because even after such performances, the heart again becomes contaminated by the modes of passion and ignorance.”

Śreyaḥ-Kairava Candrikā-Vitaraṇam:

The holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa emits nectarean rays which cause the white lily (*kumudini*) of supreme fortune to bloom. As the moon, by its rays, causes the white lilies to blossom and become very fragrant, the holy name, by the transmission of its potency, causes all kinds of good fortune to arise for the *jīvas*. The following verse from the *Skaṇḍa Purāṇa* has been cited as evidence of this in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.234):

*madhura-madhuram-etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānām
sakala-nigamavallī-satphalaṁ citsvarūpaṁ
sakṛdapi pariḡitaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛḡuvara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma*

“Of all that is auspicious, the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa stands supreme. Of all that is sweet, the holy name is sweeter still. It is the eternal, fully-spiritual fruit of the wish-fulfilling tree of the entire Vedas. O best of the *Bhṛḡus*! If anyone even once chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, either with faith or indifferently—but free from any offense—the holy name immediately delivers him from the ocean of material existence.”

Vidyā-Vadhū Jīvanam:

The holy name is the life of all transcendental knowledge (which is here compared to a wife [*vadhū*]). This is supported in the *Gāruḍa Purāṇa* as follows:

*yad icchasi param jñānam jñānād yat paramam padam
tadādareṇa rājendra kuru govinda kīrtanam*

“O best of Kings! If you desire to obtain that topmost knowledge by which the supreme goal (*param padam*) is attained, then with great respect and devotion, chant the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

Comment

By chanting the holy name of Govinda, one easily attains the supreme destination [*param padam*]. *Param padam* does not refer to *mukti*. Beyond *mukti*, beyond Vaikuṅṭha, beyond even Ayodhyā and Mathurā—the attainment of the service of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Vraja is what is here referred to as *param padam*. This fruit is obtained by the chanting of the holy name of Lord Govinda, not by any ordinary knowledge.

It is further stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.5.40):

*dhātar yad asmin bhava īśa jīvās
tāpa-trayeṇābhihatā na śarmā
ātman labhante bhagavaṁs tavānghri-
cchāyām sa-vidyām ata āśrayema*

“O father! O Lord! Being averse to You, the living entities in this material world are always overwhelmed by the three-fold miseries—*ādhyāmika*, *ādhibhautika*, and *ādhidaiivika*. Thus they are unable to find any happiness or peace. Therefore, O Lord, equipped with transcendental knowledge (*vidyā*), I am taking shelter of the shade of Your lotus feet.”

Comment

Equipped with transcendental knowledge here means equipped with *bhakti*. Out of all types of knowledge, *bhakti* is the best because by it, the Supreme Lord becomes known.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.29.49) it is stated, *sa vidyā tan-matir-jayā*: “That by which one's attention is concentrated upon the Supreme Lord is called ‘*vidyā*’ (knowledge).” Only by *bhakti* can one's attention be drawn upon the lotus feet of the Lord. Therefore, the knowledge being referred to here is *bhakti*. This knowledge (i.e., *bhakti*) dissipates ignorance (*avidyā*). The holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the life of transcendental knowledge by which the consciousness becomes firmly situated at the lotus feet of the Lord, and one is engaged in devotional service.

Ānandām-budhi Vardhanam:

The chanting of the holy name of the Lord expands the ocean of transcendental bliss within the heart, as it is stated in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (8.3.20):

*ekāntino yasya na kañcanārtham
vāñchanti ye vai bhagavat prapannāḥ
aty-adbhutam tac-caritam sumāṅgalam
gāyanta ānanda-samudra-magnāḥ*

“The one-pointed devotees (*ekāntika bhaktas*), who are fully surrendered unto the Lord, become immersed in the ocean of transcendental bliss by chanting and reciting the transcendental pastimes of the Lord which are astonishing and supremely auspicious. They have no desire other than to obtain the lotus feet of the Lord. They are always merged in the ocean of transcendental bliss. I pray unto that supreme *brahman* (*parabrahma*), who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

Pratipadam Pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam:

When the mirror of the heart is cleansed by chanting the holy name of the Lord, then all types of good fortune arise for the chanter. Thereafter, he attains perception of his constitutional identity (*svarūpa*). For one who chants the holy name in that stage of attainment, the ocean of transcendental bliss is enlarged, and he tastes complete nectar in newer and newer varieties at every step.

Comment

An ordinary conditioned soul will not experience *ānanda* when he chants the holy name. When, however, one chants the holy name according to this process, in other words after having freed oneself from all misgivings (*anarthas*) and having attained one's *svarūpa*, one who then chants the holy name with love and spiritual emotion (*bhāva*), will taste the nectar of the name at every step.

It is therefore said in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

*tebhyo namo 'stu bhava-bāridhi-jīrṇa-paṅka-
sammagna-mokṣaṇa-vicakṣaṇa-pādukebhyaḥ
kṛṣṇeti varṇa-yugalam śravaṇena yeṣāṁ
ānandathur-bhavati nartitaromavṛndāḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances again and again unto the lotus feet of that person whose heart trembles with bliss upon chanting and hearing the holy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose bodily hairs stand on end due to ecstasy, and who is expert in

delivering the conditioned souls who are sunk in the mud of the ocean of material existence."

Sarvātma-snapanam:

The self is thoroughly cleansed by bathing in the holy name. As it is stated in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (12.12.48)

*saṅkīrtyamāno bhagavān anantaḥ
śrutānubhāvā vyasanaṁ hi puṁsām
praviśya cittaṁ vidhunoty aśeṣaṁ
yathā tamo 'rko 'bhram ivati-vātaḥ*

“By describing the transcendental characteristics or pastimes of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Hari, or by hearing of His glories, the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa enters within the heart (in the shape of *Hari-kathā*) and drives away all ignorance (*andhakāra*) exactly as the sun drives away darkness. And as a powerful wind blows away a mass of clouds, hearing of the Lord's pastimes eradicates all the sufferings of material existence.” (The word *andhakāra* above refers to the various contaminations of the heart such as *anarthas* and *aparādhas*.)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has composed the following Bengali verse in this connection:

*śruta anubhuta yata anartha saṁyoga
śrī kṛṣṇa kīrtane saba haya ta viyoga
je rūpa vāyute megha sūrya tamaḥ nāśe
citte praveśiyā doṣa aśeṣa vināśe
kṛṣṇa nāmāśraye citta darpaṇa mārjjana
ati śighra labhe jīva kṛṣṇa premadhana*

"As many varieties of anarthas as have ever been heard of or experienced are all destroyed by chanting the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As the wind disperses the clouds or as the sun dissipates the darkness, the Supreme Lord, through the medium of the hearing of His transcendental pastimes, enters the heart and completely destroys the extensive material contamination. By taking shelter of the name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the mirror of the heart is cleansed and very quickly the *jīva* attains the treasure of *Kṛṣṇa-prema*."

The holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is fully conscious (*caitanya*), and it is the personification of sweetness (*mādhurya*) and of transcendental *rasa*. As stated in the *Nāmāṣṭaka* (8):

*nārada viṇojjīvana
sudhormi niryāsa mādhurī pūra
tvaṁ kṛṣṇa-nāma kāmam-*

sphura me rasane rasena sadā

"O holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa! You are the life-support of Śrī Nārada's *vīṇa*. You are the crest upon the waves of nectar arising from the ocean of sweetness (*mādhurya*). May you, therefore, always appear very prominently on our tongues accompanied by great attachment (*anurāga*)."

Śrī Hari nāma is worshipable particularly for liberated persons. Simply by a shadow of pure chanting (*nāmābhāsa*), all misery and distress are dissipated. As stated in the *Nāmāṣṭaka* (2):

*jaya nāmedheya muni vṛnda geya
jana rañjanāya param ākṣarākṛte
tvam anādarād api manāg udīritam
nikhilogra tāpa paṭalim vilumpasi*

"O holy name, O Kṛṣṇa appearing in the form of the name! Great sages such as Nārada and others constantly chant Your glories. For the delight of all humanity, You have appeared in the form of transcendental syllables. Although You are directly the supreme *brahman*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, You appear in the form of syllables for the benefit of people in general. Even if one chants the holy name of the Lord indifferently (*avahelanā*), or in other words with the four kinds of *nāmābhāsa*—*sāṅketya* (to indicate something else), *parihāsa* (jokingly), *stobha* (for musical entertainment), and *helā* (neglectfully)—the holy name is competent to destroy the most grievous sins and thus nullify all severe material afflictions. Therefore, O holy name, may there be all victory unto You!"

It is, therefore, stated in Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata (*Madhya* 23.76-78):

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*prabhu kahe-kahilaṅ ei mahāmantra
ihā japa giyā sabe kariyā nirbandha
ihā haite sarva-siddhi haibe sabāra
sarva-kṣaṇa bala'ithe vidhi nāhi āra*

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, ‘I have spoken this *mahā-mantra*, now all of you return home and perform *japa* and *kīrtana* of the holy name with great love and faith, keeping track of the number of rounds you chant. By this practice, all types of perfection will arise. Always chant the holy name, for there are no rules and regulations regarding its performance. At every moment, utter this *mahā-mantra*.’”

Śloka Two

Why is the practice of chanting (nāma sādhana) so accessible?

*nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam idṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ*

He bhagavan ! nāmnām bahudhā akāri—Being compelled by causeless mercy, You have manifested innumerable names such as Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, etc., just to benefit the living entities; tatra—in all those names; nija sarva śaktiḥ arpitā—(You) have invested all the potencies of Your personal forms; smaraṇe kāla api na niyamitaḥ—moreover, in remembering the holy name of the Lord (nāma smaraṇa), (You) have not imposed any restrictions such as the consideration of a specified time like sandhyā-vandanā (evening prayer). In other words, at any time of the day or night, the holy name can be chanted and remembered. This is the regulation You have given; tava etādṛśī kṛpā—this is your mercy; mama idṛśam durdaivam—but my misfortune (in the form of offenses to the holy name) is such that; iha—in (towards) this holy name which awards all benedictions and is so easily accessible; anurāgaḥ na ajani—attachment has not arisen.

Translation

"O Lord! Your holy name bestows all auspiciousness upon the living entities. Therefore, for the benefit of the jīvas, You eternally manifest Your innumerable names, such as Rāma, Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Mukunda, Mādhava, Govinda, Dāmodara, and so on. You have invested those names with all the potencies of Your various personal forms. Out of causeless mercy, You have not imposed any restrictions on the chanting and remembrance of such names in regards to any specified time, such as sandhyā-vandanā (evening prayer). In other words, at any time of the day or night, the holy name can be chanted and remembered. This is the regulation which You have established. O Lord! This is Your causeless mercy upon the living entities. Nonetheless, on account of committing offenses (nāma aparādha), I am so unfortunate that although Your holy name is so easily accessible and bestows all good fortune, I have not awoken any attachment toward it."

Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam

Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana is of four varieties being distinguished by name (nāma), form (rūpa), qualities (guṇa), and pastimes (līlā). The holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original seed of all happiness. The holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (Śrī Nāma) and Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the possessor of the name (Śrī Namī), are one and the same. There is no difference between them. Śrī Kṛṣṇa nāma saṅkīrtana is extremely beneficial for everyone in all respects. Therefore, in order to arouse faith in the jīvas toward the holy name of the Lord, the Supreme Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally

broadcast the supreme utility of Kṛṣṇa nāma saṅkīrtana.

He says, "O Lord! O most merciful One! Seeing me devoid of all shelter, You have manifested Your holy names, being compelled by Your causeless mercy. You have many names which are all non-different from You. These are classified into two groups: mukhya (principal) and gauṇa (secondary). The names Hari, Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Acyuta, Rāma, Ananta, and Viṣṇu, etc. are principal names; whereas, the names Brahma, Paramātmā, Supreme Controller, Maintainer, Creator, Mahendra, etc. are secondary names. Furthermore, You have invested Your principal names with all the potencies and perfect competence of Your svarūpa śakti."

This is proved by the statements of many scriptures (as cited below):

*na hi bhagavanna aghaṭititam idam
tvad-darśanān nṛnām akhila-pāpa-kṣayaḥ
yan-nāma sakṛc chravaṇāt
pukkaśo 'pi vimucyate saṁsārāt*

"O Lord! Just by seeing You, all the sins of men become destroyed. This is not at all impossible, for even a low class dog-eater (cāṇḍāla) who hears Your holy name but once is liberated from material existence."

—Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 6.16.44—

*vedākṣarāṇī yāvanti pathitāni dvijātibhiḥ
tāvanti harināmāni kīrtitāni na saṁśayaḥ
ṛgvedo yajurvedaḥ sāmavedo 'pyatharvaṇaḥ
adhītāstena yenoktaṁ harir ityakṣara dvayam*

"The extent to which the twice-born brāhmaṇas recite the syllables of the Vedas, they most certainly (indirectly) chant the holy name of the Lord. In this there is no doubt. But one who has uttered the two syllables 'Hari' should be understood to have completed his study of all the Vedas—the Ṛg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda and Atharva Veda."

—Viṣṇu Dharmottara—

*ma ṛco mā yajustāta mā sāma paṭhakiṅcana
govindeti harernāma geyaṁ gāyasva nityaśaḥ*

"Therefore do not study the Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma, Atharva or any other of the Vedas. Just sing the name of 'Govinda', and in this way engage constantly in the chanting of the holy name of the Lord."

—Skanda Purāṇa—

*avamanya ca ye yānti bhagavat-kīrtanaṁ narā
te yānti narakaṁ ghoram tena pāpena karmaṇā*

"Those persons who bear contempt against the chanting of the holy name of the Supreme Lord fall down into formidable hell as a consequence of such sinful acts."

—Padma Purāṇa, Vaiśākha Māhātmya—

*etan nirvidyamānānām
icchatām akuto-bhayam
yoginām nṛpa nirṇītam
harer nāmānukīrtanam*

"O King! It is the opinion of all scriptures and all previous ācāryas that whether one is an unalloyed devotee, detached from material existence on account of direct experience of the misery of material life; whether one is desirous of elevation to the heavenly planets or liberation; or whether one be a self-satisfied yogi (ātmārāma), one should chant the holy name of the Lord with great love."

—Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 2.1.11—

*āsya jānanto nāma cid-viviktana
mahaste viṣṇo sumatim bhajām-ahē
omiteyad-brahmaṇopadiṣṭam nāma
yasmād-uccāryamāṇam-eva saṁsāra
-bhayāttārayati; tasmād ucyate tāraḥ*

"O Lord Viṣṇu! Your name is fully spiritual (cit svarūpa), and thus it is self-manifested. Although we are not perfectly acquainted with the glories of uttering Your holy name, if we chant, knowing just a little of its glories, we will obtain full knowledge of that subject. Brahmājī propagated the transcendental sound `om', the mere utterance of which liberates one from the fear of material existence. Therefore the vibration om is known as `tāraka brahma'." (Tāraka means that which liberates or enables one to cross over).

—Hari Bhakti Vilāsa 11.512 : Dhṛta Ṛg Veda 1.156.3—

*sakṛd-uccāritam yena harir-ityakṣara-dvayam
baddaḥ parikaras-tena mokṣāya gamanam prati*

"Those who are free from all offenses and who utter even once the two syllables `Hari' become resolute to obtain liberation from material existence and the service of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

—Padma Purāṇa, Uttar Khaṇḍa, Chapter 46—

*tad aśma-sāram hṛdayam batedam
yad gṛhyamāṇair hari-nāma-dheyaiḥ
na vikriyetātha yadā vikāro
netre jalam gātra-ruheṣu harṣaḥ*

"O Suta! Certainly that heart is steel-framed which, in spite of hearing and chanting the all auspicious holy names of the Supreme Lord, does not melt and begin to flow toward Him. When the heart does melt, the eyes become overflowed with tears and the hairs of the body stand on end due to ecstasy."

—Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 2.3.24—

*madhura-madhuram-etan-maṅgalam maṅgalānām
sakala-nigama-vallī-satphalam cit-svarūpam*

*sakṛd-api parigītam śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛguvara naramātram tārayeta kṛṣṇanāma*

"O respected Bhṛgu! This holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is sweeter than the sweetest honey. Amongst all that is auspicious, it stands supreme. It is the spotlessly pure (viśuddha), eternal, cognisant (cinmaya), and fully ripened fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literature. If anyone chants the holy name even once, whether sincerely or casually, but without offenses, the holy name immediately delivers the chanter from material existence."

—Hari Bhakti Vilāsa 11.451 : Dhṛta Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa—

*gītvā ca mama nāmāni vicaren-mama sannidhau
iti brabīmi te satyaṁ kṛīto 'haṁ tasya cārjuna!*

"O Arjuna! I declare this truth unto you that those who approach Me chanting My name certainly purchase Me. I become completely subservient to them."

—Adi Purāṇa—

*nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
'bhinnatvān-nāma-nāminoḥ*

"The holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa awards all benedictions just like the cintāmaṇi stone. It is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the embodiment of all transcendental mellows (caitanya rasa vigraha). The holy name is complete, beyond the influence of māyā, and eternally liberated, since Śrī Kṛṣṇa nāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the possessor of the name (Śrī nāmī), are non-different."

—Padma Purāṇa—

*ataḥ śrī-kṛṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grahyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

"Therefore, the transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa cannot be perceived with the gross material senses. They automatically manifest themselves on the tongue and other senses which have awakened eagerness for the transcendental service of the Lord."

—Padma Purāṇa—

Thus the existence of all potencies in Hari nāma is established by the statements of the Śruti, Smṛti, and the Tantras. In the processes of karma, jñāna, yoga, etc., emphasis is placed on the rules or considerations regarding time, place, and performer. But in the chanting and remembering of Your holy name, You have not imposed any restrictions regarding time, place, and performer; this is an example of your limitless mercy upon us. In spite of this, we are so unfortunate that we have failed to obtain even the slightest attraction toward Your most munificent names.

The word *durbhāgya* (unfortunate), used here, indicates the presence of offenses to the holy name (*nāma aparādha*). In the discussion which follows below, these offenses are discussed in summary fashion.

In this material world fashioned by *māyā*, the living entities who are averse to the Supreme Lord are bound by attachment to innumerable types of sense gratification. They never make any endeavour to direct their attention toward the Lord. At all times, they remain devoutly engaged in the performances of karma, *jñāna*, and other processes which simply produce misery. But by these processes, the eternal welfare of the *jīva* cannot be achieved.

Thinking thus, unlimitedly merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested His holy names to the *jīvas* as the method of obtaining *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is predominated by the *hlādinī* potency of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa śakti*, and, by the chanting of the holy name, it is transmitted into the hearts of the *jīvas*. But in spite of hearing and chanting, the *jīvas* do not obtain attachment toward the holy name on account of offenses. Therefore, persons possessing faith (*śraddhā*) should receive Hari *nāma* from the mouth of a bonafide spiritual master. Being attentive to avoid committing offenses, they should perform *japa* and *nāma saṅkīrtana* with great faith, as far as their capacity allows.

Offences are of ten kinds:

(1) “*Satām nindā nāmaṅ paramam aparādham vitanute; yataḥ khyātim yātam katham usahate tad vigarhām*”—To criticise the devotees of the Lord is a very grievous offense to Śrī *nāma*. How can Śrī *nāma* prabhu tolerate criticism of those great souls who are deeply devoted to the holy name and who spread its glories throughout the world? Therefore, criticism of saintly persons and devotees is the first offense against the holy name.

(2) “*Śīvasya Śrī Viṣṇor ya iha guṇanāmādi sakalam; dhiyā bhinnam paśyet sa khalu harināmāhitkaraḥ*”—In this world, those persons who, by mundane intelligence, see a difference in the all-auspicious transcendental holy name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Viṣṇu, in other words, who consider them to be like material phenomena and thus different from *nāmi-Viṣṇu* (the bearer of the name), commit an offense against the holy name. Furthermore, the (offensive) chanting of those who consider demigods such as Śiva, etc. to be independent Lords, equal in all respects to Lord Viṣṇu, is certainly detrimental.

(3) “*Guror avajñā*”—To disregard the spiritual master who is established in all the truths regarding the holy name, considering him to be an ordinary man possessing a perishable body composed of material elements, is the third offense against the holy name.

(4) “*Śruti śāstra nindanam*”—The fourth offense is to find fault with the Vedas, the *sattvic Purāṇas*, and other scriptures.

(5) “*Tathārthavādo*”—The fifth offense is to consider the glories of the holy name to be exaggerated.

(6) "Hari Nāmnī kalpanam"—The sixth offense is to consider the holy name to be imaginary.

(7) "Nāmno balād yasya hi pāpa buddhir na vidyate tasya yamair hi śuddhiḥ"—Persons who have the tendency to commit sinful actions on the strength of the holy name cannot be purified by any artificial processes of yoga, such as yama, niyama, dhyāna, dhāraṇā, etc.—this is certain.

(8) "Dharma vrata tyāga hutādi karma śubhakriyā-sāmyam api pramādaḥ"—To consider routine religion, penances, renunciation, sacrifices and other ordinary pious activities in the material mode of goodness (sat karma) to be equal to the transcendental holy name of the Lord is negligence and is thus considered an offense.

(9) "Aśraddadhāne vimukhe 'pyaśṛṇvati yaścopadeṣaḥ śivanāmāparādhaḥḥḥḥ"—To instruct the glories of the holy name to faithless persons who are averse to hearing and chanting the holy name is also an offense.

(10) "Śrutvāpi nāma-māhātmyam yaḥ prītir-ahito 'dhamāḥ ; aham mamādi paramo nāmni so 'pyaparādhakṛt"—Those who, in spite of hearing the astonishing glories of the holy name, maintain the conception that "I am this material body" and that worldly objects are "mine", and who display no persistence in or love for the utterance of the holy name, are also offenders to the holy name.

—Padma Purāṇa, Svarga Khaṇḍa 48—

It is essential to chant the holy name free from these ten kinds of offenses. A chanter of the holy name does not have to endeavor to dissipate sins by virtuous deeds (sat karma), nor does he endeavor to accumulate pious credits like the fruitive workers (sat karmis), for such fruitive activities are no longer under his jurisdiction. In other words, he has already given up the right (adhikāra) as well as the obligation to perform them.

If, however, he commits any offense against the holy name, he should constantly chant the holy name, feeling very agitated at heart. By such constant chanting of Hari nāma, there will be no opportunity to commit further offenses and all previous offenses will be destroyed.

As it has been said in the scriptures (Padma Purāṇa Svarga Khaṇḍa 64), "Nāmāparādha-yuktānām nāmānyeva harantya dham; aviśrānti prayuktāni tānyevārthakarāṇi ca"—Only Hari nāma is able to destroy the sins of persons who are infested with nāmāparādha. Therefore, one should constantly chant the holy name of the Lord. By this process, all offenses will be dissipated and one will obtain Kṛṣṇa prema, the highest attainment of life.

When all offenses have thus been nullified, attachment (anurāga) for Hari nāma will arise and, at that time, complete perfection (sarvārtha siddhi) will be attained. By complete perfection here is implied Kṛṣṇa prema. This is the second instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Caitanya-Caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā, Ch.20.17-19):

*aneka-lokera vāñchā—aneka-prakāra
kṛpāte karila aneka-nāmera pracāra
khāite suite yathā nāma laya
kāla-deśa-niyama nāhi, sarva siddhi haya
"sarva-śakti nāme dilā kariyā vibhāga
āmāra durdaiva—nāme nāhi anurāga!!"*

"Innumerable varieties of desires for sense enjoyment reside in the heart of those who are averse to the Lord, being bound by the illusory energy. Therefore they are cheated and deprived of their constitutional occupation which is to engage in the devotional service of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is very merciful. Compelled by great compassion, He has manifested His many names, and in the vibration of such names, He has not imposed any restrictions in regard to time, place, person, etc. Even by chanting Śrī Kṛṣṇa nāma at the time of eating, drinking, and sleeping, all perfection is attained. Alas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has invested all His potencies in His holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have not even the slightest attachment for these names."

Śikṣāṣṭakam: Song 2 (Gītāvalī)

*tuñhu dayā-sāgara tārayite prāñi
nāma aneka tuyā śikhāyali āni'*

*sakala śakati dei nāme tohārā
grahaṇe rākhali nāhi kāla-vicārā*

*śrī-nāma-cintāmaṇi tohāri samānā
viśve bilāoli karuṇā-nidānā*

*tuyā dayā aichana parama udārā
atiśaya manda nātha!bhāga hamārā*

*nāhi janamala nāme anurāga mora
bhakativinoda-citta duḥkhe vibhora*

"O ocean of mercy Śrī Kṛṣṇa, You have manifested Your innumerable names in this world just to deliver the living entities from the ocean of material existence. Out of Your kindness, You have invested all the potencies of Your respective transcendental forms into those names. In the chanting of the holy name, You have not placed any restrictions regarding time, place or other considerations. At any time, in any place, under any circumstance, the practitioner of devotional service (sādhaka jīva) can perform japa, kīrtana, or remembrance (smaraṇa) of the holy name.

Like Your transcendental form, the holy name is sat (eternal), cit (full of knowledge), ānanda (full of bliss), and it is superior even to touchstone (cintāmaṇi). You have distributed this touchstone-like Hari nāma throughout the entire world. This is the topmost display of Your mercy. On the one hand Your

mercy is extremely generous and beyond compare, yet on the other hand my misfortune is very great, for I have not even the slightest attraction toward the magnanimous name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Therefore Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "My heart is overwhelmed with sadness. What shall I do? O Lord! Now I am simply waiting expectantly upon Your causeless mercy."

Vivṛti

"O Lord! Out of Your causeless mercy, You have manifested innumerable names for the benefit of the entire world. You have invested each of those names with all the potencies of Your respective personal forms. In the chanting and remembrance of these names, You have not imposed any restrictions regarding when such chanting should be done. Even while eating, reclining, or sleeping—at any time—one can chant the holy name of the Lord. There is no inconvenience in this whatsoever. Yet I am so unfortunate that I have not even the slightest attachment for chanting or remembering such liberal and magnanimous names."

Mukhya and Gauṇa Nāma:

It is mentioned above that the Lord manifests innumerable (bahu) names. The word 'bahu' indicates that the Lord's holy names are of two types: mukhya (principal) and gauṇa (secondary). Mukhya nāma is also of two types: mādhyama (names which represent the sweet, intimate, loving feature of the Lord) and aiśvarya (names which represent the opulent and reverential feature of the Lord). Included in the first category are Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā-Ramaṇa, and Gopījana-vallabha; included in the second category are Vāsudeva, Rāma, and Nṛsiṃha. The separated portions of the Lord, or in other words His partial manifestations such as Brahma, Paramātmā, etc. are included in the gauṇa or secondary names of the Lord. The principal names of the Lord are non-different from Him. They are endowed with all the potencies that are to be found within the Lord's personal form. The secondary names are only partially endowed with such potencies.

The meaning of Durdaiva:

The jīva is conscious (cetana). The principal meaning of the word cetana is that the jīva has independence. But by misuse of his independence he becomes averse to the Lord and is thus bound in the perishable kingdom of māyā. In this way, his misfortune (durdaiva) becomes established. The word durdaiva refers to the jīva's aversion toward the service of the Lord.

When the jīva embarks upon the three-fold paths of enjoyment—namely, anyābhilāṣitā (material desires), karma and jñāna—he is thrown into forgetfulness of his constitutional nature (svarūpa), and he thus brings misfortune upon himself. Under the sway of material desires (anyābhilāṣa), the jīva abandons the service of Kṛṣṇa and becomes intoxicated with desires to satisfy his own mind and body. In this way, he becomes attached to the happiness of this inert material

world.

He engages in pious activities in order to obtain fleeting heavenly pleasures. When, in the midst of such enjoyment, he is forced to experience distress, he renounces the inclination for material enjoyment and seeks liberation by merging into the impersonal, undifferentiated feature of the Supreme (nirbheda brahma).

Nāmāparādha, Nāmābhāsa, and Śuddha Nāma:

By some great fortune, the jīva obtains the association of the Lord's devotees. By the association of those devotees, by the instructions received from the spiritual master, and by the mercy of the Lord, the jīva becomes inclined toward the service of the Lord. This is the natural and eternal engagement of the jīva.

At present, the good fortune of the living entities has become severely impaired due to being covered by their entanglement in the three paths cited above. They remain busy in various pursuits such as mundane religiosity (dharma), economic development (artha), and sense gratification (kāma). Sometimes, becoming disgusted by his engagement in sinful and wretched activities, the jīva takes up the chanting of the holy name, but, being infested with the ten offenses, he commits still more offenses to the name. At such a time, the name which he chants is not śuddha nāma (pure chanting), but nāma aparādha (offensive chanting).

Sometimes, being harassed by his restless state, he avoids material sense gratification, hoping to obtain peace. For his welfare, he takes up the chanting of the holy name, but remains indifferent toward the cultivation of sambandha jñāna. At that time also, the name which he chants is not śuddha nāma, but nāmābhāsa (a shadow of the holy name). By chanting in the stage of nāmābhāsa, he becomes liberated from the materialistic conception of life (prāpañcika jñāna) and becomes eligible to take up the service of the Lord.

Pure devotees, having rid themselves of misfortune in the shape of mundane existence and impersonal liberation, chant the pure holy name of the Lord; consequently, they attain unalloyed Kṛṣṇa prema.

The process to attain freedom from Nāmāparādha:

Observing the predicament of the conditioned living entities, Śrī Gaurasundara instructed them on the system for performing nāma bhajana. The jīvas absence of attachment toward the holy name of the Lord is their misfortune. But in spite of such misfortune, the mercy of the Lord is always present. There is a method of becoming freed from nāmāparādha. Considering offenses to be like a thunderbolt, one should never engage in aparādha, and, by incessantly chanting the holy name, there will be no occasion to commit such offenses.

By chanting nāmābhāsa, one obtains mukti, or in other words, freedom from attachment to material sense enjoyment. Thereafter, the jīva obtains qualification to chant the holy name purely. The attainment of all such opportunities is an indication of the Lord's causeless mercy. By the influence of chanting the Lord's principal names (mukhya nāma—ie. Rādhā-Kānta, Rādhā-Ramaṇa, Madana-Mohana, Govinda, Madhusudana, etc.), the jīvas attain exceptional and exclusive

benefit.

Niyamitaḥ Smaraṇe na Kālaḥ:

As far as the fulfilment of desires for insignificant material sense enjoyment are concerned, there are rigid considerations regarding time, place, person, eligibility, etc. But the Lord, out of His mercy upon the jīvas, has not imposed any such considerations in regards to the chanting of the holy name. At all times and in any condition, one can chant the holy name of the Lord.

In this connection, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has said the following in the Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata (Madhya 28.28 ; and Madhya 23.78):

*"ki śayane, ki bhojane, kivā jāgaraṇe
ahirnaśa cinta kṛṣṇa, balaha vadane"*

"Whether sleeping, eating or waking—at all times— chant the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

"sarvakṣaṇa balaithe vidhi nāhi āra"

"There are no hard and fast rules for chanting the holy name of the Lord, so chant always."

It is further stated in the Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Antya 20.18):

*"khāite suite yathā tathā laya
kāla, deśa niyama nāhi, sarva sidhi haya"*

"The holy name may be chanted at any time, even while eating or sleeping. In this matter, there are no considerations of time and place. By chanting the holy name, one will attain all perfection."

Śrī Bhajana Rahasya Verses

Nija-sarva-śaktiḥ-tatrārpitā:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa has invested all potencies in His holy names, as stated in the Skanda Purāṇa:

*dāna-vrata-tapas-tīrtha-kṣetrādi-nāñca yāḥ stitāḥ
śaktayo devamahatāḥ sarva pāpa harāḥ śubhāḥ
rājasūyāśvamedhānām jñāna-syādhyātma vastunaḥ
ākṛṣya hariṇā sarvāḥ sthāpitāḥ sveṣu nāmasu*

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa invested all potencies in His holy names. Whatever potencies are to be found within the demigods to destroy sins or to bestow benedictions, as well as all potencies that are present within charity, vows, penances, holy places, the rājasūya and aśvamedha sacrifices, or knowledge of spiritual phenomena, have been assembled by the Supreme Lord and invested in His holy names."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has composed the following Bengali verse in this connection:

*"dharma-yajña-yoga-jñāne-yata śakti chila
saba hari-nāme kṛṣṇa svayaṁ samarpila"*

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa extracted all the potencies that are present in dharma, yajña, yoga, and jñāna, and conferred them upon His holy names."

Niyamitaḥ Smaraṇe Na Kālah:

There are no rules regarding the time for chanting and remembering such holy names of the Lord. In the chanting of the holy name, there are no considerations such as whether one is clean or unclean, purified or unpurified, or whether the occasion is timely or untimely. This is corroborated in the Vaiśvānara-saṁhitā:

*na deśa kāla niyame na śaucāśauca nirṇayaḥ
param saṅkīrtanād eva rāma rāmetimucyate*

"In the chanting of the holy name, there are no rules regarding time and place, nor are there any considerations of cleanliness or uncleanness. Simply by repeating the holy name 'Rāma, Rāma', all jīvas can obtain liberation from material existence."

Durdaivam-īdṛśamihājani-nānurāgaḥ:

But we are so unfortunate that we have not even the least attachment for Your holy name which bestows all benedictions. The characteristics of such misfortune (durdaiva) have been stated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.9.7):

*daivena te hatadhiyo bhavataḥ prasaṅgāt
sarvāśubhopaśamanād vimukhendriyā ye
kurvanti kāma-sukha-leśa-lavāya dīnā
lobhābhibhūta manaso 'kuśalāni śasvat*

"O Lord! By hearing, chanting, and remembering Your transcendental activities, all forms of misery and misfortune are driven away. Persons who are averse to such hearing and chanting continuously engage in inauspicious activities, being oppressed at heart with an obsession to enjoy worthless material sense gratification. They are unfortunate and bereft of all good sense."

Śloka Three

What is the process of chanting the holy name?

*tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

tṛṇād-*api sunīcena*—being completely free from materialistic pride, to consider oneself even lower and more worthless than insignificant grass which has been trampled beneath everyone's feet; *taror api sahiṣṇunā*—being more tolerant than a tree; *amāninā*—being prideless; *mānadena*—giving respect to others in accordance with their respective positions; *sadā hariḥ kīrtanīyaḥ*—always incessantly chant the holy name of Hari.

Translation

"Thinking oneself to be even lower and more worthless than insignificant grass which has been trampled beneath everyone's feet, being more tolerant than a tree, being prideless, and offering respect to all others as befits their respective positions, one should continuously chant the holy name of Lord Hari."

Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam

Four symptoms are observed in the devotee (*sādhaka*) who chants the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa free from all offenses: (1) natural humility born of complete detachment from material sense gratification, (2) pure compassion devoid of envy, (3) purity of heart free from false ego, and (4) an attitude of respect toward everyone as befits their respective positions.

(1) *Tṛṇād api sunīcena* (humbler than a blade of grass)

When the holy name of Lord Hari, which is the personification of *aprākṛta* (supramundane) *cinmaya* (consisting of spiritual existence) *rasa*, makes its appearance in the heart of the practicant devotee (*sādhaka*), his heart becomes overwhelmed and he begins to think thus:

“O, I am by nature infinitesimal consciousness (*aṇu caitanya*) and a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I have absolutely no use for mundane material objects. Alas! Alas! Due to my aversion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, I now find myself in a miserable plight. I have fallen into the cycle of repeated birth and death, and I am being scorched by various kinds of afflictions. By the mercy of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, I have now

understood that my indifference can be dissipated only by the practice (sādhana) of devotional service to the Supreme Lord. By becoming situated once again in my original constitutional identity (svarūpa), I can obtain love for the Supreme Lord (Bhagavat-prema). Therefore, until, by the grace of the Lord, I obtain release from material existence, I shall have to take support of the principle of yukta vairāgya and, while cultivating sambandha jñāna, accept only those things which are useful for the maintenance of life."

"Misery arising from poverty, disease, lamentation, old age, etc., as well as happiness arising from wealth, good health, strength, knowledge, etc. are all manifest reactions of previous activities (prārabdha karma). These I will certainly have to enjoy or suffer. Loss and gain, life and death, happiness and distress have nothing to do with spiritual reality (pāramārthika). Therefore, I have absolutely no use for these mundane subjects. Thinking in this way, I shall say with great humility:

"O Kṛṣṇa! O Gauracandra! O Lord of my life! When shall I obtain Your unadulterated service? Please be merciful upon this wretched and fallen soul, and accept me without delay.' Speaking in this way, I shall pass my days, somehow or other, living either at home or in the forest."

"Even though grass is a material object, its ego in respect to matter is natural and reasonable. But my ego in respect to the present subtle and gross material body is inappropriate, because, in reality, it is not related to my pure constitutional nature. The ego of grass is real, but my material ego is unreal. Therefore, it is only proper for me to become even lower than a blade of grass."

(2) Taror api sahiṣṇunā (more tolerant than a tree)

The meaning of the statement 'taror api sahiṣṇunā' is that the tree is so tolerant it does not neglect to offer its shade and sweet fruits even to the person who comes to cut it down. Because the devotee of Kṛṣṇa is even more merciful than the tree, he does good to all—both friend and enemy. This compassion, free from envy, is the second symptom of saintly persons engaged in the performance of Hari nāma kīrtana.

Persons who chant the holy name free from all offenses think as follows: "O Lord! My friends and associates, who are all among the group of conditioned souls, are very unfortunate. How may they obtain attachment for Your all auspicious holy name? Being blinded by the illusory energy, they are submerged in considerations of wife and children, wealth and property, victory and defeat, loss and gain, birth and death. They are filled with anarthas (unwanted things), and have not even the slightest detachment from mundane matter. They are bound by the stringent ropes of innumerable desires for sense enjoyment. At all times, they are busily engaged in seeking the fruit of karma and jñāna. The fruit of karma is the momentary happiness of material enjoyment available in this world or in the heavenly planets. This momentary happiness ultimately leads to suffering. The fruit of jñāna is liberation (mukti). How may the desire arise in such persons to perceive their actual form (ātmā svarūpa)?" Speaking thus, the sādhanika jīvas, being deeply moved with emotion, begin to sing in a very loud voice:

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatiḥ anyathā*

"In Kali yuga, there is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way, than chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name, chanting the holy name of Lord Hari."

(3) Amānī (freedom from false prestige)

The word 'amānī' indicates the third symptom of the sādḥaka engaged in the performance of kīrtana; namely, that he is freed from false ego. All egotism arising from yogic powers, material opulence, wealth, beauty, high birth, social status, strength, prestige, and high position associated with the gross and subtle body of the living entity who is bound by the illusory energy, is false and opposed to one's real identity. To be freed from such false designations is to be devoid of false ego (mithya abhimāna śūnyatā).

One who, in spite of possessing all these qualifications, is further ornamented with the qualities of tolerance and freedom from false ego is most competent to chant the holy name. Such a pure sādḥaka, completely renouncing the pride of being a brāhmaṇa householder, or the egotism of being a sannyāsi or ascetic in the renounced order of life, fixes his mind exclusively on the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and engages constantly in chanting the holy name of the Lord.

(4) Mānada

(offering all respect to others)

Lastly, the word 'mānada' indicates the fourth symptom of a sādḥaka engaged in the chanting of the holy name; namely, that he offers respect to everyone as is befitting their respective position. Understanding all living entities to be servants of Kṛṣṇa, they bear no attitude of malice or vengeance toward anyone. They please everyone with their sweet words and auspicious behaviour which are intended for the good of the entire world. They humbly offer respect as befits any individual's position, whether he be a qualified brāhmaṇa or other dignified person of this world, or whether he be an exalted demigod such as Brahmā, Rudra, etc. They pray to them for the awakening of devotional service to the Supreme Lord. In particular, they thoroughly and lovingly engage themselves in the service of the pure devotees of the Lord.

Thus Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana, performed with the four above mentioned symptoms, is the only method of attaining the topmost perfection of human life. This is the instruction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the incarnation who delivers the conditioned souls in Kali yuga (Kali Yuga Pāvanāvātārī).

Caitanya-Caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā, Ch.20.22-26):

*uttama hañā āpanāke māne tṛṇādḥama
dvi-prakāre sahiṣṇutā kare vṛkṣa-sama*

*vṛkṣa yena kātīleha kichu nā bolaya
śukāñā maileha kāre pānī nā māgaya*

*yei ye māgaye, tāre deya āpana-dhana
gharma-vṛṣṭi sahe, ānera karaye rakṣaṇa*

*uttana hañā vaiṣṇava habe nirabhimāna
jīve sammāna dibe jāni' 'kṛṣṇa'-adhiṣṭhāna*

*ei-mata hañā yei kṛṣṇa-nāma laya
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇe tānra upajaya*

"In spite of being very exalted, a chanter of the holy name considers himself to be even more worthless and contemptible than insignificant grass. He is as tolerant as a tree in two ways. Even at the time of being cut, a tree raises no protest. Although being dried up and on the verge of death, it will ask water from no one. Yet to anyone who requests something from it, the tree will offer its fruit, flowers, wood, bark, and sap-everything that it has. The tree, while personally tolerating all kinds of heat and rain, offers protection to others from the same hardships."

"Similarly, a Vaiṣṇava desires nothing for himself, but gives everything to others and offers them protection to the extent of giving them their constitutional occupation (svarūpagata dharma) of love of Kṛṣṇa. In spite of being the most elevated person, he is devoid of false ego. He offers respect to everyone as befits their position, knowing everyone to be the residence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Such a person is genuinely fit to chant the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. One who chants the holy name of the Lord, endowed with all such qualifications, is sure to obtain love of Kṛṣṇa."

Śikṣāṣṭakam: Song 3 (Gītāvalī)

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-kīrtane jadi mānasa tohāra
parama jatane tañhi labha adhikāra*

*tṛṇādhika hīna, dīna, akiñcana chāra
āpane mānabi sadā chāri ahaṅkāra*

*vṛkṣa- sama kṣamā-guṇa karabi sādhana
pratihimsā tyaji anye karabi pālana*

*jīvana-nirvāhe āne udvega nā dibe
para-upakāre nija-sukha pāsaribe*

*haile-o sarva-guṇe guṇī mahāśaya
pratiṣṭhāsā chāri kara amānī hṛdaya*

*kṛṣṇa-adhiṣṭhāna sarva-jībe jāni' sadā
karabi sammāna sabe ādare sarvadā*

*dainya, dayā, anye māna, pratiṣṭhā-varjana
cāri guṇe guṇī hai', karai kīrtana*

*bhaktivinoda kāṅdi', bale prabhu-pāya
hena adhikāra kabe dibe he āmāya*

"If you desire to chant the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then you must, with great endeavour, acquire proper qualification. Give up your false material ego and consider yourself to be more fallen and worthless than insignificant grass. Become as tolerant and forgiving as a tree. Abandon violence and the spirit of vengeance, and give protection and maintenance to all. For the maintenance of your own existence, do not create anxiety for anyone. Renounce your own happiness and work for the welfare of all others. Although you may be a repository of all good qualities, shun the aspiration to acquire reputation and prestige. Know all living entities to be the residence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and humbly offer respect to everyone as befits their position."

"Being thus possessed of four qualities-humility, compassion, respect for others and renunciation of the desire for personal prestige, chant the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Crying again and again, Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura offers the following prayer at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord: 'O my Lord! When will You bestow such qualification upon me to chant the holy name?'"

Vivṛti

By his constitutional nature, the jīva is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, whether residing in this world or in the spiritual world, the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the eternal dharma of the living entity. Hari nāma is both the means of attainment (upāya) as well as the object to be obtained (upeya) both for self-fulfillment (svārtha-siddhi) and for rendering benefit to others (paropakāra). Nothing else can compare with it. By the chanting of the holy name, all types of auspiciousness arise, both for oneself and for others. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, out of His mercy upon the living entities, composed the verse ṭṛṇādapi sunīcena in order to describe how the jīvas may chant the holy name free from nāmāparādha and nāmābhāsa.

Those who have no inclination at heart to serve Kṛṣṇa and who are intoxicated with material enjoyment can never acknowledge their insignificance. As far as material sense enjoyers are concerned, they have no perception of their insignificance. Tolerance is also absent from their character. They are ever unable to give up their false ego and material prestige. No material sense enjoyer is inclined to offer respect to another material sense enjoyer. Their nature is to be envious of one-another.

The nāma-bhajanānandī Vaiṣṇavas, on the other hand, are even humbler than a blade of grass; they are more tolerant than a tree; and, while remaining indifferent toward their own prestige, they are always eager to offer respect to others. In this material world, they alone are competent and able to chant the holy name of the

Lord constantly.

The respect which pure Vaiṣṇavas offer to their respective gurus and other Vaiṣṇavas is inspired by their innate propensity to honour others. This is known as svabhāvika mānada dharma. In order to enthuse their followers or dependents in bhajana, pure devotees display affection and encouragement toward them. This is done out of their natural pridelessness. This is known as amānī svabhāva. In other words the respect (sammāna), honor (gaurava), and affection (sneha), etc. that such devotees offer is due to the innate feeling of the heart. Pure devotees do not consider such affectionate words of appreciation to be cheap material flattery. Furthermore, by tolerating the taunting remarks of the foolish, they exhibit their quality of forbearance.

Pure devotees, constantly engaged in chanting the holy name, consider themselves to be even lower than the straw in the street that is trampled beneath the feet of all living entities in this world. They never think of themselves as gurus or Vaiṣṇavas. They consider themselves to be disciples of the entire world, and the most fallen and insignificant of all. Knowing every atom and every infinitesimal living entity to be the residence of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, they do not consider anything to be inferior to themselves. Devotees absorbed in chanting the holy name never desire nor request anything for themselves from anyone else in this world. Even if others bear malice toward them or commit violence, they never retaliate nor adopt a vengeful attitude; on the contrary, they pray to the Lord for the welfare of their tormentors.

The devotees who chant the holy name adorned with the above mentioned qualities never abandon the devotional process received from their guru in order to adopt new and divergent views. They do not fabricate concocted verses (padāvalī) and chant those in place of the Hari nāma mahā mantra. Remaining always under the guidance of their guru, they preach the glories of the holy name, write books based on pure devotional service, and engage themselves in Hari nāma bhajana and kīrtana.

In such activities, there is no transgression of Vaiṣṇava humility, for the devotee always considers himself to be low and fallen. He never tries to deceive others by making a false show of humility in order to acquire wealth or cheap adoration, for he knows that such false expressions and behavior are not illustrative of genuine humility.

The uttama mahā-bhāgavatas, while engaged in chanting the holy name of the Lord, never consider the moving and stationary entities within this material world to be items for their own enjoyment, rather they see this entire material world as favorable for the service of Kṛṣṇa and the devotees of Kṛṣṇa. In other words, they see everything in this world as related to Kṛṣṇa; they see all moving entities as servants of Kṛṣṇa and all non-moving entities as enjoyable by Kṛṣṇa.

They never think this material world to be for their own enjoyment, but for Kṛṣṇa's enjoyment. They never invent new mantras, giving up the chanting of the mahā-mantra which they obtained from their guru. They do not engage in propagating new theories and opinions.

To regard oneself as a guru of Vaiṣṇavas is contrary to the principle of humility. Those who do not listen to the instructions of Sikṣāṣṭaka set forth by Śrī Gaurasundara, who, being forgetful of their actual spiritual identity, become greedy for prestige and material gain in order to satisfy their senses, and who are anxious to obtain the status of Vaiṣṇava or guru can never chant the holy name of

the Lord. Even a sincere and faithful disciple cannot obtain qualification for hearing the holy name by hearing kīrtana performed by such persons. Therefore, considering oneself lower than the straw in the street, being more tolerant than a tree, being devoid of false prestige and offering all respect to others, one must chant the holy name of the Lord.

Śrī Bhajana Rahasya Verses

Kīrtaniyaḥ sadā Hariḥ:

Everyone should chant the holy name of the Lord at all times. This is stated in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as follows (2.1.11):

*etan nirvidyamānānām icchatām akutobhayam
yoginām nṛpa nirṇītaṁ harer nāmānukīrtanam*

"O King! It has been decided by previous ācāryas that whether one be an unalloyed devotee, thoroughly detached from material existence; whether one be desirous of elevation to the heavenly planets or liberation; or whether one be a self-satisfied (ātmārāma) yogi, one should in all cases hear, chant, and remember the transcendental name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Hari. These three activities are considered to be the supreme form of sādhana and sādhya."

(In other words, previous ācāryas have determined that these three activities are both the means of attaining perfection [sādhana] as well as the goal to be obtained by such practice [sādhya] for all types of persons.)

First of all, one must give up the bodily conception of life. This is stated in the Mukunda-mālā stotra (37):

*idam śarīraṁ śata-sandhi-jarjjaram
pataty-avaśyam pariṇām-peśalam
kim-auśadhiṁ pṛcchasi mūḍha durmate
nirāmayam kṛṣṇa-rasāyanam piba*

"O fool! O dull-headed creature! This constantly mutable body, which is afflicted by innumerable attachments, will surely perish one day. What medicine are you seeking to remedy this situation? Just incessantly drink the medicine of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which destroys even the disease of this material existence, the source of all other diseases."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has composed the following Bengali verse in this connection:

*śata-sandhi-jara-jara, tava ei kalevara,
patana haibe eka-dina
bhasma, krimi, viṣṭhā habe, sakalera gṛṇya
tabe, ihāte mamatā arvācīna
ore mana, śuna mora e satya-vacana
e rogera mahauśadhi, kṛṣṇa-nāma*

"Even if it remains for one hundred years, this gross material body will undoubtably perish one day. It will then transform into ashes, worms, and stool, and become most abominable to all. Therefore, to become attached to this body is certainly improper. O mind! Just listen to this instruction. The only remedy for this disease is to constantly hear, chant, and remember the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The elixir (rasāyana) of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only cure for all diseases."

Śloka Four What is the desire of the sādhakas?

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagadisa kamaye
mama janmani janmaniśvare
bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi*

He Jagadīśa ! aham dhanam na, janam na, sundarim kavitam va na kamaye—O Lord of the Universe! I do not desire wealth, followers such as wife, sons, relatives, etc., or mundane knowledge described in poetic language; mama janmani janmani—my only prayer is that in birth after birth; tvayi ahaituki bhaktih bhavatāt—may have unadulterated devotional service unto Your lotus feet.

Translation

"Hey Jagadīśa (O Lord of the Universe)! I do not desire wealth, followers such as wife, sons, friends and relatives; or mundane knowledge described in poetic language. O Lord of my life! My only desire is that in birth after birth I may have unadulterated devotional service unto Your lotus feet."

Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam

The sādhaka possessed of faith (śraddhālu) should first of all hear the holy name of Śrī Hari emanating from the mouth of his spiritual master. Thereafter, being freed from all offenses, he should chant the holy name with great faith. By chanting the holy name according to this method, the four symptoms mentioned in the previous śloka will manifest in his heart. Conversely, if the sādhaka does not give up all attachment to material sensual happiness, his pure constitutional identity (śuddha svarūpa) will not arise, and without the awakening of his pure identity, bhakti (the intrinsic nature of which is that it is predominated by the hlādinī potency) cannot be transformed into bhāva bhakti.

In consideration of this, the pure character of sādhana bhakti as regards Śrī nāma saṅkīrtana is being clearly described in two couplets ('na dhanam na janam' etc.) by positive and negative indication. The positive indication refers to the principal

characteristic of bhakti (svarūpa lakṣaṇa); namely, that it involves the cultivation of activities favorable to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (ānukūlyamaya Kṛṣṇa anuśilana). The negative indication refers to the two secondary or marginal characteristics of bhakti (taṭastha lakṣaṇa); namely, that all desires for anything other than bhakti are rejected (anyābhilāṣitā śūnya) and that bhakti should not be obscured by karma and jñāna, etc. (jñāna karmādy-anāvṛta). As long as the cultivation of activities favorable to Śrī Kṛṣṇa remains covered by ulterior desires (anyābhilāsa) and by karma, jñāna, yoga, etc., it does not reach the stage of śuddha or uttamā bhakti; rather, it remains as a mere shadow (ābhāsa) of bhakti.

In order to dissipate the shadow referred to here, the following instruction is being given—"Hey Jagadīśa (O Lord of the Universe)! I do not desire wealth (dhana), followers (jana), or beautiful poetry (sundarī kavita)." The word `dhana' refers to the wealth of religiosity (dharma) of those who are devoutly engaged in the performance of duties in varṇāśrama. It also refers to all varieties of desires for material enjoyment in this world and in the heavenly planets, and all paraphernalia for the enjoyment of the gross and subtle senses, such as wealth, property, etc.

The word `jana' refers to women, sons, servants, maidservants, subjects, friends and relatives. Real knowledge (vidyā) is that by which the intellect remains firmly situated at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. But the words `sundarī-kavitā' refer to ordinary knowledge related to mundane poetry. They do not refer to transcendental poetry in which is found essential knowledge concerning the Lord or descriptions of His pastimes.

Lord Caitanya, praying in the mood of a devotee, says: "I do not pray to you for all these things. My only prayer is that birth after birth I may have unmotivated devotional service (ahaituki bhakti) unto You Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who are the Lord of my life." Ahaituki bhakti is here defined as bhakti which is devoid of desires for material enjoyment (kāmanā-vāsanā rahit), which is fully transcendental in nature (cinmaya svabhāva yukta), which gives pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is pure (śuddhā), exclusive (kevalā), unmixed (amiśrā), and free from all material attachments (akiñcanā).

The endeavour to remove the miseries of material existence in the form of repeated birth and death is a matter beyond the ability of the living entities, for it depends exclusively on the will of the Lord. One's liberation from all miseries occurs automatically upon cessation of the cycle of birth and death which takes place by the will of the Lord. Therefore, what is the need of praying for the removal of such miseries, which is contrary to the principle of bhakti? Lord Caitanya thus prays:

"Until the cycle of birth and death is terminated by the will of the Lord, let Me have unmotivated devotional service unto the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord birth after birth, regardless of my material circumstances—this is my only prayer."

Śrī Caitanya-Caritamṛta (Antya-līlā 20.27,28,30–31):

*śuddha-bhakti' kṛṣṇa-ṭhāṇi māgite lāgilā
premera svabhāva—yāñhā premera sambandha*

sei māne,—'kṛṣṇe mora nāhi prema gandha'

dhana, jana nāhi māṅgo, kavita sundarī

*śuddha-bhakti' deha' more, kṛṣṇa kṛpā kari
ati-dainye punaḥ māṅge dāsyā-bhakti-dāna*

āpanāre kare saṁsārī jīva-abhimāna

"The Supreme Lord, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, considering Himself to be an ordinary conditioned soul, prays for pure devotional service unto the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The nature of prema is such that whoever possesses it begins to think that they have not even a trace of devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who is the very embodiment of prema, says: 'I do not want wealth, followers such as wife, sons, friends, relatives, etc., or mundane knowledge described in poetic language. O merciful Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa! May You display Your causeless mercy and bestow upon Me only Your unalloyed devotional service. I humbly and repeatedly beg the gift of devotional service at Your lotus feet.'"

Śikṣāṣṭakam: Song 4 (Gītāvalī)

*prabhu tava pada- juge mora nivedana
nāhi māṅgi deha-sukha, vidyā, dhana, jana*

*nāhi māṅgi svarga, āra mokṣa nāhi māṅgi
nā kari prārthanā kona vibhūtira lāgi'*

*nija-karma-guṇa-doṣe je je janma pāi
janme janme jena tava nāma-guṇa gāi*

*ei mātra āsā mama tomāra caraṇe
ahaitukī bhakti hṛde jāge anukṣaṇe*

*biṣaye je prīti ebe āchaye āmāra
sei-mata prīti hauk caraṇe tomāra*

*sampade vipade tāhā thākuka samabhāve
dine dine vṛddhi hauk nāmera prabhāve*

*paśu-pakṣī haye thāki svarge yā niraye
tava bhakti rahu bhaktivinoda -hṛdaye*

"O merciful Lord! This is my specific submission at Your lotus feet. I do not ask for bodily happiness, knowledge, wealth, followers, attainment of the heavenly planets, liberation from material existence, or any other such thing. I do not ask You for any kind of opulence or perfection. In whatever species I may take birth as a consequence of my good and evil deeds, may I continuously chant Your sweet names and describe Your transcendental qualities. In every birth, may unmotivated devotional service ever remain awakened within my heart—this is my only prayer at Your lotus feet."

"Let whatever attraction I presently have for material sense enjoyment be transformed into attraction and affection (prīti) for Your lotus feet. I pray not only that this affection for Your lotus feet remain unvarying in all circumstances of happiness and distress, but that day after day it continues to grow by the influence of the chanting of Your holy names. Wherever I take birth, be it in the animal species, in the heavenly planets, or in hell, may unmotivated devotional service ever grace the heart of this servant, Bhaktivinoda."

Vivṛti

"Hey Jagadīśa! I do not desire wealth, followers, or beautiful poetry (sundarī kavītā) adorned with literary embellishments (alankāra). You are my worshipable Lord birth after birth. My only desire is that I may remain engaged in unmotivated devotional service (ahaituki bhakti) unto Your lotus feet."

The word `sundarī kavītā' refers to material religiosity (dharma) described in the Vedas. The word `dhana' refers to wealth (artha) and `jana' refers to wife, children, family, and so on.

"Not only do I reject material enjoyment in the form of dharma, artha, and kāma, but I have no desire even for liberation from the cycle of repeated birth and death. I do not desire engagement in Your service in order to obtain the four Vedic goals (dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa). I desire only that I may serve You for Your own pleasure."

The devotee king Kulaśekhara also prays in this way:

*nāsthā dharme na vasunicaye naiva kāmopabhoge
yad yad bhavyam bhavatu bhagavan pūrva-karmānurūpam
etaḍ-prārthyam mama bahumatam janma-janmāntare 'pi
tvat-pādāmbhor-uhayugagatā niścalā bhaktir-astu
nāham vande padakamalayor-dvandvam-advandva-heto
kumbhīpākam gurum-āpi hare nārakam nāpanetum
ramyārāmāmṛdutanulatānandane nābhirantum
bhāve bhāve hṛdaya-bhavane bhāvayeyam bhavantam*

"O Lord! I have no faith in the institution of varṇāśrama dharma or temporary religious pursuits related to the body and mind. In other words, there is no possibility of deriving any benefit from such activities. Even if I were to attain sovereignty over this earth planet, I have no faith that any benefit could be had by that either. Neither do I desire material sense enjoyment. However many enjoyable items of sense gratification are to be found within this material existence, either on this earth planet or in the heavenly planets, I have no desire for any of them."

"Whatever reactions I am destined to suffer or enjoy for the activities of my previous life, let them come. It is not for this that I pray to Your lotus feet. My only prayer is that in birth after birth unflinching prema bhakti toward Your lotus feet may arise in my heart. I do not pray to you for the attainment of worldly happiness nor for relief from material distress. I do not pray for deliverance from the most dreadful hell known as Kumbhīpāka. I do not pray to enjoy the company of exquisitely beautiful heavenly damsels (apsarās) in the Nandana-kānana pleasure gardens of the heavenly planets. O my Lord! I pray only that prema

bhakti may arise in my heart toward Your lotus feet. In this life, and in birth after birth, let me meditate on the glories of Your lotus feet with great love, considering them as my all in all."

Persons possessing faith in the Vedas and who are desirous of routine religiosity (dharma) worship Sūrya (the sun-god); those who desire wealth worship Ganeśa; those who desire varieties of sensual enjoyment worship Śakti (Durgā); those who desire liberation worship Rudradeva (Śiva); and individuals whose devotion is mixed with the desire to enjoy the results of their activities (sakāma upāsana) worship Lord Viṣṇu. Consequently, they are also mixed devotees. Worship of these five personalities is known as Pañcopāsana. Pañcopāsana is sakāma upāsana (worship with material desires), whereas in the stage of niṣkāma (freedom from material desires), there is worship of nirguṇa-brahma. Lord Viṣṇu is worshipped purely by unmotivated devotional service (ahaituki bhakti).

Śrī Bhajana Rahasya Verses

Exclusive unmotivated devotional service (ekāntikī ahaitukī bhakti) is depicted in various places in the scriptures; as in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.2.14):

*tasmād ekena manasā bhagavān sātvatām patih
śrotavyaḥ kīrtitavyaś ca dhyeyaḥ pūjyaś ca nityadā*

The highest attainment to be achieved by humanity by perfect execution of one's prescribed duty [svadharma] within the categories of dharma, artha, and kāma [trivarga] is to please Śrī HHari.) "Therefore, with one-pointed attention, pure devotees, being devoid of all desires for dharma, artha, kāma, and mokṣa, should constantly hear about (śravaṇa), chant (kīrtana), remember (smaraṇa), and worship (japa-puja) the holy name, form, qualities, and pastimes of Śrī Hari, who is the protector of the devotees."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says in this connection:

*ananyabhāvete kara śravaṇa-kīrtana
nāma-rūpa-guṇa-dhyāna-kṛṣṇa-ārādhana
saṅge saṅge anarthanāśera yatna kara
bhakti-latā phala-dāna karibe satvara*

"One should hear and chant about the transcendental name, form, qualities, pastimes, and associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with undivided attention. Simultaneously, one should worship Kṛṣṇa in all respects. One should endeavour to eliminate all anarthas. Only then can the creeper of devotional service (bhakti latā) quickly bear fruit."

The devotee has no desire to attain the heavenly planets, Brahmaloaka, sovereignty over the entire earth, rulership of Rasātala, or the eight or eighteen mystic yoga siddhis. All these things are worthless to him. This is confirmed in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (6.11.25):

*na nāka-prṣṭham na ca pārameṣṭhyam
na sārvaḥmaṇam na rasādhipatyam*

*na yogasiddhīr apunar-bhavaṁ vā
samañjasa tvā virahayya kāṅkṣe*

(Śrī Vṛtrāsura is praying to the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān.) "O Lord, who are the abode of all auspiciousness! I have no desire to attain Dhruvaloka, Brahmaloḥka, or sovereignty over the earth. I do not desire the eight mystic siddhis (such as aṇimā, mahimā, etc.), the nine priceless jewels of Kuvera (the Padma, Mahāpadma, Śaṅkha, Makara, Kacchapa, Kunda, Mukunda, Nīla, and Kharva), nor even mokṣa, if I have to give up Your service."

The symptoms of advancement in ahaituki bhakti are given in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.2.42):

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika ekakālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syu
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣudapāyo 'nughāsam*

"With each morsel of food that a person engaged in eating takes, three effects are simultaneously accomplished: he obtains satisfaction, filling of the stomach, and cessation of hunger. Similarly, surrendered souls engaged in the performance of bhajana simultaneously experience three effects: the awakening of bhakti aiming at prema, direct manifestation of the Lord's beloved form, and detachment from material objects."

One should endeavor to attain to the status of pure, unmotivated devotional service (śuddha ahaituki bhakti). This is stated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (1.5.18):

*tasyaiva hetoḥ prayateta kovidō
na labhyate yad bhramatām uparyadhaḥ
tal labhyate duḥkhavad anyataḥ sukham
kālena sarvatra gabhīra raṁhasā*

"As misery is obtained without any endeavour, happiness will also come of its own accord in due course of time. Therefore, intelligent persons do not endeavour even slightly for dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa, and so forth. They endeavor only for the wealth of bhakti which is the rarest commodity to be obtained within the fourteen planetary systems."

Śloka Five

What is the constitutional identity(svarūpa) of the sādḥaka?

*ayi nanda-tanūja kiṅkaram
patitam mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūli-sadṛṣam vicintaya*

ayi nandanūja—O Son of Nanda Maharaja; viṣame-bhavāmbudhau—in the dreadful ocean of material existence; patitam kiṅkaram mām kṛpaya—being

merciful upon me, your eternal servant fallen (in); tava pāda-paṅkaja-sthita-dhūli-saḍṛśam—like a particle of dust affixed to Your lotus feet (in other words as your eternally purchased servant); vīcintaya—please consider.

Translation

“O son of Nanda Mahārāja! Please be merciful upon me, your eternal servant, fallen in the dreadful ocean of material existence as a result of my fruitive actions. Like a particle of dust affixed to Your lotus feet, kindly accept me forever as your purchased servant.”

Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam

Is it proper for the sādḥaka who has taken up the process of chanting the holy name to reflect upon the miseries of material existence? To solve this apprehension, Śrī Gaurasundara has set forth the verse mentioned above (`ayi nanda tanūja').

"O son of Nanda Mahārāja! In reality, I am Your eternal servant. But now I have fallen into this dreadful ocean of material existence as a result of my own misdeeds. Lust (kāma), anger (krodha), and envy (matsartā), etc. are like crocodiles with ferocious mouths standing erect, ready to swallow me up. Drifting here and there in the waves of wicked hopes and misplaced anxieties, I am severely oppressed. The powerful blasts of wind in the form of bad association cause still greater anxiety. In such a condition, I have no shelter other than You."

"Karma, jñāna, yoga, austerity, and so on are like bunches of straw that are seen floating here and there. But has anyone succeeded in crossing the ocean of material existence by taking shelter of them? Sometimes persons drowning in the ocean of material existence grab hold of these bunches of straw and pull them down along with them. Now there is no refuge other than Your mercy. Your holy name alone is the only sturdy boat, taking shelter of which, the jīva can easily cross the ocean of material existence. Considering all this, I have taken shelter of the very firm boat of Your holy name by the causeless mercy of the lotus feet of my spiritual master. You are very affectionate to the surrendered souls. Please forgive all the faults of this person, who is without any other shelter, and consider me as a particle of dust at Your lotus feet, for then I shall never be separate from Your lotus feet."

This is the purport of the above mentioned verse. It is to be understood from this that the sādḥaka must completely renounce the desire for material enjoyment and liberation.

Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta (Antya līlā 20.33-35):

*tomāra nityadāsa mui tomā pāsariyā
paḍiyāchoṅ bhavārṇave māyābaddha haṅga*

*kṛpā kari kara more pada-dhūli sama
tomāra sevaka karoṅ tomāra sevana*

*punaḥ ati utkaṅṭhā dainya haila udgam
kṛṣṇa ṭhaṇi māge prema nāma saṅkīrtana*

"O my Lord! I am Your eternal servant. Owing to great misfortune, I have abandoned You. Being bound by māyā, I am drowning in the bottomless ocean of material existence. Kindly accept me as a particle of dust at Your lotus feet. I shall become Your servant and eternally engage in Your service.' Speaking in this way, great longing welled up within the heart of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In a very humble mood, He again began to pray to awaken love for the chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa."

Śikṣāṣṭakam: Song 5 (Gītāvalī)

*anādi karama phale paḍi bhavārṇave jale
tarivāre nā dekhi upāya
e viṣaya halāhale divāniṣi hiyā
mana kabhu sukha nāhi pāya*

*āśā pāśa śata-śata kleśa deya avirata
pravṛtti urmira tahe khelā
kāma krodha ādi chaya bātpāḍe deya bhaya
avasāna haila āsi belā*

*jñāna karma ṭhaga dui more pratāriyā lai
avaśeṣe phele sindhu jale
e hena samaye bandhu tumi kṛṣṇa kṛpā sindhu
kṛpā kari tole more bale*

*patita kiṅkare dhari pāda padma dhūli kari
deha bhaktivinode āśraya
āmi tava nitya dāsa bhuliyā māyāra pāśa
baddha ha'ye āchi dayāmaya*

"O supremely merciful Lord Kṛṣṇa! I am drowning in the bottomless ocean of material existence as a consequence of my fruitive activities, which are without beginning. I can see no means of crossing this ocean. My heart is being scorched with the deadly poison of sense gratification. My mind is greatly perturbed. I am continuously troubled, being bound by the stringent ropes of unlimited lusty desires. I am being tossed here and there, struck by the violent crashing of the waves of material nature. My life duration is dwindling and death is approaching. Lust, anger, illusion, envy, greed, and madness are like six thieves which have pounced upon me. Karma (fruitive activities) and jñāna (mental speculation) are like two robbers who have cheated me and thrown me into a bottomless ocean."

"O ocean of mercy! At such a time of formidable distress, You are the only friend. O Kṛṣṇa! You are very merciful. Kindly deliver me. I am Your eternal servant. I have forgotten You and thus become tightly bound by the illusory energy. Please accept this fallen servant Bhaktivinoda, and fix me as a particle of

dust at Your lotus feet."

Vivṛti

Śrī Nandanandana is the worshipable object for all living entities. Eternal servitorship to Lord Kṛṣṇa is inherent within the pure spiritual identity (svarūpa) of every jīva. The jīva, having become indifferent to the sense of servitorship toward Lord Kṛṣṇa, is drowning again and again in the insurmountable and fearful ocean of material existence. On this account, he is tormented by the three-fold miseries of material life. In this situation, the jīva's only support is the mercy of the Lord. If Śrī Kṛṣṇa, out of His causeless mercy, accepts the jīva as a particle of dust at His lotus feet, then the jīva's covered identity and eternal disposition of servitorship to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, can become manifest once again.

The attempt to attain the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by one's own endeavour is called 'ārohapantha'. Kṛṣṇa cannot be obtained by this method. Only upon surrendering unto Lord Kṛṣṇa can the jīva obtain the service of the Lord by His will and mercy. Endowed with such firm faith, one should engage in the process of sādhana and bhajana. The word 'pada dhūli' (a dust particle at the feet of the Lord) indicates the jīva's eternal identity as an infinitesimal part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa (vibhinnāṁśa).

As long as the jīva is not situated in his svarūpa, anarthas are inevitable. In such a condition, ascertainment of the ultimate goal remains ambiguous. Pure chanting of the holy name begins upon the awakening of sambandha jñāna, and only by such pure chanting is prema obtained. When, by continuous chanting of śuddha nāma, rati (which is a combination of the samvit and hlādinī potencies of the Lord's svarūpa śakti) toward the lotus feet of the Lord is awakened in the heart of the jīva, he is then known as a jāta rati bhakta (a devotee in whom rati or bhāva has manifested).

There is a difference between the chanting of an ajāta rati sādhanaka (one in whom rati is not manifest) and a jāta rati bhāvuka bhakta. To deceitfully present oneself as a jāta rati bhakta before having attained to such a stage is completely inappropriate. After anartha nivṛtti, one becomes situated in 'naivantarya', or uninterrupted steadiness in the practice of sādhana (śravaṇa, kīrtana, etc.). Next, one attains 'svecchā-pūrvikā' which means meditation on the pastimes of the Lord by one's own will. This is an advanced stage of remembrance of the Lord which comes in the stage of asakti. This is followed by the condition known as 'svārasikī' when the pastimes of the Lord automatically manifest in one's heart as an uninterrupted flow (this comes in the stage of bhāva after śuddha sattva manifests in the heart). At last one comes to the stage of Kṛṣṇa prema.

Śrī Bhajana Rahasya Verses

When bhāva manifests in the heart of the sādhanaka, then dāsya rati is easily awakened. The dāsya rati mentioned here is general. It refers to the natural inborn inclination to serve Kṛṣṇa. Without the manifestation of bhāva, one's service to Kṛṣṇa is artificial. But when śuddha sattva manifests in the heart, then one naturally wants to serve Kṛṣṇa with full expression of the heart. This is supported

in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (6.11.24):

*aham haretava pādaika-mūla
dāsānudāso bhavitāsmi bhūyaḥ
manaḥ smaretāsu-pater guṇāms te
grṇita vāk karma karotu kāyaḥ*

"O Lord Hari! Will I again be able to become a servant of Your servants who have taken exclusive shelter at Your lotus feet? O Lord of my life, I pray that my heart (antakarkGHhkarāṇa) may always be engaged in remembering Your transcendental glories, my words in describing Your qualities, and my body in varieties of service to You."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura then says:

*chinu tava nitya-dāsa, gale bāndhi māyā-pāśa,
samsāre pāinu nānā-kleśa
eve punaḥ kari āśa, haṇa tava dāser dāsa, bhaji
pāi tava bhakti-leśa*

*prāṇeśvara ! tava guṇa, smaruk mana punaḥ
punaḥ, tava nāma jihvā karuk gāna
karadvaya tava karma, kariyā labhuk śarma,
tava pade sampinu parāṇa*

"I am your eternal servant, but due to my own misfortune, I have forgotten You. Consequently, māyā has captured me and, binding me in her chains, she has cast me down into this material atmosphere. I have been wandering here and there in this material existence and rotating through thousands and millions of different species of life. I am being crushed by varieties of different miseries. Now in the association of the Vaiṣṇavas, my intelligence has become aroused. Now the only aspiration in my heart is that I may become a servant of the servant of Your servants. By engaging in Your service, may I obtain a particle of bhakti?"

"O Lord of my life! Let my mind be constantly engaged in remembering Your transcendental glories and attributes; let my tongue be always engaged in chanting Your holy name, form, qualities, and pastimes; let my two hands be engaged in various types of service to You. I shall thus taste the bliss of service to You. My entire being is offered at Your lotus feet."

By his constitutional nature, the jīva is meant to be enjoyed (bhogyā), whereas Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme enjoyer (bhoktā). Therefore, by continuous practice of bhajana, an ardent desire will arise in the heart to become a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā who is the embodiment of transcendental bliss (ānandamayī). At that time, gopī bhāva, or the loving sentiment exhibited by the gopīs, awakens in his heart. This is confirmed in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.29.38):

*tannaḥ prasīda vṛjinārdana te 'nghri mūlam
prāptā visṛjya vasatīs-tvad-ūpāsanaśāḥ
tvat-sundara-smita nirīkṣaṇa tivrakāma
taptātmanām puruṣa-bhūṣaṇa dehi dāsyam*

The gopīs say, "With a desire to serve You, we have abandoned our families and household and come to Your lotus feet. You are very merciful. Kindly bestow upon us qualification to serve Your lotus feet. O jewel among men! Our hearts are burning with desire. Please grant us the vision of Your sweet smiling lotus face and accept us as Your maidservants."

The necessity of taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā is expressed in the following statement from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

*anārādhya rādhāpadāmbhoja reṇu
manāsritya vṛndātavīm tat padānkām
asambhāṣya-tadbhāva gambhīra cittān
kutaḥ śyām-sindho rasasyāvagāhaḥ*

"If you have never worshipped the dust of the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā or the land of Vraja which is marked with the impressions of Her lotus feet, or have not served the lotus feet of those devotees who taste the profound loving sentiments of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, how can you become immersed in the blackish ocean of nectar known as Śyāma-sindhu rasa?"

Attainment of the service of the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the one and only goal of the bhāvuka bhaktas. This is exhibited in the eighth verse of Vilāpa Kusumāñjali:

*devi duḥkha kula-sāgarodare
dūyamāna mati durgataṁ janam
tvat kṛpā pravala naukayādbhutaṁ
prāpaya svapadapañkajālayam*

"Hey Śrīmatī Rādhike! O You who are adept in amorous sports! I am drowning in an unlimited ocean of horrible miseries. I am severely oppressed and shelterless. Kindly place me on the infallible boat of Your causeless mercy and guide me to the shelter of Your lotus feet."

Comment

Those who taste rasa are called rasika, and those who taste bhāva are called bhāvuka. The gopīs and Kṛṣṇa are both rasika and bhāvuka. When viśuddha sattva, or in other words bhāva descends from the gopīs upon those who are in the stage of sādhana (sādhana-vastha), they attain svarūpa siddhi (perception of their sthāyi bhāva), but they have not yet attained their siddha deha. At that stage they are known as bhāvuka bhaktas. When by further advancement, the sthāyi bhāva mixes with the elements of vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika bhāva and vyabhicārī bhāva and one is able to taste bhakti rasa, instigated by hearing the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then one is called a rasika.

Just like in rāsa-līlā, Kṛṣṇa is dancing and all the gopīs are dancing. Kṛṣṇa is continuously taking cups of rasa and giving them to the gopīs—they are rasika, and those hearing all these things, who are drinking unlimited cups of that rasa

within their hearts—they are also rasika and bhāvuka. Those who meditate upon and remember the bhāva exchanged between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, or that which is found in the gopīs, the sakhas, or in vātsalya, are called bhāvuka. Bhāva is the spiritual emotion of the ātmā; it is not of this bodily heart.

For example, Kṛṣṇa is addressing Śrīmatī Rādhikā. "Who are You? How have You come here (at Govardhana or Rādhā-kuṇḍa)? Why are You stealing all my flowers and breaking all my creepers which are very dear to me? Then Śrīmatī stopped, turned toward Kṛṣṇa, and without saying a word, She glared at Him with an angry mood. What does this mean? Although She said nothing, Her look expressed everything. This is bhāva. What bhāva? "Are You are a thief, or am I a thief? You are a thief, so don't accuse me in this way." She did not say this, but everything was expressed in Her gaze. ·

Those devotees who have accepted the servitorship of Śrīmatī Rādhikā constantly engage in saṅkīrtana that is intently focused on Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is stated in Śrī Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi (259):

*dhyāyam staṁ śikhi piccha mauli
manīsam tannāma saṅkīrtayan
nityam taccaraṇy ambujam paricaran
tan mantra varjyam japan
śrī rādhā pada dāsyam eva
paramābhīṣṭam hṛdā dhārayan
karhi syām tad-anugraheṇa
paramādbhutānurāgotsvavaḥ*

"By constant meditation upon Śrī Kṛṣṇa whose head is bedecked with a peacock feather, by chanting His sweet holy names, by serving His lotus feet, and by chanting the mahā-mantra, we anxiously aspire to obtain the service of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhājī. By constantly thinking in this way and by Her causeless mercy, a deep spontaneous attachment (anurāga) will awaken toward Her lotus feet."

Śloka Six

What are the external symptoms of perfection?

*nayanam galad āsru dhārayā
vadanam gadgada ruddhayā girā
pulkair nīcitam vapuḥ kadā
tava nāma grahaṇe bhaviṣyati*

(O my Lord!) tava nāma grahaṇe—at the time of chanting Your holy name; mama—my; nayanam galad āsru dhārayā—my eyes by streams of tears; vadanam gadgada ruddhayā girā—my mouth by a choked voice; vapuḥ pulkaiḥ nīcitam—and all the limbs of my body by rows of hair standing erect due to ecstasy; kadā bhaviṣyati—when will be pervaded?

Translation

O Lord! When will my eyes be filled with a stream of tears? When will my voice choke up? And when will the hairs of my body stand erect in ecstasy as I chant Your holy name.

Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam

In the five previous ślokaś the systematic development of param dharma has been described. Param dharma refers to the unfolding of the eternal constitutional identity of the jīva, which takes place through the medium of devotional service predominated by the hlādinī potency of the Lord. This systematic development (as referred to in Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 1.4.15-16) begins with śraddhā (faith).

Faith leads one to associate with saintly persons (sādhu saṅga). In their association one begins to practice the nine-fold path of devotional service consisting of śravaṇa (hearing), kīrtana (chanting), smaraṇa (remembering), pāda sevana (serving the lotus feet of the Lord), arcana (worship of the Lord in the temple), vandana (offering prayers), dāsyā (servitude), sakhya (friendship), and ātma nivedana (full surrender of the self). By execution of these items, one attains self-realization (ātma svarūpa), as a result of which, all unwanted things (anarthas) in the form of ignorance are destroyed. Thereafter, one attains niṣṭhā (steadiness), ruci (taste), āsakti (attachment for the Lord), and finally bhāva arises.

Upon the attainment of bhāva, devotional service attains to its pure identity which is now unbreakable. Bhāva is also called rati. It is regarded as the sprout (ankura) of prema. Prema is the fully blossomed state of bhakti. Of the various items of devotional service, such as śravaṇa, kīrtana, etc., practiced in the stage of sādhana bhakti, chanting of the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in particular becomes intensified in the stage of bhāva bhakti.

Nine characteristics of bhāva:

In the stage of bhāva, the following nine symptoms (anubhāvas) become manifest (as described in Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 1.3.25-26): (1) kṣānti—even though a cause for agitation may be present, the devotee's heart remains unagitated, (2) avyārtha kālatva—a devotee does not waste time in activities that are not directed toward the cultivation of bhakti, (3) virakti—detachment from the objects of sense enjoyment, (4) māna śūnyatā—pridelessness, (5) āśā bandha—a firm hope of attaining the Supreme Lord, (6) utkaṅṭhā—intense longing for the Lord, (7) nāma gāne sadā ruci—ever relishing a strong taste to chant the holy name, (8) āsaktiś tad guṇākhyāne—attachment for hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord, and (9) pritiś tad vasati sthale—love for the places of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

Constitutional nature of bhāva:

In the Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (1.3.1) it is stated: "Śuddha sattva viśeṣātmā

prema sūryāṁśu sāmyabhāk rucibhiś citta māśṛṇya kṛd asau bhāva ucyaṭe." When the heart becomes melted by ruci, or in other words, an intense longing to attain the Lord, then what was previously sādhana bhakti, is called bhāva bhakti. The primary characteristic of bhāva is that it is a phenomena constituted entirely of viśuddha sattva (unalloyed goodness), and as such it is compared to a ray (kīraṇa) of the sun of prema bhakti. The conclusion established by this verse is that bhāva bhakti or rati is the sprout (ankura) of prema and an atom (paramāṇu) of prema.

In its initial stage, prema is called bhāva. In that stage, various transformations of ecstasy arising from viśuddha sattva (sāttvika bhāvas) such as tears, standing of the hairs of the body on end, etc., are observed to a very slight extent. In the status of bhāva, while meditating on the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, tears begin to flow from the eyes. According to the statements of the Tantra and Padma Purāṇa (as quoted in Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 1.3.2–3), the anubhāvas and sāttvika bhāvas, which manifest very powerfully in the stage of prema, are visible to a slight extent in the stage of bhāva.

Anubhāvas of bhāva bhakti:

The external transformations or symptoms which illustrate the emotions that are experienced within the heart are called anubhāvas. The anubhāvas are thirteen in number as described in Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (2.2.2): (1) nṛtyam (dancing), (2) viluṭhitam (rolling on the ground), (3) gītam (singing), (4) krośanam (loud crying), (5) tanu moṭanam (writhing of the body), (6) huṅkāro (roaring), (7) jṛmbhaṇam (yawning), (8) śvāsa bhūmā (breathing heavily), (9) lokānapekṣitā (neglecting others), (10) lālāśrāva (drooling), (11) aṭṭahāsa (loud laughter), (12) ghūrṇā (staggering about), and (13) hikkā (a fit of hiccups).

Sāttvika bhāvas of bhāva bhakti:

The transformations of ecstasy arising from sattva (sāttvika bhāvas) are eight in number as described in Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (2.3.16): (1) stambha (becoming stunned), (2) sveda (perspiration), (3) romāñca (standing of the hairs on end), (4) svarabheda (faltering of the voice), (5) kampa (trembling), (6) vaivarṇya (loss of color), (7) āśru (tears), and (8) pralaya (all activity is arrested and one loses consciousness). Out of all these symptoms, dancing, singing, tears, standing of the hairs on end, and faltering of the voice are especially observed in the stage of bhāva. The crest jewel of instructors, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, just to indicate this condition of bhāva has said:

"Hey Kṛṣṇa! Hey Nanda-nandana! When will streams of tears flow from my eyes while chanting Your holy name? When will my throat become choked up due to a faltering voice? And when will the hairs of my body stand on end due to ecstasy? O Lord! Please be merciful so that all these symptoms will arise in me as soon as possible while chanting Your holy name."

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Antya Līlā 20.37):

*prema dhana bina vyartha daridra jivana
dāsa kari vetana more deha prema dhana*

"Without the wealth of love of God (prema-dhana), this wretched life is useless. O Lord! Please accept Me as Your servant and let my only remuneration be the development of love of God."

Śikṣāṣṭakam: Song 6 (Gītāvalī)

*aparādha phale mama,
citta bhela vajra sama
tuyā nāme nā labhe vikāra
hatāśa haiyā hari,
tava nāma ucca kari
baḍa duḥkhe ḍāki bāra bāra*

*dīna dayāmaya karuṇā nidāna
bhāva bindu dei rākhaha parāṇa
kabe tava nāma uccāraṇe mora
nayane jharaba dara dara lora*

*gadgada svara kaṇṭhe upajaba
mukhe bola ādha ādha bahirāba
pulake bharaba śarīra hāmāra
sveda kampa stambha habe bārabāra*

*vivarṇa śarīre hārāyaba jñāna
nāma samāśraye dharabūm parāṇa
milaba hamāra kiye aiche dina
rovaye bhaktivinoda matihīna*

"As a result of my offenses, my heart has become as hard as a thunderbolt. It does not melt even slightly, even while I chant Your holy name. O Lord! Now I am feeling very despondent. Being very aggrieved with distress, I am calling Your name again and again. You are very merciful. Kindly give me just a single drop of bhāva and save my agitated life."

"When will that auspicious day arrive, when upon chanting Your holy name, a stream of tears will flow from my eyes? When will my throat become choked up, causing me to stammer over my words? When will the hairs of my body stand erect due to ecstasy? When will I become soaked with perspiration? When will the limbs of my body begin to tremble? O Lord! When will my body become stunned? Becoming overwhelmed with bhāva, when will my color fade, and when at last will I lose all consciousness? Regaining my consciousness once again, I will maintain this life simply by taking shelter of Your holy name. Crying incessantly, this Bhaktivinoda, who is devoid of all intelligence, says, "Will there ever be such a day for this unfortunate soul?"

Vivṛti

"Hey Gopījanavallabha (O beloved of the gopis)! When will a stream of tears lovingly flow from the eyes of this gopī while chanting Your holy name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end due to ecstasy? When will I be overtaken by such a condition?"

This prayer is an example of *lālasāmayī vijñapti*. The word *vijñapti* means a kind of entreaty or submissive prayer. These have been described to be of three kinds: *samprārthanātmikā* (a prayer with whole-hearted submission of mind, body and everything to the Lord. This is a prayer for the awakening of *rati* or *bhāva* in one in whom it is not yet aroused), *dainnyavodhikā* (making known one's insignificance and worthlessness), and *lālasāmayī* (this kind of prayer applies only to one in whom *rati* has already been awakened. *Lālasā* means intense yearning. After *rati* manifests in the heart, an intense yearning will come to serve the Lord in a particular manner in accordance with one's *sthāyī bhāva*. This is a prayer to obtain that service for which one always hankers). Another example of *lālasāmayī vijñapti* is given in the *Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.156):

*kadāhaṁ yamunā-tīre nāmāni tava kīrtayan
udvāspah puṇḍarīkākṣa racayiṣyāmi tāṇḍavam*

(Nārada Muni addresses the Lord as follows) "Hey Puṇḍarīkākṣa (O lotus-eyed Lord Kṛṣṇa)! While chanting Your holy name on the bank of the Yamunā, when will my throat choke up and my voice stammer with ecstasy? When will I become absorbed in deep spiritual sentiment and dance just like a madman not caring for outsiders?"

In regards to the secondary names of the Lord (*gauṇa nāma*), such as Brahma, Paramātmā, Īśvara, Jagannātha, and so on, there is no possibility of chanting with any expression of *prema* (*prema-nāma*). Only in the chanting of the principal names of the Lord (*mukhya nāma*), such as Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Rāma, etc. can expressions of *prema* be aroused. Therefore, Śrī Gaurasundara has said: *śrutamapyaupaniṣadam dūre hari-kathāmṛtāt yanna santi dravac-citta-kampāśrupulakādayaḥ*- "The subject of the Upaniṣads is far removed from the nectarean topics of Lord Hari (Hari-kathāmṛta). Therefore, they are unable to melt the heart and cause one to experience ecstatic trembling, tears, and standing of the hairs of the body on end."

Comment

When anyone chants the *gauṇa nāma* there will be no expression of *prema* because they have no *līlā*. But when one chants the *mukhya nāma* and remembers Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the *gopīs*, a special kind of *prema* comes. Then he automatically forgets his body and everything. Sometimes he rolls on the ground, sometimes cries, sometimes, laughs, dances, or sings. This can not take place when one chants *gauṇa nāma* because there is no *līlā* and no mercy expression. When you chant Yaśodā-nandana, "Hāsi Yaśodā tanaya prasidha," so many expressions are coming. But, when you chant "Īśvara." Nothing will come. .

The subject of Brahman which has been described in the Upaniṣads is far removed from the nectarean topics of Lord Hari. When there is a discussion of Hari-kathā, the heart may become melted giving rise to the eight sāttvika bhāvas such as shedding of tears, trembling of the bodily limbs, standing of the hairs on end, etc. This verse does not refer to those who shed tears very easily due to natural unsteadiness of the heart such as is appropriate for women, nor does it apply to those who make a show of such symptoms without actually being situated in rati or bhāva. Such a display is known as bhāvābhāsa; it is not śuddha bhakti.

But when the pure jīvātmā becomes spontaneously inclined to the service of the Lord, unfavorable attitudes (pratikūla bhāva) no longer arise in his anukūla mind and body. At such a time, the heart naturally melts and the sāttvika bhāvas and bodily transformations of ecstasy are displayed in pure devotees who are liberated from all anarthas.

Those of weak faith (komal śraddhā) deceive others by imitating the behaviour of mahā-bhāgavatas and pretentiously displaying so-called symptoms of ecstasy. The emotion displayed by such imitative and deceptive practice is thoroughly opposed to the awakening of śuddha bhakti. By following in the footsteps of pure devotees and by continuous engagement in bhakti, all these spiritual emotions will arise automatically in the pure devotee in whom rati has been awakened.

Śrī Bhajana Rahasya Verses

The following references from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.3.30-31) show the necessity of performing ardent practice of nāma bhajana and kīrtana in the association of pure devotees in order to develop bhakti which is possessed of the characteristics of rati:

*parasparānu-kathanam
pāvanam bhagavad-yaśaHhḥ*

*mitho ratir-mithas-tuṣṭir-
nivṛttir-mitha ātmanaḥ*

*smarantaḥ smārayantaś ca
mitho 'ghaughā haram harim
bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā
bibhraty-utpulkām tanum*

"In the association of pure devotees, there is constant chanting and discussion of the glories of the Lord's transcendental pastimes (līlā-kathā), which are by nature purifying and productive of the highest virtue. By such association there will be three effects: the feelings of mutual affection and love between devotees will be increased, mutual happiness will be experienced, and devotees will help each other to become free from all material attachments and distress. All this is learnt in the association of devotees."

"In this way devotees constantly remember Lord Hari, who destroys all sins. They also cause the remembrance of the Lord to appear within each others hearts.

Thus by prema bhakti awakened through sādhana bhakti (bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā), they always remain engaged in thinking about the Lord and exhibit transcendental symptoms of ecstasy in their bodies such as standing of the hairs on end."

In this connection, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has composed the following verse:

*bhakta-gaṇa paraspara kṛṣṇa kathā gāya
tāhe rati, tuṣṭi, sukha paraspara pāya
hari smṛti nije kare, anyere karāya
sādhane ukila bhāve pulakāśru pāya*

"Devotees constantly hear and chant the topics concerning Lord Kṛṣṇa among themselves. They become intently absorbed in such discussions, and derive mutual satisfaction and happiness. They themselves remember the pastimes of the Lord and cause others to do the same. At the time of performing such sādhana, the eight sāttvika bhāvas, such as tears, and standing of the hairs on end, as well as the vyabhicārī bhāvas all become manifest." This is confirmed in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.3.32):

*kvacid-rudanty acyuta cintayā kvacid-
vasanti nandanti vadanty alaukikāḥ
nṛtyanti gāyanty anuśīlayanty ajam
bhavanti tuṣṇīm pārametya nirvṛtāḥ*

"Thereafter, having obtained freedom from the misconception of identifying the self with the body, they are distinguished from ordinary worldly persons by their deep absorption in constant remembrance of the Lord in the stage characterised by consummated endeavours (ceṣṭā-śīla) for bhakti (in other words, in the stage of bhāva). In this condition, they sometimes cry, sometimes laugh, sometimes become delighted, sometimes speak out to the Lord, sometimes dance, sometimes sing, and sometimes enact the transcendental pastimes of Lord Hari. Thereafter, having obtained the personal audience of the Lord they become peaceful and silent."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says in this connection:

*bhāvodaye kabhu kānde kṛṣṇa cintā phale
hāse ānandita haya, alaukika-bole
nāce gāya, kṛṣṇa-ālocane sukha pāya
līlā-anubhave haya, tuṣṇīmbhūta prāya*

"After the awakening of bhāva within the heart, when one becomes deeply absorbed in thinking of Kṛṣṇa, sometimes tears come to the eyes, sometimes one laughs, sometimes one becomes overjoyed with deep ecstasy, sometimes one speaks in an extraordinary manner unrelated to this world, sometimes one dances or sings, sometimes one experiences great happiness by a direct perception of Kṛṣṇa, and sometimes one becomes silent at heart by witnessing the pastimes of the Lord."

At that time their love toward the places which are dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is observed.

This is stated in the following verse from Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (1.2.156):

*kadāhaṁ yamunā-tīre nāmāni tava kīrtayan
udvāṣpaḥ puṇḍarīkākṣa racayiṣyāmi tāṇḍavam*

(Nārada Muni addresses the Lord as follows) "Hey Puṇḍarīkākṣa (O lotus-eyed Lord Kṛṣṇa)! When, on the bank of the Yamunā, will my throat become choked up with ecstasy as I chant Your holy names, and when will I dance just like a madman not caring for outsiders?"

Śloka Seven What are the internal symptoms of perfection?

*yugāyitam nimeṣeṇa
cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitam
śūnyāyitam jagat sarvam
govinda virahaṇa me*

govinda virahaṇa—in separation from Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa; me—my; nimeṣeṇa—even a moment; yugāyitam—it seems like a millenium; cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitam—tears are falling from my eyes like torrents of rain; sarvam jagat śūnyāyitam— this entire world seems void to me.

Translation

"Hey Sakhi! In separation from Govinda, even a moment seems like a millenium to me; tears begin to flow from eyes like torents of rain; and this entire world appears to be void."

Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam

When bhakti attains to the stage of rati, as described in the previous śloka, the sthāyī bhāva (or in other words, the permanent emotion in one of the five transcendental relationships with Śrī Kṛṣṇa) becomes clearly manifest. When the sthāyī bhāva mixes with the other four bhāvas—vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika bhāva, and vyabhicārī bhāva—it is transformed into bhakti rasa. In that state the anubhāvas and sāttvika bhāvas of bhakti are fully exhibited. In Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (1.4.1) Srila Rupa Gosvami, establishes the definition of prema in the following words:

*samyam masṛñitasvānto
mamattvātīṣayāṅkitaḥ
bhāva sa eva sāndrātmā
budhaiḥ premā nigadyate*

"Bhāva bhakti which melts the heart much more thoroughly than in its beginning stage thus making it completely soft, which produces supreme exultation of transcendental bliss, and which gives rise to a very deep sense of possessiveness (mamatā) in relationship to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called prema by learned persons."

(The term `mamatā' here refers to the sense of possessiveness by which one thinks, "Kṛṣṇa is my master, Kṛṣṇa is my friend, Kṛṣṇa is my son, or Kṛṣṇa is my lover." It is a characteristic trait of the four higher rasas only.)

According to the philosophical conclusion of this verse, bhāva bhakti which is fully matured owing to the upsurge of a very powerful sense of possessiveness (mamatā) in relationship to Śrī Kṛṣṇa should be understood to be prema.

In Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (2.5.115–116) it is described that in accordance with the five kinds of principal relationships exchanged between the viṣaya (the object of prema—Śrī Kṛṣṇa) and the āśraya (the receptacle of prema—the devotee), there are five principal rasas (mukhya rasa)—shānta, dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya, and madhura. According to the difference of the secondary relationships, there are seven secondary rasas (gauṇa rasa)—hāsya (laughter), adbhuta (astonishment), karuṇa (tragedy), vīra (chivalry), raudra (anger), bhayānaka (dread), and bībhatsa (ghastliness). Of the five types of mukhya rasa, madhura rasa is the highest. As the intensity of madhura rasa increases, it is transformed into prema, praṇaya, māna, sneha, rāga, anurāga, bhāva, and mahābhāva.

Development of prema from rati to mahābhāva:

Kṛṣṇa rati which is predominated simply by ullāsa (elation) is called śānta rasa. The prominent features of śānta rasa are attachment to Brahman and indifference toward all else, including the other rasas. When Prema is augmented due to the appearance of a strong sense of possessiveness (mamatā) in relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is called dāsya rasa. On the appearance of dāsya rasa, prīti or affection is so deep, that even though there may be sufficient cause to bring about a break in affection, it is not influenced even slightly.

When prema is possessed of even greater faith in the object of worship it is called praṇaya. This praṇaya is the essence of sakhya rasa. When praṇaya is present, there is an absence of awe and reverence even toward qualified persons. In its mature condition, praṇaya assumes a crooked nature due to excessively developed affection. This surprising and unusual state is called `māna'. When māna is present, the Lord Himself is compelled to appease the devotee, just to savour the loving sentiment of the devotee who is overcome with anger aroused by their lover's quarrel.

When prema is very deep and melts the heart to an abundant extent, it is called sneha. When sneha arises, it is marked by a great profusion of tears. In sneha, the devotee's ardent desire to see the Lord is never diminished. Although Śrī Kṛṣṇa is supremely competent, the devotee becomes apprehensive that some harm may come to Him. These two symptoms are observed in the vātsalya rasa.

Sneha which is possessed of an intense longing is called rāga. Upon the appearance of rāga, even a moment's separation is intolerable, whereas in meeting, great sorrow appears like happiness. The complete opposite of this situation is

found in separation (i.e. great happiness becomes a source of unbearable distress). This rāga causes its worshipable object to be experienced as eternally fresh, and being ever increasingly fresh itself, it is transformed into anurāga.

Upon the appearance of anurāga, the sentiment, exchanged between lover and beloved, of having been brought under one another's control is tremendously increased. Prema Vaicitrya (variegated love) is a division of vipralambha which comes in anurāga. It begins to manifest as the desire to take birth as inanimate objects (aprāṇī) that are connected to Śrī Kṛṣṇa (an example of this is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's desire to take birth as a bamboo rod so that She could become a bamboo rod flute and thus drink the nectar of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lips). Another aspect of prema Vaicitrya is that, even though separated from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the beloved begins to see Kṛṣṇa everywhere, as if He were directly before Her.

When anurāga becomes matchless and filled with astonishment, it obtains a state of complete madness (unmāda) and is called mahābhāva. In the state of mahābhāva, when the devotee is in the Lord's association, even a moment's obstruction in seeing the Lord due to the blinking of the eyes is intolerable. Similarly, a day of Brahmā (a kalpa) appears to be but a moment. Conversely, when the devotee is separated from the Lord, even a moment appears to be like an entire kalpa. In the state of mahābhāva, both in union and in separation, the sāttvika bhāvas, sañcārī bhāvas and other symptoms of ecstasy are displayed to their fullest extent.

In this one śloka, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has very concisely expressed the essence of the systematic development of prema through its various stages, as has been described by Jīva Gosvāmī in the Prīti Sandarbha. In particular, He has described the fully developed and radiant prema of the Gopīs (ujjala madhura prema).

Comment

It may be noted that the order of the stages of prema that is given by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī in the Prīti Sandarbha differs slightly from that which is given by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi. In Prīti Sandarbha the order is given as rati, praṇaya, māna, sneha, rāga, anurāga, bhāva, and mahābhāva; whereas in Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi it is given as rati, sneha, māna, praṇaya, rāga, anurāga, bhāva, and mahābhāva. There is no contradiction between these two different lists because sometimes the order of sneha, māna, and praṇaya is reversed in accordance with different rasas. .

The word `yugāyitam' (appearing like a millenium) is simple and straight-forward. The phrase `govinda virahaṇa' expresses the attitude of separation from the Lord. As mentioned in Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu (3.5.25), self-realized rasika devotees have described various divisions of vipralambha (love in separation), such as pūrva rāga (love in separation experienced between lovers who have not yet met), māna (anger which prevents a loving couple from meeting each other), and pravāsa (separation due to living at a distant place), etc. Nonetheless, the esoteric mystery implied in this verse of Lord Caitanya is that the sādḥaka jīva who is still within the world of matter is only fit to taste love in separation (vipralambha) in the condition of pūrva rāga.

Comment

It is essential for the sādḥaka jīvas to cultivate only the mood of vipralambha, and because they have never experienced meeting with Kṛṣṇa, their vipralambha will come only in the category of pūrva rāga. But without having ever met with Kṛṣṇa, how can they experience separation in pūrva rāga from Him?

By hearing the līlā-kathā of Śrī Kṛṣṇa from others, pūrva rāga is awakened. This was the case with the dvīja-patnīs as well as the ladies of Mathurā previous to Kṛṣṇa's arrival there. Rukmiṇī also had never seen Kṛṣṇa, but by hearing about Him from Śrī Nārada, pūrva rāga arose within her heart. Thus she became exceedingly anxious to meet with Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, by hearing from the guru and Vaiṣṇavas or by reading the śāstras, the jīvas may have pūrva rāga vipralambha awakened within their hearts. The jīvas have qualification only up to this extent because they have never experienced meeting with Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the other types of vipralambha such as māna and pravāsa are not possible for them. ·

Separation (viraha) is said to be of ten kinds: (1) cintā (anxious consideration), (2) jāgarāṇa (sleeplessness), (3) udvega (agitation), (4) tānava kṛśatā (emaciation of the body), (5) malināṅgatā (discoloring of the limbs of the body), (6) pralāpa (incoherent speech), (7) vyādhi (being stricken with a tormenting ailment), (8) unmāda (madness), (9) moha (bewilderment), and (10) mṛtyu (death) or mūrccā (unconsciousness).

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Antya Līlā 20.40-41):

*udvege divasa nā jāya, kṣaṇa haila yuga-sam
varṣāra megha-prāya aśru varṣe nayana
govinda virahe śūnya haila tribhuvana
tuṣānale poḍe-jena nā jāya jīvana*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, absorbed in intense feelings of separation in the ecstasy of mahābhāva, speaks as follows:

"Hey sakhi! On account of agitation caused by separation from the son of Mahārāja Nanda, I am unable to tolerate the passing of time. Each and every moment appears to be like an entire millenium (yuga). Tears are flowing incessantly from my eyes just like torrents of rain from the clouds. Now I simply can not tolerate separation from Govinda. This entire universe appears as if void. My body is always burning in the fire of separation as if my limbs had been bound by straw and set ablaze. Yet I remain alive. What am I to do now?"

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam: Song 7—in four parts (Gītāvalī)

(7-a)

gāite gāite nāma ki daśā haila

*kṛṣṇa nitya dāsa mui hṛdaye sphurila
jānilāma māyā pāṣe e jaḍa jagate
govinda virahe duḥkha pāi nānā mate
āra je saṁsāra mora nāhi lāge bhāla
kahān jāi kṛṣṇa heri e cintā viśāla
kāndite kāndite mora āṅkhi variṣaya
varṣā dhārā hena cakṣe haila udaya
nimeṣa haila mora śata yuga sama
govinda viraha āra sahite akṣama*

"While repeatedly chanting the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I was overtaken with a most astonishing condition. The realization that I am the eternal servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa began to manifest within my heart. Having become averse to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, I am firmly held in the dreadful grip of māyā. Thus I am suffering from various kinds of miseries in this material world."

"Now this material world no longer holds any attraction for me. Where shall I go now? What shall I do? Where will I meet Śrī Kṛṣṇa? Without seeing Him, I can get no relief. This has become a great anxiety. As I cry repeatedly, the tears are flowing from my eyes in an incessant downpour, like rains falling from the clouds in the monsoon season. In separation from Lord Govinda, a single moment appears like hundreds of milleniums (yugas). O Sakhi! Now I simply can not tolerate separation from Lord Govinda."

(7-b)

*śūnya dharātala, caudike dekhiye,
parāṇa udāsa haya
ki kari ki kari, sthira nāhi haya,
jīvana nāhika raya
vraja vāsī gaṇa, mora prāṇa rākha,
dekhāo śrī rādhānāthe
bhaktivinoda, minatī māniyā,
laohe tāhāre sāthe
śrī kṛṣṇa viraha āra sahite nā pāri
parāṇa chāḍite āra din dūi cāri*

"Now this entire universe seems void, and my life has become gloomy. Where shall I go? What shall I do? I am unable to attain any sense of calm. My vital air (prāṇa) is on the verge of quitting this body. O residents of Vṛāja dhāma! Give me a glimpse of Śrī Rādhānātha and save my life. Please hear the prayer of this Bhaktivinoda and take him along with you. Otherwise I cannot tolerate separation from Kṛṣṇa anymore. In two or four days at the most, I shall give up my life."

(7-c)

*gāite govinda nāma upajila bhāva grāma
dekhilāma yamunāra kūle
vṛṣabhānu sūtā saṅge, śyāma naṭavara raṅge,*

*bānsurī bājāya nīpa mūle
dekhīyā yugala dhana, asthira haila mana,
jñāna hārā hailu takhana
kata kṣaṇa nāhi jāni, jñāna lābha haila māni
āra nāhi bhela darāṣana*

"When I began to chant the holy name of Śrī Govinda in a loud voice, various symptoms of ecstasy began to manifest in my body. Suddenly, I saw the beautiful shore of the Yamunā. In a charming and lush green grove beneath a kadamba tree, naṭavara (the best of dancers) Śyāmasundara, displaying HiHiHis graceful three-fold bending form (tribhaṅga-lalita), was playing the flute accompanied by the daughter of Mahārāja Vṛṣabhānu. Seeing the matchless divine couple, I could not remain steady. I lost consciousness and fell upon the ground. How long I lay in that condition, I do not know. When I awoke, I looked here and there. But in spite of searching for a long time, I was unable to obtain their darśana."

(7-d)

*sakhi go! kemane dhariba parāna
nimeṣa haila yugera samāna
śrāvaṇera dhārā, āṅkhi variṣaya,
sūnya bhela dharātala
govinda virahe, prāṇa nāhi rahe,
kemane bāñciba bala
bhakativinoda, asthira haiyā,
punaḥ nāmāśraya kari
ḍāke rādhānātha, diyā darāṣana,
prāṇa rākha, nahe mari*

"Now this entire universe has begun to appear void. Streams of tears flow from my eyes like torrents of rain during the month of Śrāvaṇa. The life air within this body has become very restless and agitated. I feel that my life is about to come to an end—how shall I go on? In separation from the divine couple, a single moment appears like hundreds of milleniums. Deeply agitated, this Bhaktivinoda chants the holy name again and loudly cries, 'Hey Rādhānātha (O Lord of Rādhā), Hey Kṛṣṇa-Prāṇapriye (O dearly beloved of Kṛṣṇa)! Please give me Your audience and save my life. Otherwise, I will surely perish.'"

Vivṛti

"Hey Govinda! In separation from You, this entire universe seems void to me. A stream of tears is incessantly flowing from my eyes like torrents of rain during the monsoon season; a moment (nimeṣa) appears like a millenium (yuga)."

This is a very nice example of vipralambha rasa. For jāta-rati bhaktas, it is absolutely essential that one seek to experience vipralambha rasa, without concern for sambhoga (meeting with the Lord). This śloka has been cited in order to demonstrate this point.

Feelings of separation which are experienced in material relationships are simply

full of misery, whereas in aprākṛta vipralambha rasa, one experiences complete paramānanda even though externally it appears like intense suffering. Therefore, it has been said regarding the separation of a Vaiṣṇava: yata dekha vaiṣṇavera vyavahāra duḥkha, niścaya jānio sei parānanda sukha—"Although the feelings of separation experienced by a Vaiṣṇava appear like ordinary distress, you should understand that for him they are nothing but transcendental bliss." Vipralambha rasa always gives nourishment to sambhoga.

In the condition known as prema-vaicitrya, which comes under the heading of vipralambha, sambhoga or meeting with the Lord is present in the external perception. In this condition, although one is directly in the Lord's presence (sambhoga), one feels intense separation (vipralambha) due to the fear of being separated from the Lord. Due to the intense remembrance of the Lord that takes place when the devotee experiences vipralambha, there is no possibility of forgetting the Lord for even a moment. This stage is the culmination point of all bhajana.

The group known as gaura-nāgarī, who are not genuine followers of Lord Kṛṣṇa, make a licentious display of sambhoga rasa. Due their negligence of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they simply create obstacles to the development of aprākṛta rasa. Those who aspire for sambhoga (sambhogavādīs) always endeavour for the selfish satisfaction of their own senses. Therefore, they are devoid of Kṛṣṇa bhakti.

In the Caitanya-Caritāmṛta, Adi-līlā (4.165) it is said: ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā-tāre bali kāma, kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare prema nāma—"The desire to gratify one's own senses is kāma (lust), but the desire to please the senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa is prema (love)." If the gaura-nāgarīs understood the meaning of this verse, they would not endeavour to present Lord Caitanya as nāgara (the enjoyer) and themselves as nāgarī (the enjoyed) which is based solely on the consideration of personal sense gratification. One should abandon this and perform bhagavat bhajana purely under the guidance of Vaiṣṇavas.

The confidential secret of Śrī Gaurāṅga līlā is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, accepting the bhāva of an āśraya-tattva (a receptacle of loving sentiments or in other words a devotee), is always situated in the mood of vipralambha. The fullest display of the sentiment of the āśraya-tattva jīva, who is seeking to give nourishment to sambhoga rasa, culminates in the mood of vipralambha. In order to demonstrate this, Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested His eternal Gaura svarūpa who is the embodiment of vipralambha rasa. From this it can be concluded that the misplaced endeavours of those who aspire for sambhoga can never become successful.

Śrī Bhajana Rahasya Verses

The following verse from Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Karṇāmṛta (41) is an example of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's pralāpa (incoherent speech or speech filled with lamentation) instigated by feelings of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa:

*amūnyadhanyāni dinānta rāṇi hare
tvad-ālokanamantareṇa
anātha bandho karuṇaika sindho hā
hanta hā hanta katham nayāmi*

"Hey Anātha-bandho (friend of the destitute), Hey Hare, Hey Karuṇā-sindho (ocean of mercy)! Alas, alas! How can I bear the passing of these miserable days and nights, being bereft of Your association?"

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has composed the following verse in this connection:

*nā heriye tava mukha, hṛdaye dāruṇa
duḥkha dīna bandho karuṇā sāgara
e adhanya divāṇiṣi, kemane kātābe dāsī,
upāya balaha ataḥ para*

"Being bereft of Your association, my heart is filled with unbearable distress. O friend of the poor, O ocean of mercy! How shall I pass these miserable days and nights? I am Your maidservant. Therefore, please tell me immediately what am I to do about this?"

The following verse from Padyāvalī (400) is a statement of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī which illustrates Śrī Rādhā's bhāvocchvāsa (a deep outburst of feeling which expresses the bhāva or spiritual sentiment which is hidden in Her heart. There are many different instances of this. The one mentioned here is instigated by feelings of separation. In the references from Bhajana-Rahasya given in text 8, there is a statement from Kṛṣṇa-Karnāmṛta which shows an example of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's bhāvocchvāsa instigated by meeting with Kṛṣṇa. See the comment given there for further explanation of bhāvocchvāsa):

*ayi dīnadayārdranātha, he
mathurānātha, kadāvalokyase
hṛdayam tvad-aloka kātaram
dayita bhrāmyati kim karomy aham*

"Hey Dīna-dayārdranātha (compassionate Lord of the helpless), Hey Mathurānātha (Lord of Mathurā)! When will I obtain Your darśana? Being bereft of Your association, my heart has become greatly agitated and unsteady. Hey Dayita (dearly beloved)! What shall I do now?"

The following verse from Ujjvala-nīlamanī (15.167) describes ten conditions which arise due to separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa and which thus promote the state of bhāvonmāda (a kind of divine madness which comes in the stage of mahābhāva) in Śrīmatī Rādhikā:

*cintātra jāgarodvegau tānavam malināṅgatā
pralāpo vyādhirunmādo moho mṛtyur-daśa daśa*

"There are ten conditions which arise in sudūr pravāsa vipralambha (separation due to living at a distant place). These conditions are as follows: (1) cintā (anxious consideration), (2) jāgaraṇa (sleeplessness), (3) udvega (agitation), (4) tānava kṣatā (emaciation of the body), (5) malināṅgatā (discoloring of the limbs of the body), (6) pralāpa (incoherent speech), (7) vyādhi (being stricken with a tormenting ailment), (8) unmāda (madness), (9) moha (bewilderment), and (10) mṛtyu (death) or mūrccā (unconsciousness)." When Śrī Rādhikā is stricken with these ten conditions due to separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Her distress knows no

boundary.

Śloka Eight Steadiness in perfection

*āśliṣya vā pāda ratām pinaṣtu mām
adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampāṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ*

saḥ lampāṭaḥ—that debauchee, who mixes with other women; pādaratām mām—Me, (a maidservant) attached to the service of His lotus feet; āśliṣya—let Him delight (Me) by a deep embrace; vā pinaṣtu—or let Him crush (Me); vā adarśanāt—or by not being visible; marma hatām karotu—breaking (My) heart, let Him inflict anguish; yathā tathā vā vidadhātu—or let Him do as HeHe likes, let Him even enjoy conjugal sports with other lovers; tu eva—nonetheless (he); mat prāṇa nāthaḥ—the Lord of My life; paraḥ na—there is no one other than Him.

Translation

"Let that debauchee (Kṛṣṇa) delight this maidservant who is attached to the service of His lotus feet by tightly embracing Me. Or let Him trample Me, or break my heart by not being present before Me. He may do whatever He likes. Even if He sports with other lovers directly in front of Me, He is nonetheless, the Lord of My life. There is no one other than Him."

Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam

In this verse we are acquainted with the mental condition of the jīva, upon attainment of the status of prema. "That crest jewel of debauchees may delight this maidservant who is attached to the service of His lotus feet by tightly embracing Me. Or He may trample Me, or break my heart by not being present before Me. He may do whatever He likes. Even if He sports with other lovers directly in front of me, HeJHe is nonetheless, the Lord of My life. There is no one other than Him." This characteristic of one-pointed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa is also demonstrated in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (11.29.34):

*martyo yadā tyakta-samasta-karmā
niveditātmā vicikīrṣito me
tadāmṛtatvaṁ pratipadyamāno
mayātma-bhūyāya ca kalpate vai*

"When mortal beings abandon all fruitive activities and surrender themselves fully unto Me, I become desirous of bestowing some special benediction upon them. At that time, I give them the nectar of immortality and promote them to the status of My dear eternal associates."

From this characteristic it is understood that in the stage of prema, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only life, wealth, and soul of the devotee. In that condition, the perfection of religion (param dharma) is fully exhibited in the form of the mutual attraction between the Lord and the devotee. In the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (7.5.14), Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja has said:

*yathā bhrāmyaty ayo brahman
svayam ākarṣa sannidhau
tathā me bhidyate cetaś
cakra pāṇer yadṛcchayā*

"Just as iron is automatically attracted toward a magnet, similarly, by the irresistible force of the Lord's willing potency (icchā śakti), my consciousness has become released from this mundane existence and forcibly attracted to the Lord, who carries the discus in His hand."

This statement supports the idea that the mutual relationship between the infinitesimal living entity (anu caitanya jīva) and the all pervading Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa (vibhu caitanya) is a natural and eternal function (svābhāvika dharma). When the living entity becomes indifferent to the Lord, this natural function practically disappears. But when, by some great fortune, the nature of the living entity becomes cleansed and purified, this eternally established (pūrva-siddha) natural function of the jīva's relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes manifest once again.

At such a time, the attraction of the living entity for the Lord is exactly like the attraction of clean iron for a magnet. Consequently, the sole purpose of religion is to reveal the eternally established (pūrva-siddha), natural function (svābhāvika dharma) of the jīva's relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Religion has no purpose other than this. Therefore, it should be understood that the pure living entity who is engaged in the devotional service of the Lord aiming at pure love of God is completely devoid of the desire for any other result.

In Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.32.22), Kṛṣṇa Himself has given support to this in the following words:

*na pāraye 'ham niravadya-samyujām
svasādhu-kṛtyam vivudhāyuṣāpi vaḥ
yā mābhajan durjara-geha-śṛṅkhalāḥ
samvṛścya tad vaḥ pratiyātu sādhunā*

"My beloved gopīs! For My sake, you have broken the bonds of household life, which even great jñānīs and yogīs are unable to break. Your meeting with Me is completely pure and faultless. Although I possess an immortal body and eternal existence, it will not be possible for Me to repay your love, service, and renunciation, even if I endeavour for all eternity. I will remain in your debt birth after birth. You may liberate Me from this debt by your own gentle nature and by your love. Nonetheless, I will remain indebted to you."

By this statement of the Lord it is proved that the true outcome of the devotee's love is that Kṛṣṇa becomes pleased. In other words, the devotees have a complete absence of desire for their own happiness. They serve Kṛṣṇa, offer their love to

Him, and meet with Him. The sole purpose of whatever they do is to please Kṛṣṇa.

In reality, the agony spoken of in the verse by use of the words 'marma hatām'—making me broken hearted by not being present before me—is not the cause of distress, but of supreme happiness. In order to substantiate this Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.32.21):

*evam mad-arthojjhita-loka-veda-svānām
hi vo mayy anuvṛttaye 'balāḥ
mayā parokṣam bhajatā tirohitam māsūyitum
mārhattha tat priyam priyāḥ*

"O beloved gopīs! There is no doubt that for My sake, you abandoned social conventions, Vedic regulations, and even your family relationships. Even in such trying circumstances, your minds have not strayed even slightly. You have not been concerned for your own beauty or the happiness of your marital relationships; your minds have remained fixed on Me. Therefore, unknown to you, I concealed myself from you out of love. Therefore do not find fault with My love. You are all beloved to Me, and I am beloved to you."

Another important point spoken of in this verse is that in the statement, 'delighting me by Your embrace' there is not even a trace of desire for personal happiness. The purport of this statement is that the devotee simply wants to offer his love to Kṛṣṇa, and to bring happiness to Him. Therefore this statement is very appealing. It is in complete conformity with the nature of prema and the conclusions of the scripture.

Significance of Śrī Śikṣāṣṭāka as related through the life and experience of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

The glory of this Śikṣāṣṭakam will now be summarized. What is the greatness of the transcendental love of Śrīmatī Rādhikā who is the personification of the internal potency (svarūpa śakti)? What is the extraordinary sweetness of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa which She tastes through Her love? And what is the indescribable happiness which She experiences when She tastes the sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa? The Supreme Absolute truth Śrī Kṛṣṇa, desiring to fulfill these three inner longings, assumes the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Deeply absorbed in the mood of munificence (audārya), He eternally performs unlimited pastimes in Śrī Navadvīpa Dhāma, which is situated in a special section of Vaikuṅṭha named Goloka. There in the seat of His eternal transcendental pastimes (nitya līlā pīṭha) He tastes these three sentiments.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Candra, united with the bodily complexion and sentiment of Śrī Rādhā, appears in this universe only once in a day of Brahmā in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He appeared just recently on the sacred banks of the Bhāgīrathī (Gaṅgā) within the Nadia district of West Bengal, in Śrī Navadvīpa-Māyāpura, which is non-different from Śrī Vṛndāvana. He appeared in the year 1486 (1542 of the Indian calendar), on a Sunday at dusk of the full moon night of the month of Phālgunī (February-March) during a lunar eclipse. At that time, due to the lunar eclipse, the entire town vibrated the melodious sound of Hari Nāma saṅkīrtana.

Lord Caitanya's father's name was Paṇḍita Śrī Jagannātha Mīśra, and His mother's name was Śrīmatī Śacī Devī. By His transcendental pastimes, enacted at different stages of life, He inundated the entire land of Gauḍa (Gauḍa Bhūmi) with transcendental bliss. In childhood, He displayed His childlike mischievousness, and occasionally demonstrated astonishing superhuman pastimes. In boyhood, He was emersed in the pastimes of education and study. In youth, He was married according to the regulations of scripture and set an ideal example of how to execute the duties of householder life (gṛhastha dharma). It was at this time also that He began to discourse on the principles of bhakti.

Thereafter, He travelled to Gayā, and accepted initiation into the ten-syllable Gopāla mantra from Śrī Īśvara Purī, who was the foremost mendicant of the Madhva sampradāya. By doing so, He instructed all living entities about their duty to take shelter of the lotus feet of a bonafide spiritual master, as it is indicated in the revealed scriptures. Returning from Gayā, He submerged all of Gauḍa Bhūmi in the flow of the river of bhakti, by performing Śrī aHHHari Nāma saṅkīrtana in the company of His devotees. At the age of twenty four, He abandoned householder life for good, and accepted the renounced order of life (sannyāsa) from Śrī Keśava Bhāratī, who was in the line of Śāṅkara.

Afterwards, on the pretext of going for pilgrimage, He spent six years travelling throughout Bengal, Orissa, South India, Mahārāṣṭra, Uttar Pradesh (Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, Prayāga, Kāśī), and Bihār (Kanhai Nātaśālā, Rāja Mahala). During His travels, He delighted millions of people by bestowing upon them love for the holy name. Everywhere He went, He propagated pure devotional service unto the Supreme Lord. He refuted various kinds of faulty doctrines held by dogmatists opposed to the principles of scripture. He clearly established His own doctrine which was based on the principle of acintya bhedābheda tattva (inconceivable oneness and difference), the essence of all conclusions of the four Vaiṣṇava sampradāyas.

Thereafter, He remained in Śrī Jagannātha Purī continuously for eighteen years. In order to fulfill His three inner longings, He tasted the nectar of prema in the company of His eternal associates. He sent His influential preachers of pure devotional service all over and, in this way, caused His pure doctrine to be propagated by them. Thus He submerged all of India in the flow of Kṛṣṇa prema.

In the meantime, He empowered the hearts of His eternal associates like Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda, Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa, Śrī Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Śrī Jīva, Kavi Karṇapura, and others. He caused many jewels of transcendental literature to be composed by them, and thus gave nourishment to His own ideals.

That very same Śrī Gaurāṅga Deva Himself composed the Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka, which is filled with all the conclusions regarding devotional service, and instructed it to persons of all different levels of qualification. He often tasted the nectarine essence of this Śikṣāṣṭaka in a secluded place in the company of His two most confidential associates, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāya Rāmānanda. This description is found in Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta and other literatures.

In this way, by His pastimes as an ideal devotional householder, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Gaurāṅga Deva instructed all householders devoted to the performance of their prescribed duties (svadharmā) about the proper execution of family life. Likewise, by His pastimes as a sannyāsi, He instructed all

renunciants, showing them an ideal example of renunciation combined with the highest devotional sentiment. The glory of this Śikṣāṣṭaka is unlimited.

Benediction for the readers of Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka:

Faithful persons who, with great devotion, read and study this Śikṣāṣṭaka, which emanated from the lotus mouth of Śrī Gaurāṅga Deva, will become infatuated with greed to taste the honey from the lotus feet of Śrī Gaura Sundara. Moreover, they will be submerged in the reservoir of prema for Murāri Śrī Kṛṣṇa Candra. Four hundred and one years after the appearance of Lord Gaurāṅga, this commentary of Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka named Sanmodana Bhāṣya has been composed by me— Kedāranātha Bhaktivinoda.

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's concluding words to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's commentary

For pure rasika Vaiṣṇavas who taste madhura rasa, this Śikṣāṣṭaka is the essence of all the Vedas. Because it emanated from the lotus mouth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, it is an essential truth (mahā vākya). Therefore, all fortunate persons, making this Śikṣāṣṭaka a necklace with which to adorn their necks, should read, study, and worship it daily, as a matter of discipline.

The greatly merciful eternal associate of Śrī Śrī Gaurāṅga, Śrīmad Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura composed the commentary of Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka known as Sanmodana Bhāṣya. Its Hindi translation is now concluded. .

Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Antya Līlā 20.48–52):

*āmi kṛṣṇa-pada dāsī, teṅho rasa sukha-rāśi,
āliṅgiyā kare ātma-sātha
kivā nā dena darasana, nā jāne āmāra tanu mana,
tabu teṅho mora prāṇa-nātha*

*sakhi he, suna mora manera-niścaya
kivā anurāga kare, kivā duḥkha diyā māre,
mora prāṇeśvara kṛṣṇa anya naya*

*chāḍi anya nārī-gaṇa, mora vaśa tanu mana,
mora saubhāgya prakāṭa kariyā
tā 'sabāre dena pīḍā, āmā sane kare krīḍā,
sei nārī-gaṇe dekhāiyā*

*kivā teṅho lampāṭa, śaṭha dhrṣṭa sakapāṭa,
anya nārī-gaṇa kare sātha
more dite manaḥ pīḍā, mora āge kare krīḍā,
tabu teṅho mora prāṇa-nātha*

*nā gaṇi āpana duḥkha, sabe vāñchi tānra sukha,
tānra sukha āmāra tātparya
more yadi dile duḥkha, tānra haila mahā-sukha,
sei duḥkha mora sukha-varya*

"Hey sakhi! I am a maidservant of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is the ocean of the topmost happiness of transcendental rasa. He may delight Me by tightly embracing Me or trample Me beneath His feet. He may make Me happy by kindly appearing before Me or make Me broken hearted by disappearing from My sight. Even if He does not understand the sentiment (bhāvanā) of My body and mind, He is nonetheless the Lord of My life."

"Hey sakhi! I have taken a firm decision within My mind. Whether He loves Me or torments Me, He is the Lord of My life. Abandoning the other beautiful gopīs, He may manifest My good fortune by coming under My control. By sporting with Me in front of them, He will bring about their distress. On the other hand being a wicked, impudent, and crafty debauchee, He may torment Me by frolicking with other gopis in My presence. Regardless of what He does, He is the Lord of My life. I am not the least bit concerned about My own distress. I always desire His happiness alone. The fundamental purpose of My life is simply to ensure that He remains happy in every way. If by giving Me distress, He is pleased, that distress becomes the supreme source of happiness for Me."

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam: Song 8-in two parts (Gītāvalī)

(8-a)

*bandhu-gaṇa ! śunaha vacana mora
bhāvete vibhora, thākiye jakhana,
dekhā deya citta-cora*

*vicakṣaṇa kari, dekhite cāhile,
haya āñkhi-agocara
punaḥ nāhi dekhi, kāndaye parāṇa,
dukhera nā thāke ora*

*jagatera bandhu sei kabhu more laya sātha
yathā tathā rākhu more āmāra se prāṇa-nātha*

*darśana-ānanda dāne, sukha deya mora prāṇe,
bole more prāṇaya vacana
punaḥ adarśana diyā, dagdha kare mora hiyā,
prāṇe more māre prāṇa-dhana*

*yāhe tāra sukha haya, sei sukha mama
nija sukhe duḥkhe mora sarvadāi sama*

*bhakativinoda, saṁyoga viyoga,
tañhe jāne prāṇeśvara*

*tāra sukhe sukhī, sei prāṇa-nātha,
se kabhu nā haya para*

"O dear sakhis! How shall I describe the sentiment of my heart? When I am overwhelmed with emotion (bhāva), then I see that alluring person who has stolen my heart. But as soon as I return to full consciousness, I see that He has disappeared. Even upon searching, He is not to be found anywhere. At that time there is no limit to my distress. My body begins to shake and tremble. My life air becomes restless and agitated."

"Alas! Alas! What am I to do? He is the friend of the whole world. Whether He takes me with Him or not—however He may deal with me—He is the Lord of my life. He may delight me by presenting Himself before me, making me happy, and appeasing me by His words filled with affection. Or He may scorch my heart by keeping Himself invisible. He may do whatever gives Him pleasure. Even if He kills me by separation from Him, I will tolerate everything. Happiness and distress are all the same to me. My only concern is that He should remain happy. Whether in separation or in meeting, He is the exclusive Lord of the life of Bhaktivinoda, there is no other."

(8-b)

*yoga-pīṭhopari sthita, aṣṭa-sakhī-suveṣṭita,
vṛndārāṇye kadamba-kānane
rādhā saha baṁśī-dhārī, viśva-jana citta-hārī,
prāṇa mora tānhāra caraṇe*

*sakhī ājñāmata kari domhāra sevana
pālya-dāsī sadā bhāvi domhāra caraṇa*

*kabhu kṛpā kari, mama hasta dhari,
madhura vacana bole
tāmbūla laiyā, khāya dui jane,
mālā laya kutūhale*

*adarśana haya kakhana ki chale
nā dekhiyā domhe hiyā mora jvale*

*jekhāne sekhāne, thākuka dujane,
āmi ta caraṇa dāsī
milane ānanda, virahe yātanā,
sakala samāna bāsi*

*rādhā-kṛṣṇa prāṇa mora jīvana maraṇe
more rākhi māri sukhe thākuka dujane*

*bhaktivinoda, āna nāhi jāne,
paḍi sakhi pāya
rādhikāra gaṇe, thākiyā satata,*

yugala-carāṇa cāya

"Śrī Nanda-nandana, who wields the flute and steals the hearts of the entire universe, is graciously seated on a jeweled throne with Śrīmatī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, at the seat of Their transcendental pastimes (the yoga pīṭha), surrounded by the aṣṭa sakhīs in a kadamba forest of transcendental Vṛndāvana. The lotus feet of this divine couple are my life and soul. I have offered myself at Their lotus feet. I am a maidservant engaged in the service of Their lotus feet. Sometimes They take hold of my hands and, with sweet voices, They request tām̐būla (betel) and then eat it. Sometimes with great wonder, They take a garland from me and wear it. While at other times, They disappear from me on some pretext."

"O sakhi! Happiness is found wherever They are found. I am a maidservant of Their lotus feet. Bliss obtained in Their company and torture endured in Their separation are all the same to me. In life and in death—at all times—the divine couple, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, are my very life. Bhaktivinoda knows no one else but Them. Falling at the lotus feet of Their dearest sakhis, I beg for one thing alone: that they accept me into the personal group of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and engage me always in the service of the lotus feet of the divine couple."

Vivṛti

"I am a maidservant of the gopīs who are always engaged in serving the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in varieties of different ways. He may embrace me, He may make me His very own, or He may break my heart by not being present before me. He is a debauchee (lampaṭa) who is always engaged in seducing the young cowherd-wives (gopa-vadhū). He may do whatever pleases Him, yet He is the Lord of my life. There is no one other than Him. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the independent Supreme person. Acting in accordance with His desire is my only religion. I have no interest separate from His, nor can I display any inclination for service that is contrary to His will."

In the stage of perfection, the jīva is devoid of both bodily and mental material designations. At that time, he becomes a female companion of the gopīs in aprākṛta Vṛndāvana, the playground for the accomplishment of Kṛṣṇa's own will (sva-icchā-vihāra kṣetra). There he is engaged in fulfilling the desires of Śrī Kṛṣṇa through spiritual (aprākṛta) senses in his siddha deha (eternal spiritual body). This is the actual nature of prema bhakti.

The jīva should never consider himself as the āśraya vighraha. The āśraya vighraha refers to the Lord's eternal associates who are naturally the receptacle of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and under whose guidance the aspiring devotees place themselves in order to awaken their spontaneous attraction toward the Lord. The āśraya vighraha here specifically refers to Śrīmatī Rādhikā. The devotee never considers himself to be identical with the āśraya vighraha, but always feels himself to be their follower and an aspirant for their mercy. When one considers himself as the āśraya vighraha then his worship becomes ahaṅgrahopāsanā.

Ahaṅgrahopāsanā refers to a type of worship in which the devotee considers himself to be identical with the object of worship. The unadulterated condition of the pure jīva is to remain always under the guidance of the āśraya jātiya (Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Her confidential associates). Although the jīva is dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he

is, by constitution and by the will of Kṛṣṇa, the separated part and parcel of the Lord (vibhinnāṁśa).

Summary of Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka:

In all eight śloka of Śikṣāṣṭaka, the three subjects sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojana tattva have been explained through the medium of abhidheya. In the first śloka, the process (sādhana) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana has been described in a general way. In the second śloka, the awareness of one's incompetence to execute this super-excellent form of sādhana is shown. The third śloka teaches the method for chanting the holy name; the fourth śloka, the necessity of eliminating unfavorable desires (pratikula vāñchā) and deceit (kaitava) in the form of the aspiration for mokṣa; the fifth, knowledge of the jīva's original spiritual identity (svarūpa jñāna); the sixth, how one obtains one's good fortune in coming closer to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; the seventh, the mood of separation (vipralambha) in those who have acquired superior qualification; and the eighth, how to attain the ultimate perfection of one's cherished goal (sva-prayojana).

In the first five śloka, instructions on sambandha jñāna have been given through the medium of abhidheya. In all eight śloka, abhidheya tattva has been described. In the final three śloka, instructions regarding prayojana, or the ultimate goal, are found. In the first five śloka, the process of sādhana bhakti is described under the heading of abhidheya tattva, and in the next two śloka, bhāva bhakti. In the sixth to eighth śloka, and particularly in the seventh and eighth śloka, sādhyā or in other words prema bhakti has been displayed.

Presenting the following śloka composed by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, I offer my obeisances at the feet of all the readers:

*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas-tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kācid-upāsanā vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad bhāgavatam pramāṇam-amalaṁ premā pumartho mahān
śrī caitanya mahāprabhu-matam-idam tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ*

"The Supreme Lord Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental abode Śrī Vṛndāvana dhāma are my worshipable objects. The most excellent method of worshipping Kṛṣṇa is that adopted by the beautiful cowherd damsels (goparāmaṇī), the young wives of Vraja (Vraja vadhū). Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the flawless (nirmala) and most authoritative scripture (śabda-pramāṇa), and Kṛṣṇa prema is the fifth and highest achievement of human life beyond dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. It is thus known as pañcama-puruṣārtha or parama-puruṣārtha. This is the opinion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We have supreme regard for this conclusion. We have no inclination or respect for any other misleading opinions."

Śrī Bhajana Rahasya Verses

The following verse from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (10.31.11) gives an example of the highly developed Kṛṣṇa prema of the gopīs. When Kṛṣṇa was wandering about in the forest with bare feet chasing after the cows, the gopīs felt tremendous anxiety

thinking of the pain that Kṛṣṇa might be experiencing and spoke as follows:

*calasi yad-vrajāccārayan paśūn nalina
sundaram nātha te padam
śila-tṛṇāṅkuraiḥ sīdatīti naḥ kalilatām
manaḥ kānta gacchati*

"Hey Nātha (O Lord)! Hey Kānta (O Lover)! When You set out from Vraja and head for the forest to graze the cows, our hearts become greatly anguished with the thought that Your feet, which are softer and more delicate than a lotus flower, will be pricked by jagged stones, spiked husks of grain, and by the rough grass, shoots, and thorns."

When the gopīs are unable to behold the lotus face of Śrī Kṛṣṇa which is encircled by curling locks of hair, they consider each and every moment to be like hundreds of yugas. (The exact words used here to express a moment are nimeśa, which means the blinking of an eye, and truṭi, which is the time occupied in the integration of eighteen atomic particles or in other words 1/1687.5 of a second.) This is expressed in the following verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.31.15):

*aṭati yad-bhavānahni kānanam truṭi
yugāyate tvāmapaśyatām
kuṭīla-kuntalam śrī-mukhañca te jaḍa
udīkṣatām pakṣma-kṛd-dṛśām*

"Hey Priya (Dear beloved)! When You go to the forest to herd the cows, we are unable to see You and thus even a single moment (truṭi) appears to us to be like an entire yuga. At the day's end, we are able to behold Your beautiful face encircled by curling locks of hair. Yet even at that time, the blinking of our eyes presents an obstruction in seeing You, which we are unable to tolerate for even a moment (nimeśa). We then consider the creator of our eyelids to be a great fool."

The following verse from Kṛṣṇa-Karṇāmṛta (12) is an example of the gopīs' bhāvocchvāsa (a deep outburst of feeling instigated by their natural inborn bhāva—see comment below) at the time of meeting with Kṛṣṇa:

*nikhila-bhuvana-lakṣmī-nitya-līlāspadābhyām
kamala-vipina-vīthi-garva-sarvaṅkaṣābhyām
praṇamadabhaya-dāna-praudhigādhāḍṛtābhyām
kim api vahatu cetah kṛṣṇa pādāmbujābhyām*

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the abode wherein Śrīmatī Rādhikā, who is the original source of all the lakṣmīs (nikhila-bhuvana-lakṣmī), conducts Her eternal pastimes; His beauty steals the pride of the forest path which is decorated with rows of lotus flowers. He is expert at bestowing fearlessness upon the surrendered souls. May His lotus feet be ever manifest in our hearts initiating the flow of indescribable happiness."

Comment

The term nikhila-bhuvana-lakṣmī refers to Śrīmatī Rādhikā. It means that She is the original source of all lakṣmīs who are of three types: the lakṣmīs of Vaikuṅṭha, the mahiṣīs (queens) of Dvārakā, and the Vraja-devīs. The term bhāvocchvāsa here refers to an outburst of feeling which expresses the bhāva hidden in the hearts of the gopīs. How does this occur?

The gopīs were silent and Kṛṣṇa was silent. They were feeling the mood of separation. The gopīs were weeping and feeling very distressed at heart. But suddenly Kṛṣṇa approached Śrīmatī Rādhikā from behind and clasped His hands in front of Her eyes. She knew it was Him by the touch of His hands, but She did not let on that She knew. She exclaimed, "Viśākhā," and Kṛṣṇa laughed trying to restrain Himself. Śrīmatī Rādhikā was feeling overjoyed. Then just to increase Kṛṣṇa's mood, She said, "Yes I knew. You are Lalitā." Then Kṛṣṇa could not check Himself anymore and He at once began to laugh very loudly. Then Śrīmatī Rādhikā said, "Oh You, You, You, You!" After this They embraced.

This is an example of bhāvocchvāsa. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is always experiencing bhāva within Her heart. But if any uddīpana (external impetus which stimulates the bhāva within the heart) comes and makes these moods come out from the heart so that everyone can see, it is called bhāvocchvāsa. This bhāvocchvāsa is so powerful that it cannot be checked by anything just as the flow of a swift moving river cannot be checked.

Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's Concluding words to Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam

Now in concluding, this translator, who aspires for the service of the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā, cites a verse from Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and humbly bows at the respected feet of the faithful readers.

*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas-tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kācid-upāsanā vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad bhāgavatam pramāṇam-amalam premā pumartho mahān
śrī caitanya mahāprabhor-matam-idam tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ*

"The Supreme Lord Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental abode Śrī Vṛndāvana dhāma are my worshipable objects. The most excellent method of worshipping Kṛṣṇa is that adopted by the beautiful cowherd damsels (gopā-ramaṇī), the young wives of Vraja (Vraja vadhū). Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is the flawless (nirmala) and most authoritative scripture (śabda-pramāṇa), and Kṛṣṇa prema is the fifth and highest achievement of human life beyond dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. It is thus known as pañcama-puruṣārtha or parama-puruṣārtha. This is the opinion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We have supreme regard for this conclusion. We have no inclination or respect for any other misleading opinions."