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THE SECRET WITHIN SANATANA-DHARMA
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Most people, especially non-Indians, have no knowledge about sanatana-dharma. They think that India is a place of poverty; but we have come from such a great Bharata (India) that if one hears and even slightly follows its message, his life will be successful. We have not come to beg, but to give something. We have come to give the message by which all can stop hankering for material possessions, and by which all can be happy.

Sri Sukadeva Gosvami was not roaming naked because of poverty, the four Kumaras (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat-kumara) were not naked due to poverty, and Lord Sankara was also not naked because of poverty. Sankara can give anything to the world, because he is complete. We have come to give the knowledge of Bharata, and if one experiences and realized this knowledge his life will be successful. Some people misunderstand these teachings. Being less intelligent, they think that this dharma, religion, is like any other. But it is not true. You have heard that Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, known as Prabhupada, preached the sankirtana movement throughout the world. He was my god-brother and also my siksa-guru. Just as he was known as Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, I am also known as Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja. I took sannyasa long before he did, and it was by my request that he took sannyasa. I advised him to take the renounced order and preach throughout the world, and he accepted my advice and thus took sannyasa from my Gurudeva in 1959. I was there at that time, and I taught him how to wear his sannyasa dress with danda, kaupin, etc. After taking sannyasa, he preached this Bharatiya sankriti, Indian culture, all over the world.

We must understand what is Indian culture. First we must understand that we are not this body, but the soul within the body. The soul is not pleased with what we are doing for the body, and even such a great and powerful person as Hiranyakasipu could not be happy. Ravana had 100,000 sons and 125,000 grandsons, and even he was not happy. There was no one to perform his funeral rites - because all were dead. Only Vibhisana remained alive, but Ravana had already chased him away. Like Ravana and Hiranyakasipu, we also identify with this body, but actually we are all eternal servants of Krsna. We are unable to easily understand that whatever we are doing for the body does not please the soul.

Somehow we should realize that inside our body there is the soul which is part and parcel and an eternal servant of Krsna. This human birth is only meant to realize this fact. No one is happy in this world. America is the world's greatest nation, but even President Clinton was not happy in America. He had problems with his wife, he took a girlfriend, and one day he will have to give up his body and die.

Only one who realizes that he is a soul and an eternal servant of Krsna can be happy. In order to realize this, one must chant the names of the Lord, and this is the essence of all scriptures:

harer nama harer nama
harer namaiva kevalam
kalau nasty eva nasty eva
nasty eva gatir anyatha

["In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy the only means of deliverance is chanting the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way." (Cc Adi 17.21)]

If one wants to be happy in a world full of all kinds of miseries, he should chant the holy names of the Lord. One name of Krsna can give more benefit than thousands of yajnas, baths in tirthas, donations, and worshipping in temples.

Valmiki became samanya-brahma (having qualities as good as God), by chanting the name of Rama backwards (mara [meaning death] instead of rama). Agastya Rsi was able to drink all the water of the ocean, Sankara is able to supply all the necessities of the world and also destroy it, and Brahma is able to create the world - only on the strength of the holy name. If one does not do anything else but chant the names of the Lord, his life will be successful. This is Indian culture.

You may have heard, "atithi devo' bhava" (the guest should be treated as good as God) "matri-pitri devo' bhava" (one's mother and father should be respected as one would respect God), and "sarve bhavantu sukhina" (peace unto all). This is a general idea of Vedic culture. One must always remember God while performing his responsibilities, and whenever society forgets this, the Lord descends as Rama, Nrsimha, and Vamandeva, and sometimes He sends his servants like Ramanuja, Madhavacarya, Visnu Swami, Sankaracarya, Nimbadiya, etc. Sankara is His greatest devotee. Among the knowers of Bhagavat-tattva, Sankara is the greatest. Sometimes Bhagavan sends Sankara to this world, to remind those who have forgotten Him.

One must worship the Lord by sravanam, kirtanam, smaranam, etc. Only this will make your life successful. Do not waste your time in accumulating material wealth, because it will ultimately destroy you. One day you will have to leave everything and go. You cannot take anything with you.

I will tell you a simple story in this regard: A saintly person went to the King's palace to meet him. The King thought that the Vaisnava must have come to ask for money, and he therefore told his servants to tell him that he has no time. He requested them to tell that Vaisnava to come back after a few days. The Vaisnava returned to the King after eight or ten days, and the King again sent a message to him that he should come back after a few more days. He again came back after two or three days, but the King again sent a message saying that he does not have time and that the saintly person should return after two more days.

The saintly person then went to the Queen and asked for an audience. The Queen was pious. She told her servant to bring him to her, and then she asked him how she could

serve him. The saintly person replied, "I don't need any service. I have come only for you. The King's duration of life is now only seven more days. I came almost three weeks ago, but the King did not have time to talk to me. The King will die after seven days. Whatever you need to do, you may do."

The Queen became extremely upset, and in the meantime the saintly person left. The Queen immediately sent a message for the King to come, and he immediately arrived. He had all the time in the world for his queen, but he did not have even a little time for the Vaisnava. Nowadays there are many persons who pose themselves as sadhus and go from house to house asking for money. Unlike real sadhus, they leave home and at the same time run after money. The King had thought that the saintly person who came to him was one of those who are after money, and therefore he had not bothered to see him.

The Queen told her husband the sadhu's message: that he had only seven days to live. She also told him that the sadhu had just left the palace. Beside himself with grief, the King quickly sent his men to look for him, and they found him sitting near a river under a tree and chanting harinama. Hearing the King's request, the sadhu returned to his palace, and this time the King welcomed him with great respect and gave him an asana upon which to sit. He humbly said, "You have told my wife that I have only seven days to live." The sadhu replied, "It is true. You will die after seven days, and no one will be able to save you. You will definitely have to die; so you must now prepare for your death."

The King then begged, "What is your advice? What should I do?" The sadhu replied, "You have performed many pious activities, and you will therefore go to heaven. You will get all nice facilities there, and there is one problem. At present there are very big mosquitoes there. They will bite you, and you will get malaria. You can get a mosquito net there, but one corner of the net is a little torn. The mosquitoes will come through the hole and bite you. Since there is no needle and thread available in heaven, you should take a needle and thread with you." Desperate, the King then asked, "How can I take a needle and thread with me?" The sadhu replied, "You have accumulated so much wealth, and you say you cannot take a needle and thread with you to heaven?"

This is our situation. You cannot take even a needle and thread, nor can you even take with you one of the hairs on your head. Please understand that although you are working so hard, you will not be able to take anything. You may be working very hard for your children, but they will also neglect you. After all, Western culture has now entered India. As soon as the children grow up and get married, they leave their parents. They will only look after their own children, and they will not give you a glass of water. I see that the Indians who have settled outside of India (Canada, America, etc.) are now regretting their move. In fact, I met a Panjabi in Canada who was actually crying. He told me that he had come here for wealth and he was very successful in attaining it, but his children had become spoiled. He said that his 22 year-old-daughter had brought her boyfriend home and she was taking alcohol with him. When the father questioned her, she threatened to shoot him. This person then began to wonder whether it was for this purpose that he left India and settled in Canada. Could he not have maintained his family in India? He admitted that he had come due to greed for wealth, and now he had lost everything. He is

now crying, and there are many cases like his. It is all right that you Indians have come here, but you should not give up your Indian culture. You should know that you will not be able to take anything with you when you die, and that you are eternally a servant of Krsna.

You must know that you are not this body. A few days after the soul leaves this body, the body will begin to decompose. The birds and animals will eat the body, and then that body will become his stool. And, if the body is burnt, it will become ashes. Therefore, don't be proud of your beauty and youth. There is no need to be proud. One day this young and beautiful body will become old. Please remember this.

Wherever you are, perform krsna-bhajana and do not give up your Indian Culture. It is for this purpose, to re-establish Vedic culture, that Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, sometimes comes Himself to this world, sometimes He sends His servants, and sometimes He sends one of His many Incarnations.

More than five thousand years ago, Svayam Bhagavan Krsna appeared on this planet. Before Him, Lord Ramacandra, Lord Nrsimghadeva and other incarnations had appeared, but the root cause of all incarnations is Sri Krsna Himself.

ete camsa-kalah pumsah
krsnas tu bhagavan svayam
indrari-vyakulam lokam
mrdayanti yuge yuge

["All these incarnations of Godhead are either plenary portions or parts of the plenary portions of the purusa-avatars. But Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. In every age He protects the world through His different features when the world is disturbed by the enemies of Indra." (Cc Adi 2.67)]

Why did Krsna appear?

yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata
abhyuttanam adharmasya tadatmanam sramyamaham
paritranaya sadhunam vinasaya ca duskrtam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge-yuge

["Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise of irreligion – at that time I descend Myself. In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium." (Bg 4.7)]

Krsna tells Arjuna that whenever there is decline in religion and increase in irreligion and demons, He appears. He upholds religion, kills the demons, and protects the devotees.

There is an important point here. Krsna came to uphold religion. However, during the Mahabharata War many millions of people were killed, millions of women became widows, and many unwanted children were born (varnasankara). Where was religiosity? The answer is that the war created a platform for the Srimad-Bhagavatam to be heard. Soon after the war, Sukadeva Gosvami recited Srimad Bhagavatam to Pariksit Maharaja. Srimad-Bhagavatam is the essence of all Vedic scriptures, and in the first chapter, verse three, it is stated:

nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam
suka-mukhad amrta-drava samyutam
pibata bhagavatam rasam alayam
muhur aho rasika bhuvi bhavukah

["O expert and thoughtful men, relish Srimad-Bhagavatam, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Sri Sukadeva Gosvami. Therefore this fruit has become even more tasteful, although its nectarean juice was already relishable for all, including liberated souls." (SB 1.1.3)]

Bhagavad-gita is the nectarean essence of all Upanisads, and Krsna gave this to the world by speaking to Arjuna. But what is Srimad Bhagavatam? 'Nigama' and 'agama'. ['Ni' is short for 'nisesa rupena,' and 'gama' means 'go.' This means there remains nothing left in the matter of doing to Radhika and Krsna. Regarding the word agama, 'a' means 'samyak rupena' or complete, and again, 'gama' means 'go.' In this way agama means that scripture by following which one can completely go to Radha and Krsna. Nigama and agama, then, mean the same thing.]

Bhagavad-gita is the essence of the Upanisads, whereas Srimad-Bhagavatam is the essence of all Vedic sastras: Veda, Upanisads, Puranas, Srutis, Gita, Ramayana, etc. Gita is the first stage of Vedic dharma and Srimad Bhagavatam is the 'Phd'. Krsna appeared for preaching the knowledge of Srimad Bhagavatam. Krsna did not come only to kill demons like Kamsa. He did not come only to suppress the symptoms of Kali-yuga, nor did He come only to kill the agents of Kali-yuga like Karna, Duryodhana, Jarasandha, Dusasana, Sakuni, and Kalyavana. His appearance was for a very special reason, which is very difficult for ordinary persons to understand.

All scriptures recommend their readers to meditate on the Supreme Lord, but Srimad Bhagavatam tells us that this Supreme Personality of Godhead is very rasika. He is the enjoyer of all mellows and is very merciful. He comes to this world as someone's son, someone's friend, and someone's most beloved. We are looking for Bhagavan, but Srimad Bhagavatam tells us that Krsna is looking for us. He comes down from His spiritual abode to help those of us who have forgotten Him for many, many births. Don't think that this is your first birth. We have taken birth many millions of times since the beginning of creation. You are entangled in the endless chain of birth and death. Now, in this human birth, we have the opportunity to get free from the cycle of birth and death by associating with sadhus and coming to temples.

When you die, you will have to come back again as a human being, or a donkey, or a dog, or any other body. Even in the body of a pig you will get a wife and children, but you will not get spiritual knowledge in any body other than the human form. Begin your performance of bhajana right away, and get out of the endless cycle of birth and death.

It is to help you in this regard that Krsna comes down to this world. That Supreme Brahman, upon whom the yogis meditate, becomes the son of Yasoda. Sometimes Yasoda Maiya refuses to breast-feed Krsna because of His being naughty. She tells Him, "You tell lies and steal from other people's houses. I will not take you on my lap." She says this to Parabrahma. There is no evidence in any other scriptures where anyone chastises Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His friends defeat Him in wrestling matches and laugh at Him, and Krsna also laughs and becomes very happy to be defeated by them. Parabrahma Krsna bows His head and His flute at the feet of the gopis and says, "I can never repay my debt to you." He falls down at their feet and begs forgiveness, admitting His mistakes.

Brahma, Sankara and others meditate upon the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord and are unable to realize His lotus feet in their hearts, and that same Parabrahma Krsna cries, yearning to climb upon His mother's lap. Moreover, not being satisfied with one mother's milk, that Parabrahma expands Himself into thousands of calves and cowherd boys and drinks the milk of thousands of gopis and thousands of cows for one year. Even Lord Balarama was astonished to see this. Lord Ramacandra and Lord Nrsimhadeva do not perform such activities as Lord Krsna. No other incarnation performs activities like this, for only Krsna can satisfy the desires of everyone.

There is one other, very special, reason that Krsna appeared in this world. He came to attract everyone by His most attractive form, His form of conjugal love. The Upanisads meditated upon Krsna for thousands of years to serve Him as the gopis serve, and an example of this is given in the Upanisads. Once, while Arjuna and Krsna were going somewhere by chariot, Krsna asked him to bring some water for drinking. Arjuna walked in the direction in which he saw birds flying to and from. He saw the Yamuna River flowing by, and many birds drinking water there. Then he saw an old lady sitting on the river's bank, and a spiritual effulgence was emanating from her body. Her hair was totally white and she was in samadhi. One could not say how old she was.

Arjuna offered her his obeisances, and she came to her external consciousness. Arjuna asked who she was and what she was doing there. She replied that she had been meditating upon Lord Krsna for thousands of years. By Krsna's mercy, Arjuna was able to see her; otherwise no one could see her. Arjuna asked why she was meditating upon Krsna. In reply, she said that she had seen the moods of the gopis, and understood that Krsna can only become subservient by their love. The gopis had given up their families, society, chastity, dharma, and so on to serve Krsna, and He thus always remains indebted to them. She was therefore meditating and desiring to be born from the womb of a gopi. She wanted to become the gopis' servant, in order to assist in their service to Radha-Krsna Yugala. Arjuna was astonished and asked who she was. She replied that she was a veda-mantra of one of the branches of the Upanisads.

Arjuna then left, returned to Krsna, told Him about her, and Krsna went to see her. Upon seeing Krsna, she became very happy and said, "Today all my desires are fulfilled." Krsna then gave her the benediction that she would be born from the womb of a gopi in Vrndavana where His pastimes are going on in the next exhibition of His prakata-lila there. He told her, "You will serve me as a nitya-siddha gopi in the association of other nitya-siddha gopis." After benedicting her in this way, He left.

Krsna fulfilled the desires of many devotees, like his sakha Sudama-vipra, or like Arjuna, but He did not give them gopi-bhava. The five Pandavas and Draupadi are still meditating on the banks of Radha Kunda as trees, in order to obtain a greed to serve the lotus feet of the gopis.

So Krsna apparently came to this world for many reasons. He came to deliver the pious and destroy evil elements. He also came to fulfill Lord Rama's promise to the sages of Dhandakaranya forest who had been performing austerities for many thousands of births, and who, when they saw the beauty and charm of Rama, wanted to marry him. Rama told them that He would only be able to fulfill their desires in His future appearance as Krsna. When Vamandeva incarnated and appeared before Bali Maharaja, He was seen by Bali Maharaja's daughter. She immediately became attracted and desired to have him as a son. Later, when she saw how He bound up and humiliated her father, she wanted to kill him. Krsna therefore also came to fulfill her desire, and she came as Putana Witch in Krsna lila. In this way, there are various reasons for Krsna's descent - but they were all subsidiary to His main reason.

Krsna's main reason for coming was that He wanted to display His madhurya pastimes, like rasa-lila, only for those fortunate living entities with the svarupa and samskaras, impressions in their hearts, for madhura-rasa or srngara rasa. He came to give them a greed to serve in the footsteps of the gopis, to serve Radha-Krsna Conjugal with an inclination to serve Srimati Radhika. Krsna came for the same reason that Caitanya Mahaprabhu later came; to give greed for manjari-bhava.

Lord Caitanya made all the wild animals, like elephants, tigers, and lions chant Hare Krsna. He simply took some water, sprinkled it upon them and said, "Chant Krsna's name." Hearing this, the elephants, lions and tigers began to dance and chant. He gave them general prema, but the main purpose for His appearance is this:

anarpita-carim cirat karunaya vatirnah kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasam sva-bhakti-sriyam
harih purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitah
sada hrdaya-kandare sphuratu vah saci-nandana
(Cc Adi 1.4)

["May that Lord, who is known as the son of Srimati Sacidevi, be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what

no incarnation ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant spiritual knowledge of the mellow taste of His service in conjugal love."]

Governed by the mood and color of Srimati Radharani, Krsna appeared as Lord Caitanya to give unnatojjvala-rasa (parakiya bhava). None of the gopis were married to Krsna. Krsna was married to Rukmini, Satyabhama and other queens in Dvaraka, but nobody says, "Satyabhama-Krsna or Rukmini-Krsna. He is known as Gopinatha, Radha-vallabha, and Gopi-vallabha.

he krsna karuna sindhu dina-bandho jagat-pate
gopesa gopika-kanta radha-kanta namo stu te

Caitanya Mahaprabhu did not come to give vatsalya or sakhya-bhava. Only the love of gopis can control Krsna.

Lord Ramacandra accepted one wife; He could not accept any other woman. The rsis of Dandakaranya forest desired to marry Him. He told them that they would appear as gopis in Krsna-lila, and at that time their desires would be fulfilled. Ramacandra was intensely feeling separation from Sita. He told a Vasista Rsi that He wanted to perform a Yajna in order to give solace to His heart. A successful asvamedha-yajna shows others the power of the king performing it. Rama considered that by performing the yajna this would be accomplished, and at the same time the crowds and festivities relating to the yajna would hopefully keep Him so busy that he would be able to get some relief from His feelings of unbearable separation from Sita devi.

He requested Vasista, "Please let me perform a yajna." Vasista said, "You cannot perform a yajna. Yajna can only be performed together with one's wife; but You have abandoned Sita to the forest. Call her back so that the yajna can be performed." Ramacandra replied, "This is not possible." Vasista said, "Performance of the yajna without Sita is impossible." Lord Ramacandra insisted, "Somehow the yajna must be performed." Vasista then said, "You can get married again. There are many thousands of women desiring to marry You." Rama said, "I cannot marry any other woman. Please find a way that the yajna can be performed."

Vasista replied, "You can make a murti of Sita and then sit down and perform the yajna with Her murti beside You." Lord Ramacandra ruled the earth for 11,000 years. He went to the forest for fourteen years, when he was twenty-two years old. He came back and became King of Ayodhya when he was about thirty-five years old, and He ruled for 11,000 years. Each year He performed a yajna, and He therefore performed thousands of yajnas and made thousands of murtis of Sita. In order to perform the yajnas He also made the murtis become alive by the prana-prathista ceremony. Towards the end of His lila, all the murtis of Sita told Rama that they now want to live with Him, but He explained that only the original Sita could reside in His heart. [The murtis were manifestations of Sita devi, but they were not the original.] He told them to take birth in Krsna-lila in Dvapara-yuga, and at that time, He will fulfill their desires.

We should therefore understand that Lord Krsna is Svayam Bhagavan. Rama is not less than Krsna, but it is Krsna Himself who becomes Rama, and Radharani becomes Sita. Sankara is not separate. He is Krsna's servant. Sometimes, to serve Rama, he comes as Hanuman. He comes as Bhima to serve Krsna, and to serve Krsna as a gopi he comes as Gopisvara Mahadeva. He serves Krsna in so many ways.

vrndavanavani-pate! jaya soma- maule
sanaka-sanandana-sanatana-naradedya
gopisvara! vraja-vilasi yuganghri-padme
prema prayaccha nirupadhi namo namaste

["O Gate-keeper of Vrndavana, O Soma! All glories unto you. O you whose forehead is decorated with the moon and who is worshipable by all the sages headed by Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana, Sanat and Narada! O Gopisvara! Desiring that you bestow upon me that prema for the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha-Madhava who perform joyous pastimes in Vraja-Dhama, I offer you my pranamas again and again."]

All ten avatars are manifestations of Krsna Himself: "Kesava drta dasavidha-rupa, jaya jagadhisa hare." We worship one Krsna, and Rama is not separate from Him, nor is Sankara or Kalki or Vamana. All belong to one family. We are all Krsna's servants, and it is only because we have separated ourselves from Him that we are suffering. This is sanatana-dharma

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