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THE VRAJAVASIS NEVER KNOW
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There are two kinds of transcendental bhakti: aisvarya-mayi and madhurya-mayi; bhakti or service mixed with opulence, and bhakti or service with pure, sweet humanlike relationships.

Narayana never descends to this world. He has no father or mother. Rather, He has associates like Narada and others, and He is full with great opulence. Any pure devotee of Narayana can offer Him pranama, but no one can serve as Laksmi devi can. Moreover, even Laksmi devi also engages only in services mixed with awe and reverence, like massaging His feet. Narayana's manifestations are also full of opulence. Sahasra-sirsa, for example, has millions of hands, heads, eyes, ears, and so on, and He cannot be seen anywhere in this world; that is opulence. Everyone prays to Him in great awe and reverence, uttering only the purusa-sukta prayers.

Bhagavan Nrsimhadeva also has no father or mother, and He is also full with opulence. Rama also has opulence, but He also has sweet pastimes. He has a father, Maharaja Dasaratha, a mother, Kausalya, brothers like Laksmi, Bharata, and Satrugna, and a wife, Sita devi. He takes birth from Kausalya and performs many pastimes, but sometimes He displays great opulence. To cross the Indian Ocean was a very difficult task, but when Varunadeva, the predominating Deity of the ocean, refused to give Rama passage, He simply took up His bow and arrow. Then, upon hearing the sound of Rama's bowstring, Varunadeva began to tremble, and he thus requested Rama to build a bridge over him. The killing of Ravana was also not a simple task, and no one besides Rama could have done so. This was opulence.

When Rama took birth from the womb of mother Kausalya, He was four-handed, sixteen years of age, and He looked like Visnu. An ordinary person would not have been able to exhibit such features. He performed very sweet pastimes, such as walking barefoot in the forest with Sita and Laksmi, obeying his father and mother, and so on, but He also displayed opulence. Although Rama had friends, those friends were like His servants, and even his wife Sita was like a servant. She was obliged to obey him, and He was even able to order her, "You must leave my house."

Rama sometimes mercifully embraces Hanuman in the mood of giving blessings: "Mangalam bhavatu, kalyanam bhavatu," but Hanuman cannot embrace Rama. Rama can sit under the shade of the tree, and Hanuman can sit on a branch above Him, but He cannot climb on the shoulders of Rama. Hanuman cannot give the remnants of his meal to Rama, nor can Sita, Laksmi, Bharata, Sugriva, or Vibhisena.

Hanuman is a premi-bhakta, and Bharata, Satrugna, and the others are also exalted devotees. Bharata is the embodiment of love and affection for Rama, but he cannot sit on Rama's bed, nor can he embrace Him or give Him his food remnants.

This is not the case for the Pandavas and Draupadi, however. Arjuna can give his remnants to Krsna in the sense that they can sit together and eat from the same plate. They can sleep on the same bed, with Krsna's head on the same side of the bed as Arjuna's feet. Krsna's feet lay across Arjuna's chest, and Arjuna's feet lay across Krsna's chest. Satyabhama and Rukmini fan them on one side of the bed, and Draupadi and Subhadra fan on the other side. Krsna is controlled by Arjuna's love, and therefore He gave to him His sister Subhadra in marriage, making their relationship still more sweet.

Before the Mahabharata Battle, Krsna bewildered both Arjuna and Hanuman by His Yogamaya potency. Arjuna had the self-conception that, "I am the very best archer in the whole world," and actually he was unparalleled. One day Arjuna met Hanuman and told him, "Your Rama was not such a good archer, and His strength is not equal to mine. If I were present with Him, there would have been no need to make a bridge of boulders on the ocean. With my bow and arrows, I would have easily made a very strong bridge over the ocean so that the monkeys and all others could cross. Why did Rama request all the monkeys and bears to make a bridge? He could have simply asked me." Hanuman replied, "You are ignorant. You don't know the real situation. The weight of the monkeys was so great that your bridge of bow and arrows would not have been able to tolerate it." Arjuna replied with great pride, "You can examine my bridge for yourself; you and your millions of monkeys can try walking on my bridge."

Then, in a moment, Arjuna made a strong bridge over the nearby wide river with his bow and arrows. Seeing that Arjuna's bridge was very strong, Hanuman flew in the air, went to the mountains, and assumed a gigantic form. He then tied large mountains to the hairs coming from the pores of his body, returned, and began to cross the bridge. He was now so heavy that Arjuna thought, "My bridge will not be able to tolerate his weight. What should I do?" He began to pray, "Krsna, I have taken Your shelter. I am Your surrendered devotee. Please save me. Please protect the words I have spoken to Hanuman: 'My bridge is so strong that even you and millions of monkeys like you will not be able to break it.' Hanuman also prayed – to Rama, "O Rama, save me. If the bridge does not break, it will be an insult to Your name and reputation – not mine but Yours – because I have taken Your shelter." Both Arjuna and Hanuman fearfully prayed.

Hanuman pressed down one of his feet on the bridge, which then began to tremble but not break. Hanuman saw this and thought, "Why doesn't this bridge break? My weight equals that of the entire world, and still the bridge doesn't fall. Rama Rama Rama Rama." Arjuna thought, "This bridge is shaking. I think it will break at any moment. Krsna, Krsna, Krsna." After Hanuman prayed to Rama, he put his second foot and his whole weight on the bridge, but still the bridge did not break.

Hanuman now saw a current of blood coming from the bridge. He at once jumped and saw that Rama's back was supporting the bridge, and at the same time Arjuna saw Krsna holding up the bridge. Both saw their own Istadeva; Hanuman saw Rama and Arjuna saw Krsna, and they both began to pray. There was one form, and yet both saw their own Istadeva.

Rama told to Hanuman, "Now you can see that Krsna and I are one. I am Rama, and Rama is Krsna. There is no difference between Us. I want to take away the burden from the earth, so help Arjuna. I order you to always save him during the Battle of Kuruksetra. You should remain on his flag, and you should save him from the very powerful bows of Bhisma Pitamah, Karna, and Dronacarya. Otherwise in the first day, in the first battle, he will be killed by the first arrow. I will also be there on the chariot, as Arjuna's charioteer; so you must save Arjuna."

Later, during the Mahabharata battle, whenever Karna, Bhisma Pitamah, and Dronacarya fired their arrows at Arjuna, Hanuman roared louder than a thunderbolt from the flag of the chariot. This roaring scared them and, bewildered, they shot their arrows here and there and missed Arjuna. Karna had an infallible weapon, which was given to him by the demigods. When he shot that special arrow, it turned into a great python whose gaping mouth opened wide. Krsna hinted to Hanuman; He then pressed Arjuna's chariot down below the earth with His foot, so the python would not be able to strike, and simultaneously Hanuman roared so loudly that the python became afraid and confused. Hanuman was always serving Rama, and He made himself the servant of Arjuna and saved his life many times.

Arjuna is more dear to Krsna than Hanuman. Still, even he sometimes experiences Krsna's opulence. When he saw the fearsome universal form of Krsna, in whose body Brahma and other demigods reside, and into whose blazing mouths thousands of warriors were rushing to their deaths, he forgot their friendship. At that time he folded his palms and prayed, "O my Prabhu, I have made many mistakes due to my false conception that I am Your friend, and I have committed many offenses at Your lotus feet. I promise that I will never again call you 'Friend'. I will only address You as 'Prabhu'."

Arjuna does not have the qualification to be in Vrndavana, because he has some mood that Krsna is the Supreme Lord. No one in Vrndavana, namely Krsna's friends, father, mother, or anyone else of Vrndavana, knows that Krsna is the Supreme Lord. They may hear from here and there that Krsna is the Supreme Lord, but they never believe it. In a separation mood, they may say that they have heard that Krsna is the Supreme Lord, but still they never believe it. This is the specialty of Vrndavana.

There is much opulence in Mathura, in Dvaraka, and at the Battle of Kuruksetra; everyone honors and fears Krsna there. In Vrndavana, however, Krsna's friends can defeat Him in games, and He becomes quite happy by this. Although there is much more opulence in Vrndavana than in Vaikuntha-loka, Dvaraka, and Mathura, that opulence is covered with sweetness. This is the specialty of Vrndavana.

Krsna has parents, Devaki and Vasudeva, in Dvaraka Puri, but there He is a ksatriya, a Yadava, and He is always surrounded by His many Queens. He cannot carry His flute and wear His peacock feather there, nor has He any other paraphernalia of Vrndavana there. The Queens of Dvaraka have love and affection for Him, and many sweet pastimes take place in Dvaraka – but not like those of Vraja. Among all the residents of Dvaraka and Mathura, Krsna selected only Uddhava to go to Vrndavana. Arjuna is superior to

Hanuman, but Uddhava is superior to Arjuna. He is Krsna best friend, His servant, and His advisor, and he is the Prime Minister of the Vrsni dynasty.

vrsninam pravaro mantri
krsnasya dayitah sakha
sisyo brhaspateh saksad
uddhavo buddhi-sattamah

"The supremely intelligent Uddhava was the best counselor of the Vrsni dynasty, a beloved friend of Lord Sri Krsna and a direct disciple of Brhaspati." (SB 10.46.1)

Uddhava plays so many roles in his relationship with Krsna, but when he went to Vrndavana, he realized, "I'm not really a bhakta of Krsna. He never fully lives in Mathura and Dvaraka. He is only partly there, but He is always in Vraja in His full feature." When Uddhava went to Vraja, he saw the height of the love and affection of Nanda Baba, Yasoda, and the gopis, and then he began to pray:

vande nanda- vraja- strinam
pada-renum abhiksnasah
yasam hari-kathodgitam
punati bhuvana-trayam

"I repeatedly offer my respects to the dust from the feet of the women of Nanda Maharaja's cowherd village. When these gopis loudly chant the glories of Sri Krsna, the vibration purifies the three worlds." (SB 10.47.63)

Uddhava uttered, "I pray to the dust of the lotus feet of the gopis. More so, I pray to one particle of dust of the lotus feet of one gopi. That particle of dust is so powerful that it can fulfill the desires of the whole world. I want to be any grass, or any creeper in Vrndavana, so that when the gopis come to meet Krsna at night, their foot dust will fall upon my head. Brahma, Sankara, and all other demigods pray to Krsna. They want to meditate on Krsna, but His lotus feet do not come in their meditation or in their hearts. The gopis, on the other hand, keep the lotus feet of Krsna directly on their breasts, and Krsna is always controlled by them. I therefore want to have the foot dust of the gopis on my head."

Uddhava prayed, "O gopis, I have received so much by your darsana; my life is now successful. In Mathura, I would not have realized your glories, but now I can see them." These gopis are not sadhakas, and they are not even siddhas. They are Krsna-kala, Krsna's own sakti or power.

You can also say that the gopis are Krsna; no harm. They are acintya bhedabheda. As His power, they are simultaneously different and non-different from Him. Our aim and object is to have love and affection like the gopis, to be the maidservant of the gopis, and to serve Radha-Krsna Conjugal under the guidance of the gopis.

How can we attain this most elevated object? We learn from Srila Rupa Gosvami that within each very minute seed of a pipal tree, or banyan tree, there is the potency of all the leaves and branches of that tree. The potency of its height, width, age, fruits, and the sweetness of those fruits are all contained within the seed. Similarly, the potency of our complete spiritual form and nature is in our soul, and Guru helps to manifest that seed of bhakti there. That seed fully contains everything about our spiritual identity, but don't think that it will fructify in a day or two. You should have strong faith in the chanting of the maha-mantra and diksa-mantras given by Gurudeva. Don't doubt their potency. The fruit will not come in a day or two, or even in one or two years. It may take a long time because we have forgotten Krsna for millions of births, from time immemorial, but it will come. Don't be weak. You want to see the fruit immediately, as you want to immediately roll as capati, cook it, and eat it; but bhakti is not like that. A five-year-old girl may say, "I want to see my child," but she must first mature and marry. As it may take many years to have a child, why are you in a hurry about bhakti? If you have no taste, no harm. Go on chanting and remembering Krsna. Go on practicing:

sraavanam kirtanam visnoh
smaranam pada-sevanam
arcanam vandanam dasyam
sakhyam atma-nivedanam

“The nine-fold process of devotional service consists of hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Visnu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him.” (Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.5.23)

Gradually your practice will become very strong, and you will have a very thick relationship with Krsna. All of your offences and anarthas will disappear, taste will then come very quickly, asakti will come, and then rati will come. Don't be hopeless.

Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja came to this world and gave the process of chanting the maha-mantra, and the diksa-mantras like brahma-gayatri, guru-mantra, guru-gayatri, gaura-mantra, gaura-gayatri, gopal-mantra (krsna-mantra) and kama-gayatri. Still, so many left him. Some of them became family persons and are hardly practicing. I think that all who are present here were brahmacaris at the time of Srila Swami Maharaja, but when he left this world all became grhastha, and some totally left Krsna Consciousness. Don't be like that. It may take time to become perfect, but always remember:

utsahan niscayad dhairyat
tat tat karma pravartanat
sanga-tyagat sato vrtteh
sadbhir bhaktih prasidhyati

"There are six principles favorable to the execution of pure devotional service: (1) being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring with confidence, (3) being patient, (4) acting according to regulative principles [such as sravanam kirtanam visnu smaranam [SB 7.5.23] - hearing, chanting and remembering Krsna], (5) abandoning the association of nondevotees, and (6) following in the footsteps of the previous acaryas. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service."

Always be like that. Try to double your chanting, remembering, reading, worshiping, and all other devotional practices. Measure your progress daily by asking yourself, "At what stage was my bhakti yesterday, and what is the standard of my bhakti today?" In business, in the evening, before closing shop, the owner of a shop will check his records to see if he has a profit or a loss. If there is a gain, it is good; if there is a loss, it is bad. Similarly, if your bhakti is not increasing, there must be a loophole. Follow Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, and never slip from the line of bhakti.

guru-gosthe-gostalayisu-sujane-bhusura-gane
sva-mantre-sri-namni-vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-sarane
sada-dambham-hitva-kuru-ratim-apurvam-atitara-
maye-svantar-bhratas-catubhir-abhiyace-dhrta-padah

"O my dear brother, my foolish mind! Taking hold of your feet, I humbly pray to you with sweet words. Please give up all pride and quickly develop sublime and incessant rati for Sri Gurudeva, Sri Vraja-dhama, the residents of Vraja, the Vaisnavas, the brahmanas, your diksa-mantras, the holy names of the Supreme Lord, and the shelter of Kisora-Kisori, Sri Sri Radha-Krsna, the eternally youthful divine couple of Vraja." (Sri Manah-siksa, verse one, by Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami)

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami is saying, "Oh my brother mind, give up all false ego and worldly desires. I pray to you very humbly; follow me. You should chant the maha-mantra daily, and you should also meditate in the morning, midday and evening on the mantras that my Gurudeva has given: brahma-gayatri, guru-mantra, guru-gayatri, gaura-mantra, gopal-mantra, krsna-mantra, and kama-gayatri. Increasing more and more, continue without fail. If you do not follow these principles and you are associating with bad elements, your bhakti will disappear."

At last you should remember:

tan-nama-rupa-caritadi-sukirtananu-
smrtyoh-kramena-rasana-manasi-niyojya
tisthan-vraje-tad-anuragi-jananugami
kalam-nayed-akhilam-ity-upadesa-saram

"The essence of all advice is that one should utilize one's full time – twenty-four hours a day – in nicely chanting and remembering the Lord's divine name, transcendental form, qualities and eternal pastimes, thereby gradually engaging one's tongue and mind. In this way one should reside in Vraja [Goloka Vrndavana dhama] and serve Krsna under the

guidance of devotees. One should follow in the footsteps of the Lord's beloved devotees, who are deeply attached to His devotional service." (Upadesamrta, verse 8)

This is the essence of all the teachings of Srila Rupa Gosvami. By following this, your life will be successful. Always try to be in Vrndavana, where the gopas and gopis performed their pastimes, where Yamuna is flowing, where Giriraja Govardhana gloriously stands, and where Krsna never leaves. Try to go there under the guidance of any qualified rasika Vaisnava who is in the line of Rupa Gosvami. Don't go with an ordinary person. Try to remember the holy names of Radha and Krsna that qualify Them as the Istadevas of the mood for which you aspire, remember the meaning of those names, and also remember your connection with Their sweet pastimes.

sri krsna gopala hare mukunda
govinda he nanda kisora Krsna
ha sri yasoda tanaya prasida
sri ballavi jivana radhikesa

Chant Hare Krsna, but with a link to the names' relationship with the sweet pastimes of Krsna. Chant names like these: Sri Krsna, Gopala, Hari, Mukunda, and Govinda. But you will not yet be fully satisfied. Then you will chant, "Ha Sri Yasoda," and then something more, "Sri Ballavi Jivana," and finally "Radhikesa." This is the Supreme name. If you are weeping with a melting heart while chanting, you will then see that Krsna is in your heart. Don't expect that your seed will become a big mango tree in one day. In this process you should chant, remember, follow your Gurudeva and Vaisnavas, and remain in the association of self-realized devotees. This is the essence of all the teachings of Sri Rupa Gosvami. If you follow these teachings, you are obeying me, Srila Swami Maharaja, our guru-parampara, Sri Rupa Gosvami, and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. This is the only process; I don't know anything other than this.

Gaura premanande

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