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Subject: 2001 July 19 – Russia – A Response to the Rtvik System

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A RESPONSE TO THE RTVIK SYSTEM
A Lecture Given in Polansk, Russia: July 19, 2001

I offer my humble obeisances at the lotus feet of my paramaradhyatama gurupadapadma nitya-lila pravista om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktiprajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja, and also to my siksa-guru om visnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja.

In our class yesterday we discussed the intrinsic nature of bhakti. We explained there that pure bhakti is the function of the svarupa-sakti (internal potency) of Krsna, and therefore it never manifests in the material senses, words, or mind. There is a process for it to manifest, however. Krsna is an ocean of mercy and His devotee is also an ocean of mercy. Our only hope is to receive their mercy. This is the only ray of hope. Only by the causeless mercy of Krsna and His devotees will the vrtti (characteristic function) of svarupa-sakti enter and become one with the senses of the material body.

Srila Rupa Gosvami has given a process for this transcendental vrtti of bhakti to come upon the conditioned soul's tongue and other senses, and that is:

adau sraddha tatah sadhu sanga'tha bhajana-kriya,
tato 'nartha nivritti syat tato nistha rucis tatah,
athasaktis tato bhavas tatah premabhyudancati
sadhakam ayam pennah pradurbhave bhavet kramah

"In the beginning there must be faith. Then one becomes interested in associating with pure devotees. Thereafter one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles under his orders. Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits and becomes firmly fixed in devotional service. Thereafter, one develops taste and attachment. This is the way of sadhana-bhakti, the execution of devotional service according to the regulative principles. Gradually emotions intensify, and finally there is an awakening of love. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Krsna consciousness."

(Madhya 23.16)

Without accepting diksa from a bona fide guru, can one develop bhakti or not? Some think that chanting, remembering, reading books, and performing arcana, sravanam and

kirtanam is sufficient and there is no need for a mediator. They think that accepting a 'rtvik' person is sufficient for attaining pure bhakti, and there is no need of accepting diksa from any living self-realized guru.

Those who think, "There is no need to accept a guru as a mediator because we can chant the holy name, we can read books, and we can do arcana and sadhana simply by the rtvik system," are not within the guru-parampara. They deceive others. They are actually cheaters; not bhaktas. Nowhere in the sastra is it written that a rtvik can ever give bhakti. [There are nineteen places in Prabhupada's books where the word 'rtvik' is used, and in all cases the word only refers to a priest officiating or performing a fire sacrifice. Even when the word used is 'rtvik acarya,' it is still defined as a priest performing a fire sacrifice for a secular gain.] This can never be the case. Those who advocate the rtvik system are misleaders, and their followers are misled. Do not go towards the rtvik system.

Nowadays, among others, those who fell down from their pure life and those who left the renounced order due to being very lusty want to be rtvik. They want to gain the same position they had before, and that is why they are crying, "Rtvik, rtvik, rtvik!" Actually, however, they are all fallen souls and they have nothing to do with bhakti. In none of the sastras has it been said that this rtvik system will give bhakti.

Be careful regarding the bogus rtvik system. These rtviks have no faith in Krsna, no faith in bhakti, and no faith in scriptures like the Vedas, Upanisads, Srimad Bhagavatam, and Caitanya-caritamṛta. They also have no faith in the guru-parampara, and that is why they cannot give bhakti. You should give up the idea that the rtviks can help. They can never help you. They have never even helped themselves, so how can they help others?

This word 'rt' has come from the word 'Rg-Veda.' Those who know all Vedas, including the Rg, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva Veda, all the Upanishads, and all the Puranas, are actually rtvik. I think, however, that these modern rtviks don't even know the ABC's of the Vedas. They say that in this world there are no pure devotees, and therefore there are no pure devotees to initiate anyone. This idea is very, very wrong and it is against the principles of bhakti. The rtvik proponents saw that the devotees in their society were quarreling amongst themselves, and that there was no suddha-bhakta there. Then, mistaking that those who quarreled were in the guru-parampara, the rtviks became opposed to the actual guru-parampara.

Beware of this rtvik system. Without a self-realized guru you cannot achieve bhakti in thousands of births. This is an established truth. This is siddhanta. You should therefore accept a sad-guru, serve him, and try to follow his instructions. Then you can develop your Krsna consciousness and all of your anarthas will disappear. Otherwise, it will never be possible for pure bhakti to come and touch your heart and senses.

I would like to clarify one thing. I am not saying that all rtviks mislead others. Only those who say that there is no need of a guru do so. Whatever has been told in the Vedas and Upanisads about rtviks is only in relation to their sole function in a fire sacrifice, and those fire sacrifices are performed only to fulfill a worldly desire. They have nothing to

do with transcendental love and affection for Krsna. [In The True Conception of Sri Guru-tattva it is stated: "After deliberation upon the Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Puranas, it becomes obvious that rtviks have nothing to do with the supreme transcendental goal..'Rtau yajtiti rtviki.' One who conducts sacrifices according to Vedic mantras is called a rtvik. There is an arrangement of 16 types of rtviks to perform the sacrifices... The yajman employs priests to perform sacrifices for him and he pays them... All these rtviks are virtuous, of high character, learned in the Vedas, and expert in the execution and supervision of sacrifices... After the completion of the yajnas, the yajman (employer) pays the appropriate remuneration to the rtviks and sends them away. The yajman and the rtvik have no mutual eternal relationships."]

Real rtviks know all sastras, and all of them have gurus. A rtvik cannot be a rtvik without accepting a real guru. All rtviks, like Vasistha Rsi, are very high-class devotees. Visvamisra, Gautama, and even Vyasadeva are rtviks, but they have all accepted the guru-parampara. They all believe that there are always self-realized gurus in the world. Nowadays, therefore, those who call themselves rtviks are all cheaters, and we should beware of them.

When we accept a guru, it may be that we have so many anarthas, unwanted thoughts and habits, within us. We may be very ignorant about krsna-tattva, maya-tattva, radha-tattva, bhakti-tattva, and all other tattvas. So many anarthas and aparadhas may be there within us, but there is a process to be free from them.

There are so many gurus: caitya-guru, diksa-guru, siksa-guru, bhajana-guru, and others. Why go to a bogus-rtvik guru? If our siksa-gurus are Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda prabhu, and Radhika, why do we need to go to these rtviks?

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