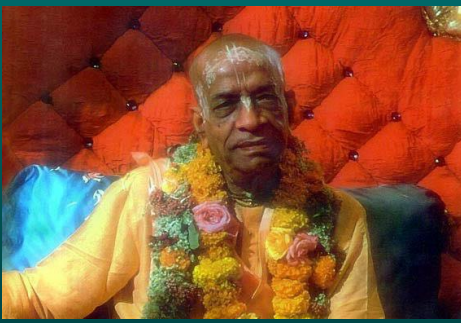


ŚRĪ MAHĀNET

Since the beginning of the Millennium

January 2021



Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupada

A devotee of the Lord, who is called *nārāyaṇa-para*, is never afraid of anything because he is always aware of the fact that the Lord protects him in all circumstances....When Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was personally present in the mortal world in His eternal, blissful form of Śyāmasundara, those who were not pure devotees of the Lord could not recognize Him or know His glories. *Avajānānti mām mūḍhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam* (Bg. 9.11):

He is always bewildering to the nondevotees, but He is always seen by the devotees by dint of their pure devotional service to Him.

(Srila Prabhupada Purport
Srimad Bhagavatam 3:1:41)

ŚRĪ ŚRĪ PRAPANNA-JIVANAMRTAM

by Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣhaka Śrīdhara

Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

Verse 3.5

utsahadi-guna anakulatvad adaraniyah –

*utsahan niscayad dhairyat, tat tat karma-pravartanat
sanga-tyagat sato vrteḥ, sadbhir bhaktih prasiddhyati*

Sri Rupapadanam – Sri Rupa Goswami

Because of their favorability, the six qualities beginning with enthusiasm should be honored - *bhajane utsaha yara bhitare bahire, sudurllabha krsna-bhakti pabe dhire dhire krsna-bhakti prati yara visvasa niscaya, sraddhavan bhaktiman jana sei haya krsna-seva na paiya dhira-bhave yei, bhaktira sadhana kare bhaktiman sei yahate krsnera seva krsnera santosa, sei karme vrati sada na karaye rosa krsnera abhakta-jana-sanga parihari, bhaktiman bhakta-sange sada bhaje hari krsna-bhakta yaha kare tad anusarane, bhaktiman acaraya jivane marane ei chaya jana haya bhakti adhikari, visvera-mangala kare bhakti paracari* (Bengali verse by Sri Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura)

"Within, without, he who serves with (1) enthusiasm will gradually attain to the rarest pure devotion. In devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, one who has (2) firm faith is a person loyal and devoted on the path. And if Sri Kṛṣṇa's service he fails to attain, yet practices with (3) patience - devout is such a man. (4) That which serves Lord Kṛṣṇa, for only Kṛṣṇa's pleasure, in such action, the devotee can never feel anger. (5) Abandoning the company of the non-devotee, ever with devotees, the devout serve Sri Hari. (6) Following the pure devotees' direction on the path, the true devout practice, as a matter of life and death. Who follow these six qualities qualify for pure devotion - they purify the universe by their preaching mission."

(Bengali verse translation)



WORDS OF OUR GUARDIANS

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja
from *The Loving Search for the Lost Servant*

Bhagavad Gita

Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna in the Bhagavad-gīta (2.47):

*"karmany evadhikaras te ma phalesu
kadamana ma karma-phala-hetur
bhur ma te sango' stv akarmani "*



Give your full concentration to discharging your duty and not to the result of your work. The result is with Me; all responsibility is with Me." Higher calculation is like that. The generals say, "March! Go forward. Onward! You have to go. You are my soldiers; whatever I shall ask, you must do. You may die and the victory may come afterward; that is not your concern. You are

soldiers; many of you may be finished, but the country as a whole will gain." In this way, so many important lives may be sacrificed. And as soldiers, we have no right to calculate whether we shall gain or lose in the long run. There are two things we must be very careful about. We shouldn't think that if we can't enjoy the fruits of our labor, then there is no reason to work. At the same time, we shouldn't think that we must get some share of the fruits. Remembering this, we should go on discharging our duty to Kṛṣṇa. That is devotion, and that is the meaning of Bhagavad-gīta.

Bhagavad-gīta says, "You can't change the environment. If you want

**Srila Bhakti Rakshak
Sridhar Deva Goswami
Maharaj**

"We can elevate ourselves or degrade ourselves. We are our own best friend or worst enemy." No force outside can check us if we are sincere."

peace, you must regulate yourself according to the environment." The whole gist of Bhagavad-gīta's advice is found here: Try to adjust yourself with the environment, because you are not the master of the environment. All your energy should be devoted to regulating yourself and not the outside world. This is the key to success in spiritual life. *Bhakti* does not depend on the environment or on the dealings of others. It is *ahaituky apratihata*. Nothing can obscure that flow except our own ego. I am my own greatest enemy.

*uddhared atmanatmanam natmanam
avasadayet atmaiva hy atmano
bandhur atmaiva ripur atmanah*

"We can elevate ourselves or degrade ourselves. We are our own best friend or worst enemy." No force outside can check us if we are sincere. Of course for beginners there is some concern about a proper

environment for spiritual cultivation, but even that is also dependent on the nature of their sincerity, or *sukṛti: na hi kalyana-kṛt kascid durgatim tata gacchati*. The assurance is given here by Kṛṣṇa. He says, "I'll be there to look after you in any unfavorable circumstance. I am omniscient. And I am omnipotent also. So if anyone is directed towards Me, I'll look after him." And it has also been seen in history, in the cases of Dhruva, Prahlada, and so many others. Sincerity is invincible. Even obstacles may improve our position if we can take them in the right way. From a higher angle of vision it may be seen that everything is coming to help us.

Srimad Bhagavatam

*tat te 'nukampam susamiksamano
bhunjana evatma-kṛtam vipakam
hrd-vag-vapurbhīr vidhadhan namas
te jiveta yo mukti-pade sa daya bhak*

Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.14.8) gives us a most hopeful suggestion for all stages of life: blame yourself and no one else. Maintain your appreciation for the Lord, seeing everything as His grace. At present we think our circumstances undesirable because they do not suit our present taste. But medicine may not always suit the taste of the patient. Still it is conducive to health. This verse is the highest type of regulation given by the *sastra*. If you can follow this law, then in no time you will have a very good position. We must be careful not to blame the circumstances, but to appreciate that Krsna is behind everything. Krsna is my best friend; He is in the background of everything. Everything is passing through His attentive eyes. So there cannot be any defect there.

Even Srimati Radharani says, "He is not to blame. This long separation from Krsna is only the outcome of

My fate. He should not be blamed for this." Although outwardly it is admitted by all that He had cruelly left the gopis, Radharani is not prepared to blame Krsna. "No wrong can be found in Him," She thinks. "There must be something wrong in Me which has brought about this unfortunate situation." The competition between the groups of *gopis* in the service of Krsna is also harmonized in this way by Radharani.

Krsnadasa Kaviraja Goswami has explained this most important point. According to him, it is not that Radharani does not like any other party to serve Krsna in competition with Her, but She feels that they cannot satisfy Krsna as well as She can. And this should be noted very carefully. She knows that they cannot give proper satisfaction to Krsna, so She cannot appreciate their trying to take Her place. That is Her contention. She

thinks, "If they could serve Krsna well and fully satisfy Him, I would have no complaint. But they can't. And still, aggressively they come to serve? I can't tolerate this."

Kaviraja Goswami has cited as an example of this sort of devotion a historical reference from the *Puranas*. There was once a chaste wife whose *brahmana* husband was a leper. She always tried her best to serve Him. One day, while she was bathing her husband at a holy river, he became infatuated with the extraordinary beauty of a prostitute by the name Laksahira. Her name indicated that she possessed the luster and beauty of a hundred thousand diamonds. The leper *brahmana* was irresistibly charmed by her.

DIVINE INSTRUCTION

Srila Bhakti Sundar Govinda Deva Goswami Maharaja
from "Revealed Truth"

PROCEEDING TOWARDS OUR SPIRITUAL DESTINY WITH GOOD WILL AND AFFECTION

Mahaprabhu's formula states that anyone who is humble, tolerant and gives honor to others without expecting honor for himself can properly chant the Hare Krsna Mahamantra and practice *Hari-Nama-sankirtan*. This teaching of Mahaprabhu gives us the proper spirit of spiritual life. When we follow the practice of humility,

tolerance and giving honor to others we will not do anything wrong to anyone and we will not make offences to anyone. If we give honour to everyone then we will never be in danger of making *Vaisnava-aparadha*, offence to a *Vaisnava*. It is completely necessary to avoid making offences to *Vaisnavas* because the Hare Krsna Mahamantra descends to us from the upper level through the *Vaisnavas*.

Mahaprabhu gave us

His formula because we cannot recognize who is a *Vaisnava*. What can we do when we cannot recognize a *Vaisnava*? If we give honor to everyone, even to persons who do not appear honorable to us, then we will always give honor to the *Vaisnava* even though we do not see who he is. Generally, we can understand that we should honor a *Vaisnava*; there is no question about that. But because it is difficult to recognise a *Vaisnava* we should give honor to everyone, even to someone who appears to have nothing. The Lord resides



Srila Bhakti Sundar
Govinda Deva Goswami
Maharaja

in the heart of everyone and everyone is a *Vaisnava* by nature, so we must honor everyone and that way we will always proceed clearly in our spiritual life. This is very important.

I always say that this procedure given by Mahaprabhu is the best procedure for practicing spiritual life. Why? Because we are always doing something wrong and we must avoid that. All *jiva*-souls have a very high prospect, potential and property, they are all actually eternal servants of the Lord.

Someone may be a tiny, insignificant *jiva*-soul who has not realized his own wealth, but we must give honor to everyone, no matter who they are, so that everyone will be merciful to us. If we do not make any enemies but rather make everyone our friend then our practicing life will proceed smoothly and easily. We must proceed to our destiny and for this we need the blessings and well-wishes of everyone, especially all the *Vaisnavas*, in our practicing life. We need everyone's help and goodwill and if we proceed to our destiny with that, everything

*vaisnava haba bali chila mora sada
trnad api sloke padi gela vada*

“I had a strong desire to become a *Vaisnava* but when I heard that I needed to follow Mahaprabhu's prescription of *trnad api sunichena, taror iva sahishnuna, and amanina manadena kirttaniyah sada Harih*, then I felt very hopeless, ‘How will I ever become a *Vaisnava*?’”

Everyone struggles to remember Mahaprabhu's formula and practice it properly. Sometimes we easily forget it and do something wrong. But when we come back to our good sense we can immediately begin practicing it again. Every time we can start again anew and there is no problem with that. We forget, then our sense comes back to us, and then we can again do good with our life. In that way we must try to go on and make ourselves perfect.

Faith is our first necessity in this practice and under the guidance of faith we can proceed

will be very beautiful, very fair and very good. So we should be merciful to ourselves by giving honor to others; then the whole world will become our friend and all of the Lord's servants will be merciful to us.

OUR HOPE AND OUR CHALLENGE

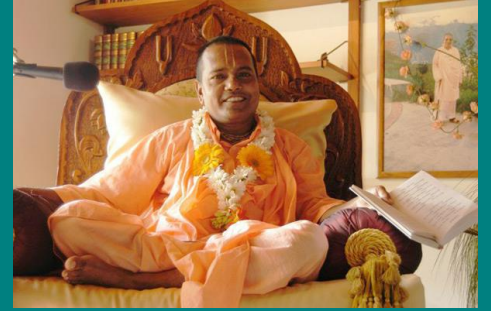
Still, even when we understand the idea and mood given by Mahaprabhu in His formula *trnad api sunichena*, it is still very difficult for us to follow. I have spoken about Mahaprabhu's formula my whole life and so many people have heard about it from me. It is very easy to hear about it. And it is very easy, and very good, to speak about it with others also, no doubt. The difficulty is focusing on it in our own lives and following it properly. What Mahaprabhu has given as the aim and objective of *Vaisnavism* is actually very difficult to follow. Some persons have spent a long life in Krsna consciousness—thirty, forty, fifty, sixty years—but not become enriched with the three qualities of humility, tolerance and giving honor to others. There is an expression in Bengal,

properly in the line of Krsna consciousness. So many disturbances may come to us, but we can cross over them by faithfully trying to practise Mahaprabhu's simple formula: humility, tolerance and giving honor to others. We are not always successful but we are trying to do that, and we should not be disappointed or frustrated. We must see that whatever situation comes to us has been given to us by Krsna and we will try to harmonize that situation through our practice of humility, tolerance and giving honor to others. And if we are not able to harmonize something and practice properly, then we can faithfully pray to our Master, “You see everything and You properly look after everyone; please do whatever is best for me.” This type of faith in the Lord's protection over us is necessary to have behind our practice of Mahaprabhu's formula.



SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Srila Bhakti Nirmal Acharya Maharaja
from "Guidance" – Volume 1



Srila Bhakti Nirmal Acharya Maharaja

Disentangled

6 December 2010

*alpa-bhāgye sevā nāhi haya
koti janma thākle bhāgya
viṣaya sei haye vairāgya*

“It takes more than just a little fortune to get service. Only after ten million births of good fortune, can one renounce this material world.”

Vṛndāvan Dās Ṭhākur writes this in his *Chaitanya-maṅgal* (later renamed as *Chaitanya-bhāgavata*). Only after you have got ten million lives of fortune, can you come to the line of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—it is not easy.

It is not easy, but we have got this chance, and we must use the

opportunity to serve, because even though we have got the chance, the illusory environment is always ready to remove us from this line. Illusory environment is very strong, so if we do not practice properly, if we do not serve properly, at any time we can lose our mind and leave this line. Be careful.

*māyāre kariyā jaya chhāḍāna nā yāya,
sādhu-guru-kṛpā vinā nā dekhi upāya*

“It is not possible to conquer *māyā* by illusory environment (by engaging in *māyā*), but it is only possible to get relief by the mercy of Guru, *Vaiṣṇav*.”

Be careful, always be careful.

*dīna yāya miḥhā kāje niśā nidrā-baśe
nāhi bhāvi maraṇa nikaṭe āchhe base*

“My days are passed in useless work and nights are wasted on sleeping. It never occurs to me that there is death sitting next to me.”
(Kalyāṇ-kalpataru, 4.4, by Śrīla Bhakti Vinod

Ṭhākur). It is a very nice song, and another song is also ‘*Bhuliyā tomāre, saṁsāre āsiyā*’ (Śaraṇāgati, 2). If you can recite and think about the meaning of this song, you will see how nice it is:

*bhuliyā tomāre, saṁsāre āsiyā
peye nānā-vidha vyathā
tomāra charaṇe, āsiyāchhi āmi,
baliba duḥkhera kathā*

“I have forgotten You, *Prabhu!* Now I have come to Your lotus feet, I surrender to You and will tell You what my sadness is.”

*jananī-jaṭhare, chhilāma yakhana,
viṣama bandhana-pāśe*

“When I was in the mother’s womb, I got very much austerity.”

To be continued in our Feb 2021 issue...

VAISNAVA CALENDAR for New York , New Jersey Area

January 2021

NARAYAN

1 (Fri) Krishna Dvitiya. The grand 92nd appearance day celebration of Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math's Sevaite-President-Acharya, Om Vishnupad Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Sri Srimad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj. New Year's Day.

2 (Sat) Krishna Tritiya. Festivals at the appearance place of Srila B.S. Govinda Dev-Goswami Maharaj and his youth Pastimes place: Bamunpara and Nadan Ghat.

3 (Sun) Krishna Chaturthi. Disappearance festival of the founder of the Sri Chaitanya Math and worldwide Sri Gaudiya Maths, Bhagavan Sri Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad.

9 (Sat) Krishna Dvadashi. Saphala Ekadashi (in New York). **Fast.** Disappearance of Srila Devananda Pandit. Disappearance of Srimad Bhakti Prakash Aranya Maharaj.

10 (Sun) Krishna Trayodashi. Paran between 07:19 and 16:48. Disappearance of Sripad Bhakti Bhudev Shrauti Maharaj.

11 (Mon) Krishna Trayodashi. Disappearance of Srila Mahesh Pandit. Disappearance of Srila Uddharan Das Thakur.

13 (Wed) Amavasya. Sriman Mahaprabhu leaves Nabadwip in the night to go to Katwa to take sannyas.

14 (Thu) Gaura Pratipad. Appearance of Srila Lochan Das Thakur.

15 (Fri) Gaura Dvitiya. Remembrance of Sriman Mahaprabhu's sannyas-lila.

16 (Sat) Gaura Tritiya. Disappearance of Srila Jiva Goswami Prabhu. Disappearance of Srila Jagadish Pandit.

24 (Sun) Gaura Ekadashi. Putrada Ekadashi (in New York). **Fast.** Appearance of Srila Jagadish Pandit.

25 (Mon) Gaura Dvadashi. Paran between 07:11 and 10:29.

28 (Thu) Purnima. Pushyabhisheka Yatra of Sri Krishna. Disappearance of Sripad Bhakti Sharan Vaisnava Maharaj.

MADHAVA

31 (Sun) Krishna Tritiya. Appearance of Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami Prabhu. Disappearance of Srila Ramachandra Kaviraj.

MBC TV

Mahaprabhu Broadcasting Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-8udyHuxpkFyogyV9CsraA>

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