

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

## **THE SECOND STAGE OF BHAKTI**

(A lecture based on Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's Sri Bhajana Rahasya)

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We have finished discussing the first yama (stage) of bhajana – sraddha – what it is and how to achieve it. Try to achieve transcendental sraddha, the essence of that first yama.

Corresponding to the first yama of bhajana, the first sweet pastimes in Sri Krsna's day are those of nisanta-lila, the last part of the night. Srimati Radharani and Sri Krsna are sleeping and Sri Vrnda-devi fears, "Now it is going to be dawn." She thus orders all the birds, like Suka, Sari and others, to sweetly sing the glories of Sri Krsna so that He and Srimati Radharani will wake up and return to Their homes. This is the first yama pastime of Sri Krsna, and the first yama pastime of sadhana-bhajana is sraddha. If there is no sraddha, there is no bhajana.

Nowadays I see that devotees have so many problems, and because of these problems, they cannot chant regularly. Sometimes they are restless and upset, and thus they give up worshipping Thakurji (the deity), chanting, remembering and reading books. I have come to remind you to not be like that; do not be weak. Your suffering will increase by whatever you are doing to decrease it. So don't be upset, but rather try to chant more and read more. When reading the books of Parama-pujyapada Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja, you should think, "He is instructing me." If reading a book of Srila Rupa Gosvami, think that Srila Rupa Gosvami is speaking to you; and if reading Srimad-Bhagavatam, think that Srila Sukadeva Gosvami and Srila Vyasadeva are speaking to you. And always pray to Lord Krsna and Sri Gurudeva to sprinkle their mercy upon you.

Then: dvitiya-yama sadhana – practicing the limbs of bhakti in the association of pure sadhus and gradually coming to anartha-nivrtti (gradual removal of anarthas). Only sadhu-sanga can remove all your offenses and unwanted things. No one else can remove them. Always give importance to your chanting – more than to making money – then all your problems will be solved. Have very strong belief that the holy name is Sri Krsna and Srimati Radhika Themselves. To give us this strong belief Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura quotes the verse:

namnam akari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis  
tatarpita niyamitah smarane na kalah  
etadrsi tava krpa bhagavan mamapi  
durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah

["O Bhagavan! Your holy name bestows all auspiciousness upon the living entities. Therefore, for the benefit of the jivas, You eternally manifest Your

innumerable names, such as Rama, Narayana, Krsna, Mukunda, Madhava, Govinda, and Damodara. You have invested those names with all the potencies of their respective forms. Out of causeless mercy, You have not even imposed any restrictions on the chanting and remembrance of such names. Nonetheless, I am so unfortunate due to committing offenses that I have no attachment for Your holy name, which is so easily accessible and bestows all good fortune." (Sri Siksastakam verse 2)]

What is sadhu-sanga? Sat is Krsna: satcidananda-ghana (the condensed form of eternity, bliss and knowledge). He is the only Sat (Supreme existence), and only those who are serving Sat are sadhus. Especially, those who are following the gopis and Srimati Radhika are the most qualified sadhus.

Krsna has placed all His power, mercy, beauty, and so on in His names. The 16 names in the Hare Krsna mantra are very powerful, even more so than Bhagavan Sri Krsna Himself. The names are not simple names; they are sabda-brahma (the Absolute Truth in the form of sound, or the transcendental sound of the complete body of Vedic knowledge), Sri Krsna Himself. He has made no rules and regulations, such as, "You cannot chant in the morning", or "You can chant only after bathing", or "You can only chant at midnight", or "You cannot chant while walking." There are no rules and regulations.

On one hand we have so much causeless mercy from Lord Krsna, and on the other hand we have no respect and no belief that His name can give us money. We depend on our job and money-making activities, and not on His name. We can see our ideals in our guru-parampara. What was Srila Haridasa Thakura doing for maintenance? What were Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja and myself doing? Nothing, and yet we are maintained better than all of you. I am not maintaining my life; you are – by the inspiration of Sri Krsna. Have strong belief in this.

There are six limbs of saranagati, surrender to Sri Krsna:

anukulyasya sankalpa  
pratikulyasya varjanam  
raksisyatiti visvaso  
goptrtve varanam tatha  
atma-niksepa-karpanye  
sad-vidha saranagatih

["There are six symptoms of self-surrender (saranagati). The first two are anukulyasya sankalpa and pratikulyasya varjanam: 'I will only do that which is favorable for unalloyed bhakti, and I will reject all that is unfavorable.' This is called sankalpa or pratijna, a solemn vow. The third symptom is raksisyatiti visvaso, faith in Bhagavan as one's protector: 'Bhagavan is my only protector. I can derive absolutely no benefit from jnana, yoga, and other such practices.' This

is an expression of trust (visvasa). The fourth symptom is goptrtve varanam, deliberate acceptance of Bhagavan as one's maintainer: 'I cannot obtain anything, or even maintain myself, by my own endeavor. I will serve Bhagavan as far as I am able, and He will take care of me.' This is what is meant by dependence (nirbhara). The fifth symptom is atma-niksepa, surrender: 'Who am I? I am His. My duty is to fulfill His desire.' This is submission of the self (atma-nivedana). The sixth symptom is karpanye, meekness: 'I am wretched, insignificant, and materially destitute.' This is what is meant by humility (karpanya or dainya)." (Bhakti-sandarbha-A-236)]

Very strongly accept what is favorable for bhakti and strongly reject what is unfavorable. Krsna Bhagavan has created all these worlds and He is powerful enough to save anyone and to do anything. If you have taken His shelter and are surrendered, then give up everything "on the head of Sri Krsna" and don't be worried. If He can create millions of universes and He is supporting even a fish in the sea and a bird in the midst of mountains where there is no one to maintain them, why won't He support you? Be like Sri Prahlada Maharaja. Have belief that Lord Krsna will support you, and you will see that He is true to the words He has spoken in the Bhagavad-gita: "For those who are ananya-bhaktas, those who don't know anyone other than Me, I take the responsibility for all the paraphernalia of their lives on My head and shoulders. I carry that paraphernalia Myself, and I support and nourish those devotees." He will surely keep His promise, but we have no strong faith in this and that is why we suffer. You will suffer if you are not surrendered.

Don't be upset. Be like Srila Haridasa Thakura who was beaten in so many marketplaces and at the same time was always chanting, "Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna" and feeling no pain. Sri Prahlada Maharaja was given poison and thrown in a fire, but nothing happened to him. This is sraddha.

Srila Haridasa Thakura told his executioners, "Even if you cut me in pieces, I cannot give up chanting the holy name." Be like this and you will see that Lord Krsna is always with you.

maya-mugdhasya jivasya  
jneyo anarthas catur-vidhah  
hrd-daurbalyam caparadho  
asat-trsna tattva-vibhramah

["The anarthas of the living entities enchanted by maya are of four kinds: 1) illusion about one's real identity (svarupa-bhrama), 2) hankering for that which is temporary (asat-trsna), 3) offences (aparadha) and 4) weakness of heart (hrdaya-daurbalya). They bind the living entity to the material world and entangle him in its miseries. (Sri Bhajana-rahasya 2.7)]

All conditioned souls are full of anarthas, and the first is svarupa-bhrama. We have deviated from our transcendental constitutional form and have forgotten Krsna. Therefore so many worldly desires come, and while fulfilling all these desires our heart becomes weak and then aparadhas come and we are thus bound up. At that time we want to go very far away from Krsna and guru.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja then called on various devotees who spoke at length about the four types of anarthas. For the sake of brevity we are substituting their speeches with the description given in Sri Bhaki-rasamrta-sindhu-bindu by Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura:]

"Anarthas are of four kinds: (1) svarupa-bhrama (illusion about spiritual identity), (2) asat-trsna (thirst for that which is unreal; that is, material enjoyment), (3) aparadha (offences) and (4) hrdaya-daurbalya (weakness of heart).

"Svarupa-bhrama is of four kinds: (1) sva-tattva- or jiva-svarupa-bhrama (illusion about one's spiritual identity), (2) para-tattva-bhrama (illusion about the spiritual identity of the supreme absolute truth), (3) sadhya-sadhana-tattva-bhrama (illusion about sadhana-bhakti, the means of spiritual perfection, and sadhya, the object to be obtained by such sadhana, or in other words prema-bhakti) and (4) maya-tattva-bhrama (illusion about the Lord's external energy, maya).

"Asat-trsna is of four types: (1) varieties of desires for material enjoyment in this world, (2) desires for enjoyment in the higher planetary systems of Svargaloka, (3) desires for the attainment of the eight mystic siddhis and the nine divine jewels of Kuvera (padma, mahapadma, sankha, makara, kacchapa, mukunda, kunda, nila and kharva) and (4) the desire for mukti.

"Aparadha is of four kinds: (1) offences towards Sri Krsna, (2) offences towards krsna-nama, (3) offences towards krsna-svarupa (the deity form of the Lord) and (4) offences towards the tadiya-cit-kana-jivas (living entities who are infinitesimal particles of spirit belonging to the Lord).

"Hrdaya-daurbalya is of four kinds: (1) tuccha-asakti (attachment for useless things), (2) kuti-nati (deceitful behavior): the word kuti-nati may be broken down into the constituent parts ku, bad or evil, and na or nati, that which is forbidden. In that case it would mean doing wicked deeds or doing that which is forbidden), (3) matsarya (envy) and (4) sva-pratistha-lalasa (desire for one's own fame and prestige)."

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] If you have the four kinds of anarthas, you cannot chant pure harinama or even nama-abhasa. After some time you will be so weak that you will give up chanting and remembering Bhagavan Sri Krsna and your Guru, and you will throw your deities in the ocean. Now you are worshiping so many deities, but at that time you will worship none. Try to be careful of nama-aparadha, seva-aparadha and tadiya-aparadha (tadiya means those personas and

places associated with Kṛṣṇa like Ganga, Yamuna, dhama and all the Vaisnavas). If you don't criticize any Vaisnava, very soon you will be able to achieve the pure holy name.

We should try to understand the Sri Upedasmṛta, especially the first eight verses. These are very important.

vaco vegam manasah krodha-vegām  
jihva-vegām udaropastha-vegām  
etan vegān yo viśaheta dhīrah  
sarvām apimam pṛthivīm sa śiśyat

["A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the actions of anger and the urges of the tongue, belly and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world." (Upadesamṛta, verse 1)]

atyaharah prayasas ca  
prajāḷpo niyamagrahah  
jana-sangas ca laulyam ca  
sadbhir bhaktir vinasyati

["One's devotional service is spoiled when he becomes too entangled in the following six activities: (1) eating more than necessary or collecting more funds than required; (2) overendeavoring for mundane things that are very difficult to obtain; (3) talking unnecessarily about mundane subject matters; (4) Practicing the scriptural rules and regulations only for the sake of following them and not for the sake of spiritual advancement, or rejecting the rules and regulations of the scriptures and working independently or whimsically; (5) associating with worldly-minded persons who are not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness; and (6) being greedy for mundane achievements." (Upadesmṛta verse 2)]

utsaha niscayat dharyat  
tat-tat-karma-pravartanat  
sanga tyagat sato vṛttech  
sadbhir bhaktir 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 visnoh smaranam [SB 7.5.23]-hearing, chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa], (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." (Upadesamṛta, verse 3)]

This verse is very important. You should come in that process which is favorable for bhakti. Utsaha means enthusiasm. Do not be lazy in chanting, remembering,

and all the other limbs of bhakti. Be very enthusiastic, more so than in your worldly jobs or duties. You should have strong faith in Lord Krsna's words and in the words of scriptures and your Gurudeva. If any problems come, keep your feet on the head of all the problems; never be weak.

Try to give up all kinds of sense gratification and reject all things not favorable for bhakti. Avoid the association of non-devotees and the association of stri-sangi (the opposite sex) and those absorbed in association with the opposite sex. Also avoid the association of mayavadis, sahaijayas and others like them. Be very careful to avoid them. Sato vrte – our guru-varga (disciplic succession) has made some rules and regulations regarding those in the renounced order. A sannyasi should not do any business, for it will spoil his bhajana. He should not make an incense factory or anything of that sort. A grhastha can do that, not with full energy but only to maintain his life, or else it will ruin his bhajana as well.

We should remember that there are two things, maintenance of life and practice of bhakti, and both are needed. If you cannot maintain your life you will die, and then who will practice bhakti-yoga? Maintain, but do not be attached. Have a strong belief in Sri Krsna.

Sannyasis like Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Sanatana Gosvami sometimes went to householders and begged simple prasada like chapattis, and this kind of begging is called madhukari. Regarding householder devotees, Srivasa Thakura, Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi and others like them led very simple lives. The first line of this verse, utsaha niscayat dharyat, explains how to practice bhakti-yoga, and the second line, tat-tat-karma-pravartanat, tells how to maintain our life. The maintenance of our life should be pure. We should not make money by drug selling and similar occupations.

dadati pratigrhnati  
guhyam akhyati prechati  
bhunkte bhojayate caiva  
sad-vidham priti-laksanam

["Offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts, revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially, accepting prasadam and offering prasadam are the six symptoms of love shared by one devotee and another." (Upadesamrta, verse 4)

drstaih svabhava-janitair vapusas ca dosair  
na prakrtatvam iha bhakta janasya pasyet  
gangambhasam na khalu budbuda-phena-pankair  
brahma-dravatvam apagacchati nira-dharmaih

["Being situated in his original Krsna conscious position, a pure devotee does not identify with the body. Such a devotee should not be seen from a materialistic

point of view. Indeed, one should overlook a devotee's having a body born in a low family, a body with a bad complexion, a deformed body, or a diseased or infirm body. According to ordinary vision, such imperfections may seem prominent in the body of a pure devotee, but despite such seeming defects, the body of a pure devotee cannot be polluted. It is exactly like the waters of the Ganges, which sometimes during the rainy season are full of bubbles, foam and mud. The Ganges waters do not become polluted. Those who are advanced in spiritual understanding will bathe in the Ganges without considering the condition of the water." (Upadesamrta, verse 6)]

Try to give up your dehatma-buddhi. Don't think "I am this body," and don't think that the body of a pure Vaisnava is mortal. He may be black, he may have crooked teeth and sometimes he may appear to speak harshly, but don't be cheated by those symptoms. Sometimes he may chastise you, but that is for your welfare. He may look ugly, but his soul is very beautiful, so don't criticize or offend him.

All rivers, ponds, etc. have some mud and foam. The Ganges does too, but her water is never contaminated even today. All rivers are contaminated, but this water is so pure that if you keep it in a bottle for months at a time it will not get polluted by worms or germs. Ganges is the caranamrta (water that bathed the feet) of Sri Vamanadeva, and she is also the most beloved Ganges who is serving Sri Krsna in Goloka Vrndavana. Once, Ganga-sakhi was meeting with Krsna, and in the meantime Srimati Radhika came. Both Sri Krsna and the Srimati Ganga-sakhi became upset and thought, "What to do? Srimati Radhika has come." So Ganga-sakhi became a river and Krsna became salagrama-sila (worshipable stone), and thus they avoided being seen and Srimati Radhika did not become sulky (in transcendental loving jealous anger). The Ganges is that sakhi, the beloved of Krsna. She will never be contaminated though there appears to be so much foam, clay and mud. Similarly, a pure Vaisnava may look ugly to you, but his soul is very beautiful. If he speaks harshly, no harm; because he is actually very compassionate.

We have experience of this with Pujiyapada Trivikrama Maharaja. Once his father and mother came to visit him, and at that time he spoke many harsh words to his father. I became upset and later asked him. "Why were you speaking like that to your father? You are indebted to your mother and father." He said, "I know; but I spoke like that because I do not want them to be attached to me and make any problem for my living in the matha. That is why I outwardly spoke like that." Srila Trivikrama Maharaja used to chastise the brahmacaris if they had done wrong; so everyone used to fear him. In his last days, however, he manifested a very humble nature and was like a small child. So don't criticize, otherwise you will lose your bhakti.

krsneti yasya giri tam manasadriyeta  
diksasti cet pranatibhis ca bhajantam isam  
susrusaya bhajana-vijnam ananyam anya-

nindadi-sunya-hrdam ipsita-sanga-labdhya

["One should mentally honor the devotee who chants the holy name of Lord Krsna, one should offer humble obeisances to the devotee who has undergone spiritual initiation [diksa] and is engaged in worshipping the Deity, and one should associate with and faithfully serve that pure devotee who is advanced in undeviated devotional service and whose heart is completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others." (Upadesamrta, verse 5)

It is stated here that there are three kinds of Vaisnavas, and we should respect them properly according to their stage.

First you should come from the stage of kanistha-adhikari to the stage of madhyama-adhikari. Then, in madhyama-adhikari, you will be able to do this. You will be able to recognize who is a pure Vaisnava and who is not a Vaisnava. If you cannot realize this it means you are still a kanistha. If you are in the stage of kanistha-adhikari there is nothing to tell you. Gradually, by sadhu-sanga, you will know all these things. A kanistha-adhikari is ignorant, and some ignorance can be tolerated.

However, a madhyama-adhikari should be very careful. He should know the proper etiquette in serving and glorifying Vaisnavas. If someone has not taken diksa, who is not initiated and is not a pure Vaisnava but time to time chants Hare Krsna or Krsna-Radhe, a madhyama-adhikari should honor him by mind but not by body and offering pranama. If one is kanistha he should be asat-sanga tyagi. He should not mix with mayavadis, sense enjoyers, lusty persons or the opposite sex. If he is chanting the holy name, whether he is initiated or not, properly honor him by your mind. You can think, "He is svajatiya (like-minded); he is like our brother, but ignorant." When diksa initiation has been given and the devotee has a relationship with Sri Krsna, and makes his offerings to Him with that relationship and chants and remembers Him in that special relationship, then you should honor him by your words, body and mind. He is chanting nama-abhasa, and after some time his chanting will change to pure nama.

Do not give respect to anyone and everyone, just because they wear tulsi-mala and big tilaka. If someone puts tilaka and big japa-mala on a donkey, will you do pranama to that donkey? No. Similarly, someone may be like an animal internally, but externally puts on long tilaka and carries four-kilo chanting beads. That does not make him a pure Vaisnava. Try to realize this. Don't give respect or offer pranama to such a person – even if he is chanting.

Then, "bhajantam isam." If a devotee is always chanting the holy name with relation, you should honor him by susrusaya (practical service).

tad viddhi pranipatena  
pariprasnena sevaya

upadeksyanti te jnanam  
jnaninas tattva-darsinah

["Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth." (Bhagavad-gita 4.34)]

You should do visvrambhena-seva (intimate service) to that bona fide guru. He never criticizes anyone good or bad. He is always sinking in the ocean of services to Sri Sri Radha-Krsna. Bhajana-vijnam ananyam anyam. He is always sinking in the ocean of love and affection for Krsna. By seeing such devotees, Sri Krsna's name comes to you: Hare Krsna Hare Krsna.

In this way, those who are sometimes chanting are kanistha Vaisnavas; those who are remembering continuously are madhyama-adhikari; and those who by seeing krsna-nama is inspired in our heart, they are uttama-adhikari. Giving up everything and, putting your whole heart at the lotus feet of the uttama-adhikaris and serving them, you can quickly attain bhakti.

Suppose you are chanting the holy name, hearing hari-katha, remembering Krsna Bhagavan and doing arcana, but you have no taste for those devotional activities. If this is the case, you may be very weak. Don't follow your uncontrolled mind; follow your Guru's words. Even if you have no taste, continue to chant regularly. This is the medicine and the diet for that disease of lack of devotion. Suppose you are doing these activities for some time but have no taste in hearing, but you attend the Vaisnavas' classes and sit in the front line to hear. You may become sleepy, so take some water to keep yourself awake. In India we have a plant which, if you touch its leaves, you will itch everywhere. Also, put some chili powder near your eyes and then you will weep. Doing so and continuously hearing, gradually a taste will come as you continuously chant, whether your mind wants to or not.

There was a pure Vaisnava named Pujyapad Narahari prabhu, a prominent disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, and I saw that he used to chant throughout the day and night. He used to chant while doing service or going anywhere. He slept very little during the night and while chanting at that time he used to tie his sikha to a high object by a rope and he remained standing. Be sincere and try to follow this principle. Then, if you have no taste, taste will come.

Then:

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)]

Now come with me to Vrndavana, to Seva-Kunja, where Sri Krsna is very busy pacifying Srimati Radhika, placing His flute at Her lotus feet. Srila Rupa Gosvami is there, and at the same time he is giving instructions to us. He is telling us the essence of all instructions in one sloka, as one would place the entire ocean in a pitcher.

Tan nama. The name of Sri Krsna is very powerful, but between the name Krsna and name Damodara, which is superior? All names are okay, but Damodara is somewhat more powerful. While chanting the name Damodara, you should remember His pastimes. Remember how Mother Yasoda bound Him with ropes even though He is the Supreme Lord. There is no one more powerful than He, but He forgets that "I am the Supreme Lord and I have so much power. Sad-aisvarya – I am full with six opulences." Seeing Mother Yasoda He wept, and at last He was tied to the mortar. Remember this.

he krsna! karuna-sindho! dina-bando! jagat-pate!  
gopesa! gopika-kanta! radha-kanta! namo'stu te

Gopi-kanta means most beloved of all the gopis. You should chant this name and remember His sweet pastimes with the gopis as He played His flute. The essence of all the Vedas and Upanisads is klim; by that essence Sri Krsna was calling the gopis, and each gopi thought, "Krsna is only calling me."

Some of the gopis had been cooking, but they left that. Some of them had been boiling rice, and they left it boiling. Some of them had been making chapattis, and they left them on the fire with no concern if they burned or not. They didn't look behind. Those who were nourishing their husbands, distributing prasadam and serving their children left all those activities. Some had been decorating themselves and had finished putting kajaI on one eye, but they had no time to put it on the other. Some had been putting on ornaments, and upon hearing Sri Krsna's flute they put their necklaces on their waists and other ornaments somewhere else. They forgot everything and ran to Him.

When they arrived, however, He told them, "Oh, I am very happy you came to see Me, because I am Parambrahma, the creator of the entire world. Now you have taken darsana, so now you should return to your homes." The gopis were silent. Looking down at the earth, they scratched it with their nails. With tears falling from their eyes they asked each other, "Why is He being so tricky? What is He

telling us?" Sri Krsna then said, "Even if your husband is ugly or blind, even if he is not earning money, you should try to serve him. Now the forest is full of wild beasts and the night is dark, so you should return home."

Many gopis were present there, and they gave a variety of arguments to Krsna.

One gopi said, "We cannot return yet. You should first return our hearts, which you have stolen. Our hearts are the biggest wealth of our lives. You should return them; and if you don't, we cannot go. What will we do if you don't return our hearts? Without our hearts, how can we walk and what would we do once we reach home?"

Sri Krsna said, "Still, you will have to go and serve your husbands."

The gopis said, "You are a very high class of Guru, and if You are God Himself, then You have written in the Bhagavad-gita or somewhere else that, "First surrender and worship and serve your Guru, then Me." So we are doing that exact thing. You are our Guru, because You are giving us so much knowledge by telling us, "You should serve your husbands." So if you do not give us a chance to serve You, then you have deviated from the principle of Guru. We thus reject You as Guru and we will not follow You.

"And one thing more. Our husbands are not our husbands. The meaning of 'pati' is as follows: pa indicates palana – to nourish and support; and ti indicates 'tra' – to deliver from miseries. Our husbands cannot do this. They themselves are greatly suffering, so they cannot help us. If we would be about to die, what could they do? You can do something, so You are really our husband and most beloved. If we have done something wrong, then You are to blame – because You have a very handsome, attractive and sweet appearance. Even demigods and their wives are attracted by You. Even Laksmi, the wife of Narayana, forgot her husband and came to You. If anything is wrong, it is that You are very beautiful and You have played on Your flute. Why did You play on Your flute and call us? Oh, You will have to accept us."

In this way they defeated Sri Krsna, and that Sri Krsna is Gopi-kanta. Remember these kinds of pastimes and at the same time chant:

hare krsna hare krsna krsna krsna hare hare  
hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare

If you are chanting "Radha-Rasavihari", remember the sweet pastimes of rasa. If "Radha-kanta" then remember the sweet pastimes of Sri Krsna as the beloved of Srimati Radharani. Once, Sri Krsna was going cow-herding with His millions upon millions of cow-herd friends. Sri Baladeva prabhu with his plow was in the front, Krsna was in the middle, and all the sakhas were surrounding them. His face was very beautiful and His footprints were beautifying the earth.

The cowherd boys were glorifying Sri Krsna by the words "Sadhu Sadhu!" Then Sri Krsna saw a very attractive young lady and thought "I am very beautiful, but this girl is more beautiful. I am sweet, but She is more sweet. I have all kinds of good qualities, but She is more qualified. When I see Her, My eyes and heart feel successful. Who is She?"

She was Srimati Radhika, and when She looked towards Krsna His flute fell from His hand and His peacock feather slid down from His head.

Sri Krsna became faint and was about to fall down; but in the meantime Madhumangala told Him, "What are You doing? Don't You see that Your mother and father are here?"

Remember these sweet pastimes and chant "Rasavihari, Radha-ramana ki jaya!"

narada muni bajaya vina 'radhika-ramana' name  
nama amani, udita hoye, bhakata-gita same

["The supremely rasika Sri Narada Muni plays his vina, singing the names of Sri Radhika-Ramana. Hearing this kirtana, nami (the possessors of the holy names) Sri Radhika-Ramana themselves immediately descend, dancing and tasting the bhava of Their devotees." (Narada Muni)]

The holy name is the essence of nectar. Sri Narada Muni was chanting the name, and playing on his vina and dancing.

So chant Hare Krsna with your tongue and at the same time remember Their sweet pastimes. Engage your tongue and mind under the guidance of a pure rasika (one who knows and tastes all the rasas), tattvajna (one who knows and realizes all established philosophical truths) Vaisnava in Vrndavana. If for any reason you cannot be in Vrndavana, try to be there by mind, thinking, "I am in Vrndavana. Yamuna is flowing very sweetly. Both banks of Yamuna are full with fragrant flowers like beli, jui, chameli, kadamba and so on. Bumble bees are humming, coo-coo birds are very sweetly singing, 'Radhe, Radhe!' and peacocks are dancing." Thinking this, chant:

hare krsna hare krsna krsna krsna hare hare  
hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare

If you follow all these instructions which are the essence of all nectar, you will very soon attain suddha-sattva (bhava-bhakti) and thus prema will come. Go on chanting and never be weak. If thousands upon millions of problems come, still, don't deviate.

Gaura premanande.

Editorial Advisors: Pujyapada Madhava Maharaja and Sripad Brajanatha dasa

Typist: Anita dasi

Transcriber: Vasanti dasi

Editor: Syamarani dasi