

Ananya Bhakti

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

In BG 12.8 Lord Sri Krishna says:

*mayy eva mana ādhatsva mayi buddhiṁ niveśaya
nivaśiṣyasi mayy eva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ*

Just fix you mind upon Me; the Supreme Personality of Godhead and engage all your intelligence in Me. Thus you will live in Me always, without a doubt.

Here Krishna says that we can live in Him when we give only two things to Him; our mind and intelligence. When we surrender our mind and intelligence to Him, we can live in Him without any doubt :

nivaśiṣyasi mayy eva ata ūrdhvaṁ na saṁśayaḥ

How insignificant are we? But still Krishna says we can live in Him. When we surrender to Him we realize that we are part of parcel of Krishna. Only **we** have the doubt. Can we live in Krishna, who is the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Is it ever possible? And the next question comes How? How to do it? How can we live in Krishna? Is it enough if we fix our mind upon Him and give our intelligence to Him. It sounds easy but the process looks difficult. How can we reach Him with our so called intelligence and all sorts of doubts?

In Krsna's childhood pastimes, there is the story of Aghasura Demon. It gives a clear idea of how the Gopas had simply surrendered unto Krishna, without a tinge of doubt. They had fixed their mind and surrendered their intelligence unto Him completely.

One day Aghasura, the snake demon watched Krishna and his friends playing in the forests. He was the younger brother of Putana and Bakasura; and he wanted to take revenge on Krishna. AghAsura was very huge. Srila Prabhupada describes "He was eight miles long, just like a very very fat snake. He stretched his mouth wide open like a mountain cave. His lower lip touched the ground and his upper lip touched the clouds way up in the sky. His jaws were very very deep and teeth looked like mountain peaks. His hot tongue looked like a wide road, his eyes were blazing like fire and his breathing was like a storm." He was too huge for our imagination. Aghasura was waiting with his mouth wide-open. He wanted to swallow all the gopas at once, including Krishna and Balarama.

The gopas saw Aghasura and first thought he was a statue. They started discussing among themselves. One gopa said this looks like a very very huge snake opening its mouth to swallow us. So what! Even if it were to swallow all of us, it could not possibly swallow Krishna. Krishna will easily kill him. All the gopas looked at the beautiful lotus-like face of Krishna, smiled and started to enter straight into the big open mouth of Aghasura.

Krishna looked at the gopas and gave his ever-enchanting smile.

Aghasura was waiting for Krishna. Krishna let the gopas play inside the demon's mouth for sometime and slowly went in. When Krishna went in all the demigods who had gathered to see the fun, hiding in the clouds, began to cry.

Suddenly Krishna started growing bigger and bigger inside the demon's throat. Aghasura coughed and choked. His big fiery eyes moved in pain and couldn't breath anymore. His life-air burst out of a hole in the top of his head and the demon dropped dead.

Then Krishna brought all the gopas and calves with Him safe and sound out of the mouth of the demon. From this pastime we can understand that it was the unflinching faith and love the gopas had for Krishna, that pleased Him. Lord Sri Krishna says in BG 8.14 that,

*ananya-cetāḥ satataṁ yo mām smarati nityaśaḥ
tasyāhaṁ su-labhaḥ pārtha nitya-yuktasya yoginaḥ*

For one who remembers Me without deviation, I am easy to obtain, O son of Partha, because of his constant engagement in devotional service.

Hence, I pray to Krishna for "*Ananya Bhakti*" i.e. to pray unto Him without any other object in mind and concentrating only on Him. I could then have at least a drop of the spontaneous love and unflinching faith shown by the gopas to Krishna.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Sindhu devi dasi
Abu Dhabi.

Moderator's Note: HG Sindhu Mathaji lives in Middle-east with her husband HG Sri Ramachandra Prabhu and their two sons Siddharth and Prashanth. She is a very humble devotee and does lot of service. She is taking care of one of the Gokulnandan classes (the spiritual program for kids) in the Abu Dhabi congregation. Both their sons are going to school and they are very obedient, studious, pious and intelligent in both their material education as well as spiritual activities.

Perfect Questions and Perfect Answers

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

I was going through HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj's diary yesterday and as usual I found very deep instructions in it. Maharaj had actually listed the famous questions from Mahabharata that the Yaksharaja asked Yudhishtir Maharaj when the rest of the Pandavas had fell down unconscious after drinking the water from the mystery pond during their exile. The questions are very deep and the answers that Yudhishtir Maharaj gave are much more deeper. These highest realizations when implemented in our practical life, will result in transcendental bliss. There is no doubt about it.

I am listing them here for all our benefit.

1. What makes sun shine everyday?

The power of brahman.

2. What rescues man in danger?

Courage is man's salvation in danger.

3. By the study of which science man becomes wise?

By the association of the great in wisdom that he gets wisdom.

4. What is more nobly sustaining than the earth?

The mother who brings up the children she has borne is nobler and more sustaining than the earth.

5. What is higher than the sky?

The father.

6. What is greater than the wind?

Mind.

7. What is more blighted than a withered straw?

A sorrow stricken heart.

8. What befriends the traveller?

Learning.

9. Who is the friend of one who stays at home?

Wife.

10. Who accompanies the man in death?

Dharma - that alone accompanies the soul in its solitary journey after death.

11. Which is the biggest vessel?

The Earth.

12. What is happiness?

It is the result of good conduct.

13. What is that abandoning which man is loved by all?

PRIDE.

14. What is the loss which yields joy and not sorrow?

ANGER.

15. What is that by giving up which man becomes rich?

Desire.

16. What makes one real brahmana?

Good conduct alone.

17. What is the greatest wonder in the world?

*ahany ahani bhūtāni gacchantīha yamālayam
śeṣāḥ sthāvaram icchanti kim āścaryam ataḥ param*

Every moment, every day, we see so many animals or men are dying. But those who are living he is thinking, 'I will not die.' This is the greatest wonder in the whole world.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Sudarshana devi dasi.

Real Devotional Service

Hare Krsna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my dandavat pranams. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

During Maharaj's recent visit to Auckland, nectar of Krsna Consciousness flowed with such velocity that we were all overwhelmed by the simplicity in which Maharaj could drive across crucial points to help our sadhana. Maharaj used the simple fact "We are all bound to die one day" as the vehicle to carry his transcendental messages. Maharaj explained that at the time of death our consciousness is lost from the feet upwards. Our legs, hands, eyes, ears, tongue etc all stop functioning. At that time only our devotional service will help us. If our devotional service to Krsna is perfect then He will help us to chant His name and take us back home.

Maharaj gave wonderful discourses during his stay in Auckland. Although I am certainly not qualified to write due to my mundane mind and intelligence, but due to Maharaj's encouragement, I am trying to reproduce one such verse which Maharaj took from SB 1.6.21:

*hantāsmiñ janmani bhavān mā mām draṣṭum ihārhati
avipakva-kaṣāyāṇām durdarśo 'haṁ kuyoginām*

O Narada [the Lord spoke], I regret that during this lifetime you will not be able to see Me anymore. Those who are incomplete in service and who are not completely free from all material taints can hardly see Me.

In the purport Srila Prabhupada says that, "*The beginning of devotional service starts from the point when one is freed from at least two forms of material modes namely the mode of passion and the mode of ignorance. The result is exhibited by the signs of being freed from kAma (lust) and lobha (covetousness) **And to be completely freed from all material tinges is to become free from the mode of goodness also.** One must be completely freed from all material attachment and be situated on the plane of transcendence, which alone will help the devotee get in personal touch with the Personality of Godhead.*"

Srila Prabhupada has given a very important point in the above purport for our consideration. He says that even mode of goodness is not enough for attaining the Supreme Lord. Why is it so? This is answered by the Lord in Gita 14.6:

*tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt prakāśakam anāmayam
sukha-saṅgena badhnāti jñāna-saṅgena cānagha*

O sinless one, the mode of goodness, being purer than the others, is illuminating, and it frees one from all sinful reactions. Those situated in that mode develop knowledge, but they become conditioned by the concept of happiness.

Srila Prabhupada expands on this important point in his purport to BG 14.6, "*As The difficulty here is that when a living entity is situated in the mode of goodness, he becomes conditioned to feel that he is advanced in knowledge and is better than others. In this way he becomes conditioned.*"

This is the most important point. *In mode of goodness there is every chance of getting into a comfort zone. We definitely get some peace when we are in the mode of goodness because we become sinless and equiposed. But that is not enough to become selfless. This is what the Lord indicates when He refers to Narada as "incomplete in service". Real selflessness means to not worry about our own difficulties but at the same time feel for the difficulties of others and try to help them. That is when the Lord will be actually satisfied with us. A Vaishnava's definition is given as "*
Vaiṣṇava

, *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī* - A Vaishnava is one who is troubled by the sufferings of others". Narada muni took the cue from the Lord and we can see the result in his next life, how many souls he delivered through his transcendental instructions!

Thank you very much.

Your servant,

Ambrish das

Auckland.

Bhakti - The Universal Solvent

Hare Krsna Prabhujis and Matajis,
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

We all know from Srimad Bhagavad Gita (7.4) that Earth, Water Fire, Air and Ether are the 5 gross creations within which the 5 sense objects are included and constitute our gross body. Mind, Intelligence and false Ego constitute our subtle body. Both our subtle and gross body are a part of Krsna's inferior energy (material nature). Our true identity is however the spirit soul (part and parcel of Krsna) concealed within the subtle body which in turn is concealed within the gross body.

Being conditioned in this material world, the subtle body is always under illusion in trying to lord instead of trying to serve as a servant of KRSNA, which is its true nature. So the free will that Krsna has given us is uselessly wasted in activities that the mind thinks would ensure better sense gratification for us, our family, friends, society, community, nation and so on.

Whenever we are successful in our material endeavors we become elated and praise ourselves but when our plans fail, we are frustrated. This is an ongoing process till the gross body has to die. After death of the gross body, the soul engaged with all the unfulfilled desires and material thoughts stored in the subtle body takes on another gross body with a particular set of sense objects to fulfill the unfulfilled desires in the best possible way as per the laws of nature.

Here it is evident that its the subtle body that keeps the soul engaged and moves endlessly from one gross body to another. But if the spirit soul can break open the clutches of the subtle body, just like a bird flies out naturally as soon as the cage is broken, then it goes back naturally to its original destination - back to KRSNA. Then there would be no requirement for a gross body. But how can we detach ourselves from the subtle body?

HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj in one of his lectures, quoted a verse from Srimad Bhagavatam 3.25.33 which answers the above question.

jarayatyaśu yā kośam nigīṛṇam analo yathā

Bhakti, devotional service, dissolves the subtle body of the living entity without separate effort, just as fire in the stomach digests all that we eat.

That gave us the answer - *it is Bhakti alone that dissolves the subtle body releasing the spirit soul* - i.e., Devotional service dissolves all the material thoughts and desires and in turn focusses them on Krsna. So to fulfill our uncontaminated desire to serve Him, Krsna gives us a spiritual body to go to Him and serve Him eternally. To facilitate this happening Krsna instructs us in the concluding verse of chapter 11 in Bhagavad Gita (11.55)

*mat-karma-kṛṇ mat-paramo mad-bhaktaḥ saṅga-varjitaḥ
nirvairaḥ sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ sa mām eti pāṇḍava*

My dear Arjuna, he who engages in my pure devotional service, free from the contaminations of fruitive activities and mental speculation, he who works for me, who makes me the supreme goal of his life, and who is friendly to every living being- he certainly comes to me.

What could be a more logical or a better scientific explanation for the return journey of the soul!

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Suhrts Krsna das
Auckland.

Moderator's Note: In our school days we learnt in our science subject that "**Water is the universal solvent**" - i.e., it has the ability to dissolve all the gross elements in this material world. The verse that HG Suhrts Krsna prabhu has quoted reveals the extraordinary power of devotional service as it says that bhakti can dissolve even the subtle body! Amazing power isn't it?

Remember Krishna in Everything

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

Krishna says in the 7th chapter very clearly the following things but still we don't think of him in our day to day life.
[Bhagavad Gita 7.8-10]

*bījaṁ māṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
viddhi pārtha sanātanam
buddhir buddhimatām asmi
tejas tejasvinām aham*

1. *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya* - **I am the taste of water.** {only realized on the nirjala fasting day.}
2. *prabha asmi śaśi-sūryayoḥ* - **I am the light of sun and moon.**{we gladly wish "good morning", " good evening" but never look at them thankfully. My son yesterday remarked "mummy, see moon is very closely moving with us". But we never feel that Krishna is with us in this moon.}
3. *śabdaḥ khe* - **I am the sound vibration.** {Brahmaji how nicely took up tapa without any contemplation!?! Even after hearing so many times to chant loudly we don't try to relish the sound vibration in it.}
4. *pauruṣaṁ nṛṣu* - **I am the ability in man.** {We always forget this and take the credit for ourselves gracefully.}
5. *puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca* - **I am the smell of the earth.** {When we offer Tulsi and flowers do we remember Krishna?}
6. *ttejaś cāsmi vibhāvasau* - **I am the heat of fire.** {Do we think of Krishna while lighting the lamp or while lighting the gas stove?}
7. *jīvanaṁ sarva-bhūteṣu* - **I am the life of all lives.** {Do we see Krishna in all living entities like mosquitoes and cockroaches? We often forget to see that even in other human beings }
8. *bījaṁ māṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ* - **I am the original seed of all existences.** {We must and we can look for Him in everything}
9. *buddhir buddhimatām asmi* - **I am the intelligence of intelligent.** {If somebody praises me or my child for performing some intelligent work I am the first one to take credit for it}
10. *tejas tejasvinām aham* - **I am the prowess of all powerful men.** { That 's why Arjuna asked for Krishna and not His sena!}

In Srimad Bhagavad Gita 3.14 Krishna says,

*annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaḍ anna-sambhavaḥ
yajñād bhavati parjanyo yajñāḥ karma-samudbhavaḥ*

All living bodies subsist on food grains, which are produced from rains. Rains are produced by performance of yajña [sacrifice], and yajña is born of prescribed duties.

How many of us think of Krishna while having prasadam? We always appreciate the Matajis (or Prabhujis) for the delicious chapathis and pooris. But don't see the flour behind it, the grain that was ground to flour, and the farmer who took care of the crop and moreover Krishna the seed-giver, Krishna who gives taste and juice, Krishna who gives sunlight an essential ingredient to grow a plant, and Krishna who is the taste of water, again Krishna who makes the same mud produce different types of grains, fruits and flowers.

Kunti Maharani says in one of her prayers [SB 1.8.40],

*ime jana-padāḥ svṛddhāḥ supakvaṣadhi-vīrudhaḥ
vanādri-nady-udanvanto hy edhante tava vīkṣitaiḥ*

All these cities and villages are flourishing in all respects because the herbs and grains are in abundance, the trees are full of fruits, the rivers are flowing, the hills are full of minerals and the oceans full of wealth. And this is all due to Your glancing over them.

Srila Prabhupada in the purport of BG 3.14 says, "*Yajna, specifically the sankirtana yajna prescribed for this age, must therefore be performed to save us at least from scarcity of food supply.*"

So I humbly pray to Krishna by Gurudev's blessings to guide me, and all of us to see Krishna in everything, everyday, every moment.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Abhira Kanya devi dasi
Abu Dhabi.

Moderator's Note: HG Abhira Kanya Mataji is a very simple, humble and service-minded devotee living in the Middle-east. Her whole family is nicely situated in Krishna Consciousness and they are one of the main pillars of the Abu Dhabi congregation. She is an expert cook and nicely co-ordinates prasadam arrangements for the weekly satsang programs. She is also adept in stitching wonderful dresses and making ornaments for deities. I remember two years back when I visited their congregation, I took my Bal-Gopal deity there and she voluntarily made wonderful dresses for Him. Her husband HG Girivaradhari Prabhu is also an excellent kirtan leader and program-coordinator. They have a son Krishna Kinkara das who is only 6 years old but is an expert in playing mrdanga. He learnt the instrument by himself and has been playing it ever since he was 2 years old.

The Supreme Will of the Lord

Dear Prabhujis and Matajis,

Hare Krishna! Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

While reading the 5th Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, I came across the following verse SB 5.14.45:

Maharaja Bharath took birth as a deer, as he fell down from the path of mystic yoga, on account of his attachment to a deer. Remembering how he had fallen down from his exalted position, he left his mother deer and went to Pulahāsram and was completely detached from all material things. The following verse was recited by him while quitting his body of a deer.

*yajñāya dharmā-pataye vidhi-naipuṇāya
yogāya sāṅkhya-śīrase prakṛtiśvarāya
nārāyaṇāya haraye nama ity udāraṁ
hāsyān mṛgatvam api yaḥ samudājahāra*

Even though in the body of a deer, Mahārāja Bharata did not forget the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore when he was giving up the body of a deer, he loudly uttered the following prayer: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead is sacrifice personified. He gives the results of ritualistic activity. He is the protector of religious systems, the personification of mystic yoga, the source of all knowledge, the controller of the entire creation, and the Supersoul in every living entity. He is beautiful and attractive. I am quitting this body offering obeisances unto Him and hoping that I may perpetually engage in His transcendental loving service.” Uttering this, Mahārāja Bharata left his body.

In Bhagavad Gita (8.5), Krishna says that those who think of Him at the end of life and quit the body, attain His nature. Even though Bharata Maharaj thought about Krishna in the last minute of his life in the deer body, he still took birth as Jada Bharata Maharaj. I was wondering as to how did this happen.

His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada, mercifully guided me to read his purport to the verse 1.13.43 of Srimad Bhagavatam which clarifies this point. *We must always remember that the Lord is the supreme will, and He is not bound by any law. Generally, the law of karma is that one is awarded the result on one's own actions, but in special cases, by the will of the Lord, such resultant actions are changed also. But this change can be affected by the will of the Lord only, and no other. The supreme will is absolutely free to do whatever He likes, and because He is all-perfect, there is no mistake in any of His actions or reactions. These changes of resultant actions are especially rendered by the Lord when a pure devotee is involved. There are hundreds of examples of reactions changed by the will of the Lord. He is perfect and transcendental to all laws.*

We can clearly see that it was the will of the Lord that Maharaja Bharata should take birth as Jada Bharata in his next life to deliver many fallen souls like us (through his personal example and instructions).

Your humble servant,

Karthik.S

Abu Dhabi.

Moderator's Note: Karthik Prabhu is a wonderful example of a 'Child prodigy'. He is just 11 years old and he has already completed reciting all the verses and translations of the entire Srimad Bhagavatam. He has been giving powerful classes in the weekly mangala arati gathering and the entire Abu Dhabi congregation feels inspired by his grasp of the shastras. Now he has started reading Srimad Bhagavatam once more from the beginning, scrutinizingly studying all the equivalentents as well as the transcendental purports of Srila Prabhupada.

Steps to Become Free from False-ego

Dearest Prabhujis and Matajis,

Hare Krishna. Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

The following is an excellent mail by Sriman Prashant prabhu living in the middle-east. He has wonderfully listed the teachings of Lord Rshabhadev to His sons in nice points. (I preferred to send the mail from my id in order to format the mail properly).

Prashant Prabhu is only 11 years old and is the youngest son of HG Sri Ramachandra prabhu and HG Sindhu mataji. In such a young age, he has taken to devotional service so expertly that he acts as a good catalyst for even older devotees in the congregation. He is expert in playing kartal, singing kirtans and verse recitation. He is a srutidhar - remembers everything that is being taught in the class, especially the verses. He memorizes them right away and recites them very nicely. He is also very obedient and peaceful, just as his name goes. Last but not the least, he also excels in his school and is always a top-ranker in his class. It is very rare to see these characteristics in such young children and we are really happy that such young kids are taking to devotional service so enthusiastically. Here is his mail...

Sriman Prashanth Prabhu's mail

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

In the verses (5.5.10-13) Lord Rshabhadeva instructs his sons how they can be freed from the false identification arising from false ego and material conditional life.

He shows us 14 ways by which we can give up our false ego. They are:

- 1) **Accept a highly elevated paramahamsa, a spiritually advanced spiritual master. In this way, we should place our faith and love in Him, the Supreme Personality of Godhead** - "*hamse gurau mayi bhaktyānuvṛtyā*".
- 2) **Detest sense gratification and tolerate the duality of pleasure and pain, which are like the seasonal changes of summer and winter** - "*vitṛṣṇayā dvandva-titikṣayā ca*".
- 3) **Try to realize the miserable condition of living entities, who are miserable even in the higher planetary systems** - "*sarvatra jantor vyasanāvagatyā*".
- 4) **Philosophically inquire about the truth** - "*jijñāsayā*".
- 5) **Undergo all kinds of austerities and penances for the sake of devotional service** - "*tapasa ihā-nivṛttyā*".
- 6) **Give up the endeavor for sense enjoyment and engage in the service of the Lord** - "*mat-karmabhir mat-kathayā ca nityam*".
- 7) **Listen to discussions about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and always associate with devotees** - "*mad-deva-saṅgād guṇa-kīrtanān me*".
- 8) **Chant about and glorify the Supreme Lord, and look upon everyone equally on the spiritual platform** - "*sāmya*".

9) **Give up enmity and subdue anger and lamentation** - "*nirvaira-sāmyopaśamena*".

10) **Abandon identifying the self with the body and the home, and practice reading the revealed scriptures** - "*jihāsayā deha-gehātma-buddheḥ adhyātma-yogena*".

11) **Live in a secluded place and practice the process by which you can completely control your life air, mind and senses** - "*vivikta-sevayā prāṇendriyātmābhijayena sadhryak*".

12) **Have full faith in the revealed scriptures, the Vedic literatures, and always observe celibacy** - "*sac-chraddhayā brahmacaryeṇa śaśvad*".

13) **Perform your prescribed duties and avoid unnecessary talks** - "*asampramādena yamena vācām*".

14) **Always think of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, acquire knowledge from the right source** - "*sarvatra mad-bhāva-vicakṣaṇena jñānena vijñāna-virājitena*".

Thus, practicing bhakti-yoga, you will patiently and enthusiastically be elevated in knowledge and will be able to give up the false ego (*yogena dhṛty-udyama-sattva-yukto liṅgam vyapohet kuśalo 'ham-ākhyam*).

All these instructions given by Lord Rshabhadeva would enable us to give up this material body and go back to Krishna loka if we follow them sincerely. We should perform activities only for the benefit of the soul and we should give up all other useless activities. Our only desire should be to attain Krishna. But first of all we must accept a bonafide spiritual master who can show us the right path. This is because only by serving the spiritual master humbly & sincerely one can advance in spiritual life.

Your humble servant,
Prashanth Sriram
Abu Dhabi.

Are You Serious?

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Gurudev.

It was a very nice realization from HG Ambrish Prabhuji on Real Devotional Service, particularly explanation by HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj on loss of consciousness at the time of death. Recently we all observed fast on the auspicious day of Nirjala Pandava Ekadasi by abstaining from drinking water. This time my experience was very thought-provoking which I would like to share with all of you.

When I tried to get up the day after, I found that my limbs were deserting me and were not ready to support my body weight. Similarly my arms and legs were aching when I was performing the Mangala arati making it impossible to concentrate on the beautiful forms of the deities on the altar and when I tried to sing the kirtan my voice choked and I could not even mumble the transcendental names of Krsna. I was totally helpless and praying for His mercy.

I could not help but remember what Maharaj said about experiences at the time of death which, I believe would be many many times more uncomfortable and painful than this.

So what is the ailment to this diseased condition of ours? The only way out is "**Real Devotional Service**". But Maharaj has repeatedly mentioned this and it is also my personal experience that in spite of hearing about Krsna and having all the facilities given to us by Prabhupada we commit the same mistakes again and again. We just want to go away from Krsna. We are "**not serious**" about Krsna Consciousness.

So how do we get "serious"? As always, Maharaj has provided the simplest solution which is to "remember the last day of your life" and this will help us to become serious.

And even after getting this instruction if we are not serious, then... I remembered something more, which Maharaj had mentioned to us during his last visit to Auckland, a nice verse from Bhagavad Gita 10.36.

*dyūtaṁ chalayatām asmi tejas tejasvinām aham
jayo 'smi vyavasāyo 'smi sattvaṁ sattvavatām aham*

I am also the gambling of cheats, and of the splendid I am the splendor. I am victory, I am adventure, and I am the strength of the strong.

Prabhupada explains very nicely in his purport that "*There are many kinds of cheaters all over the universe. Of all cheating processes, gambling stands supreme and therefore represents Krsna. As the Supreme, Krsna can be more deceitful than any mere man. **If Krsna chooses to deceive a person, no one can surpass Him in His deceit. His greatness is not simply one-sided, it is all-sided.***" So Maharaj says if we cheat Krsna all through our life then we cannot expect to remember Krsna on the last day as Krsna is the supreme cheater and **the important point is we will not even know that He has cheated us!!**

So if we want to perform Real Devotional Service the question to ask is "*am I serious about Krsna Consciousness?*"

Thank you very much.

Your aspiring humble servant,

Gopal Krsna das

Auckland.

Moderator's Note: HG Gopal Krsna Prabhu is a sincere, simple and studious devotee living in Auckland, NZ. He

studies Prabhupada's books very seriously. His entire family is devoted to the service of Lord Krsna and his wife is also very co-operative in assisting him. He has a daughter just 3 years old. She is being home-schooled by HG Vishnupadi Mataji (HG Suhrd Krsna Prabhu's wife). His daughter is trained so nicely that even though just 3 years of age, she recites Nrsimhadev prayers so beautifully. This is not possible without the sincerity of the parents.

The Transcendental Communication

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

I feel all the devotees in Rajkot are so lucky that Maharaj is here and we are receiving his blessing and mercy always. Last week he came here at around 6 pm after visiting three countries (Australia, New Zealand and Singapore). We received Maharaj in airport and he was in cheerful mood as always even after the hectic tour. When he reached the temple it was time for evening arati and Bhagavad Gita class. Without taking any rest he directly came to the temple and attended the arati and took class on Bhagavad Gita. One thing I have seen is that after Maharaj came back, I feel liveliness in the temple. If Maharaj is not here Sri Sri Radha Neelmadhav miss him.

I came to the temple later with my sons Jay and Abhishek to pay our namaskars to Maharaj. When we reached the temple, Maharaj was just coming out and he immediately asked my younger son (he is 7 years old), "Tell me a sloka you remember". My son recited the Bhagavatam sloka 1.2.17. Then he asked him to tell the meaning of sloka but my son said that he did not know. Then Maharaj told, "Ok all of you sit here". And then he gave explanation for the sloka.

*śṛṅvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ puṇya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi vidhunoti suhṛt satām*

Sri Krsna, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramatma [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.

This verse very nicely portrays the process of transcendental communication. If we see in the material world, in any form of communication (say radio communication, telecommunication or even normal communication among people), three factors are involved - *The Speaker, the Message and the Hearer (Listener)*. In the material communication, any or all of these three items can be imperfect. Hence there is always some kind of miscommunication. Whereas in transcendental communication,

1. **Krishna** is the original *speaker*. Whatever is there in the shastras is His message (sva-katha), either spoken by Him or spoken about Him. Krishna's quality are that,

- He is our eternal well-wisher and benefactor (**suhṛt**).
- As **Paramātmā**, He is seated in everyone's heart and is always guiding us.
- He is **param pavitraṁ** - the supreme pure (BG 10.12).

2. The **sound vibration** in the shastras is the actual *message being transmitted*. What are the qualities of the message?

- It is virtuous (**puṇya**), not papa.
- It cleanses (**vidhunoti**) the desire for material enjoyment (**abhadrāṇi**) from the core of our hearts (**hṛdy antaḥ sthaḥ**)

3. The **devotee** who hears the message is the *listener*. The required qualifications of the listener are:

- He must have developed an urge to listen to the message (**śṛṅvatām**).
- He must be truthful (**satām**).

c) He should **properly** hear and chant the message.

If we see in points 1 and 2, the speaker and the message are pure and perfect. Their qualities are flawless. But if we want to realize Krishna (the speaker) and His message to the best, then we have to perfect our qualities as a listener. As human beings we have four basic imperfections - *tendency to cheat, commit mistake, imperfect senses and can be illusioned*. To go beyond these imperfections and realize Krsna, we have to develop the qualities as mentioned above.

How to develop these qualities when we are engaged in material activities most of our lives? The simplest way is to put Krishna in whatever we speak and whatever we do. For eg., If I say, "I will be going to London", this statement is imperfect. Because my going to London depends on so many factors which are ultimately controlled by Krishna. But if I say, "**Krishna willing**, I will be going to London", then it is perfect, because if Krsna desires, I will go and if He does not desire, I will not go. Either way it is perfect. Similarly, even when we do any activity, if we have the same consciousness that "Krishna willing...", then we will become perfect and peaceful.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Bharat Ganatra

Rajkot.

Moderator's Note: Sriman Bharat Prabhuji is a very sincere devotee living in Rajkot. He is a businessman by profession but he uses most of his free time in reading scriptures. He is pure in heart and has a lot of thirst for spiritual knowledge. He listens to the class very attentively and tries to follow the instructions in his life seriously. In his home he has a blackboard and everyday he writes a new verse from Gita and teaches them to his two children. His children are also very receptive and do nice service. He also generously donates vegetables every week for the Sunday feast in Sri Sri Radha-Neel Madhav temple.

Spiritual Emergency

Dearest Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

It was 5 am. The alarm on my mobile phone rang. I silenced it. My thoughts were, I have not slept enough; I need adequate rest before I go for work to function effectively. I then received a phone call at around 5.30 am. It was a call from my colleague in Houston. It was an emergency. I immediately started making phone calls, sending mails, etc and I suddenly realized that it was 7 am.

It then dawned on me that I did not realize the time pass by. I was totally focused, concentrating on my job, not one bit sleepy. If this is the way a man reacts in a material world to an emergency, how should a man react when he realizes the urgency of spiritual development? Prabhupada used to say that spiritual development is a matter of urgency.

I then realized that what I was doing was only lip service when I spoke of bhakti and Prabhupada's teachings. In actual fact I was not making any effort towards increasing my bhakti.

During Mahavishnu Maharaj's last visit a devotee had posed a question asking what a person should do if he has a hectic schedule and finds little time for chanting and reading. Maharaj answered, "*One must try to get up at least by 5 am. Srila Prabhupada says in his purport that **Morning is the best time to perform devotional activities.***

Therefore, preferably one should chant at least some of his rounds in the morning time. But if one's schedule is such that they have to go to work early in the morning or have other things to do, then they have to adjust their other activities during the rest of the day and squeeze some time out of it to chant their allotted quota of chanting. As the devotee shows more and more inclination, Krishna will position him in such a way as to be able to perform devotional service in a better way."

If the realization had sunk in me I would be up each day before Brahma Muhurtha and I would be as focused, as I was today, while chanting.

Another related point that comes to my mind is the one that was mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita discourse last Saturday at Lakshmi Narayan Mandir. *When we offer anything to the Lord we should always endeavour to offer the best. What better to offer to the Lord than the best time of the day, i.e. the Brahma Muhurtha? Time - which is the most precious commodity in this material world.*

O Lord ! When will I stop doing lip service? When will I make a genuine effort to attain Your love? When will I realize the emergency of the position I am in? When will I stop being a hypocrite?

I sincerely plead to our spiritual master and Lord Krishna to guide me in the right path and keep me that way.

Your humble servant,

Govind Cowlagi

Singapore.

Waking Up the Crooked Mind!

Hare Krishna Devotees!

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All Glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

Govind prabhu's email was very much relevant to me! For quite a few months I have been struggling to get up at 5 am, I have had very little success. Every time the alarm goes, I tend to stop it and sleep a bit more.

It is very true that I have not been able to realize that this is an emergency. When one does not wake up in time, chanting 16 rounds only becomes a struggle and there is no time left for reading or anything else. The quality of our japa goes down when when chants later in the day.

As HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj has told quite often that "Treat each day as the last day of life", we should try to remember this always as much as possible.

When the alarm bell rings in the morning, the lethargy tends to overcome. A special messenger of bodily comforts convinces the mind "*Take some more rest. The whole day is there to chant. After all, yesterday you did 'somehow' manage to chant your rounds even though you did not wake up in time.*"

O mind when will you realize the importance of waking up early?

When will you learn to obey the words of our spiritual master as topmost priority?

When will you learn from your mistakes?

When will you learn that morning is the best time to remember?

When will you learn that it is for YOUR best interest to wake up early?

O mind do not get tricked. Time waits for NONE!

Wake up ! Wake up! WAKE UP!

With love in your heart wake up and remember Krishna!

Personally I am trying this (on advice of HH Ganapati Maharajji who visits Minneapolis regularly),(seems to work with some success so far..)

"If you do not wake BEFORE 5 am, fast until you had completed all (16) rounds. (Hope the self-punishment trains the rusted mind gradually to become disciplined and trained, so that it wakes up before 5 am no matter what)."

Your humble servant,

Manohar Krishna das

Minneapolis.

Moderator's Note: HG Manohar Krishna Prabhu is a very sincere devotee living in Minneapolis, US. He has lot of personal difficulties in following Krishna consciousness but still somehow or other keeps up with the pace enthusiastically. Things are always easier when everything goes well in our material life, but the real test of our consciousness lies in how we overcome the challenges in our material life to perform our devotional service. Krishna is always pleased when we take risks to serve Him. HG Manohar Krishna Prabhu is one such devotee. He is a very soft-spoken and a down-to-earth personality who always serves in some capacity or other in developing the community in Minneapolis. He is also very generous in charity and extremely service-minded.

Prayers for Chanting Japa

Dear Prabhujis and Matajis,

Hare Krishna. Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

I was very glad to see some nice open-hearted mails from Govinda prabhu and Manohar Krishna Prabhu. This is one of the very important quality of an aspiring devotee. Krishna is always waiting for us to openly declare to Him how wretched we are. The truth about ourselves is revealed to us every time we chant our japa - how wayward and spaced out is our chanting! Japa and Reading are the foundation of our spiritual existence. If the foundation is not strong then the whole building (of our spiritual life) will collapse in no time. If we analyse ourselves, we can realize that the root of our every single problem is weak sadhana. Hence time and again we have to get back to the basics and correct our japa and regulate our study of shastras.

A good way to fix the problem of weak japa is to read nice instructions about chanting that are available in so many of Srila Prabhupada 's books, lectures etc. Additionally there are also wonderful books to reform our japa yajna. I have been recently reading a wonderful book on chanting - "**Art of Chanting Hare Krishna**". It has lot of wonderful tips on improving our japa. One common theme I find in all these instructions though is that **We have to sincerely pray to the Lord to help us improve our chanting and the Lord definitely answers our sincere prayers.** I found the following prayers very useful to recite whenever my mind gets distracted during my chanting.

Prayers for Better Japa:

1. *"My dear Lord Caitanya! My consciousness is thoroughly mundane. Though I mouth the names of the Lord, I am too unfortunate to experience their transcendental touchstone qualities. O Lord! I beg You to please appear as the holy name and dance on my tongue. I fall at Your lotus feet and pray. If You like, You can keep me in this material world or place me in the spiritual sky; whatever You desire, You are free to fulfill. But please let me taste the divine nectar of the holy name."* (Quoted from Harinam Cintamani)

2. *"You have descended amongst the conditioned souls to distribute the holy name. So kindly consider me, an insignificant jiva, to be a recipient of Your mercy. I am a fallen soul, and You are the saviour of the fallen. Let this be our eternal relationship. O Saviour! on the strength of this relationship, I am begging from You, the nectar of the holy name."* (Quoted from Harinam Cintamani).

I also found another very significant point regarding japa in the same book - *"One must set aside some time to peacefully remember Krsna's names. During these precious moments alone with the Lord, one should concentrate all his desires, thoughts and feelings on Krsna's divine names, forms, qualities, pastimes and associates. **Attentive japa pleases the Lord and ultimately solves all problems.**"*

Last but not the least, the essence of entire Srimad Bhagavatam is pretty much said in the very last verse of this great scripture thus:

SB 12.13.23

*nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ yasya sarva-pāpa praṇāśanam
praṇāmo duḥkha-śamanas taṁ namāmi hariṁ param*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Supreme Lord Hari, the congregational chanting of whose holy names destroys all sinful reactions, and the offering of obeisances unto whom relieves all material suffering.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das.

Waking Up in the Morning

Hare Krishna Prabhus and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

There have been some very wonderful insights into waking up in the morning by the devotees. In this regard, Maharaj often quotes a verse from Srimad Bhagavatam 3.26.71,

*yathā prasuptam puruṣam prāṇendriya-mano-dhiyaḥ
prabhavanti vinā yena notthāpayitum ojasā*

When a man is sleeping, all his material assets - namely the vital energy, the senses for recording knowledge, the senses for working, the mind and the intelligence - cannot arouse him. He can be aroused only when the Supersoul helps him.

From this verse, we can understand that however much we try, until and unless Krsna allows, as the Super soul residing always in our hearts, us to awake, we cannot be aroused from our sleep. We may go to sleep with many alarm clocks surrounding us - but until He sanctions with His mercy, it is impossible to wake up for mangal-arati! Therefore, when we put our deities to rest in the night, we should not pray and tell them that we will wake them up in the morning for mangal arati! Rather, we should pray to them to wake us up for mangal arati, so that we can then "wake" them up! Then, Krsna willing, we may wake up.

That is why Gurudev always emphasises Srimad Bhagavatam 3.9.38, where the Lord, after being pleased with Lord Brahma's austerities for 1,000 years on the lotus flower, reveals an amazing secret.

*yac cakarhāṅga mat-stotram mat-kathābhyudayāṅkitam
yad vā tapasi te niṣṭhā sa eṣa mad-anugrahaḥ*

O Brahma, the prayers that you have chanted praising the glories of My transcendental activities, the penances you have undertaken to understand Me, and your firm faith in Me - all these are to be considered My causeless mercy.

In our devotional service, it is easy to forget this verse - and easy to think that our efforts bring forth the nice prayers to the Lord, our efforts constitute penance and austerities (like our sadhana, waking up in the morning etc.) and our faith is the result of our hard work - but Krsna smashes all that - by clearly pointing out that that is all HIS MERCY!

If we forget this point, we miss our destination.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Devakinandana das
Singapore.

The Vedas and The Brahmanas

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,
Dandavat pranams. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

There is a powerful verse in Srimad Bhagavatam 5.5.24:

*dhṛtā tanūr uśatī me purāṇī
yeneha sattvaṁ paramaṁ pavitram
śamo damaḥ satyam anugrahaś ca
tapas titikṣānubhavaś ca yatra*

The Vedas are My eternal transcendental sound incarnation. Therefore the Vedas are śabda-brahma. In this world, the brāhmaṇas thoroughly study all the Vedas, and because they assimilate the Vedic conclusions, they are also to be considered the Vedas personified. The brāhmaṇas are situated in the supreme transcendental mode of nature — sattva-guṇa. Because of this, they are fixed in mind control [śama], sense control [dama], and truthfulness [satya]. They describe the Vedas in their original sense, and out of mercy [anugraha] they preach the purpose of the Vedas to all conditioned souls. They practice penance [tapasya] and tolerance [titikṣā], and they realize the position of the living entity and the Supreme Lord [anubhava]. These are the eight qualifications of the brāhmaṇas. Therefore among all living entities, no one is superior to the brāhmaṇas.

Here in this verse we can understand the following important points:

1. *The Vedas are Krishna's eternal transcendental sound incarnation (śabda-brahma).* In Bhagavad Gita (3.15) it is explained that: "**Regulated activities are prescribed in the Vedas and Vedas are directly manifested from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Consequently the all-pervading Transcendence is eternally situated in acts of sacrifice.**" The four vedas viz. the Rg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda - are all emanations from the breathing of the great Personality of Godhead (Bṛhad-aranyaka Upanishad 4.5.11).
2. What is the aim of studying Vedas? Krishna gives the answer in BG 15.15 "*vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah* - **By all the Vedas, I am to be known**". Krishna also says to Uddhava in SB 11.11.18, "*śabda-brahmaṇi niṣṇāto na niṣṇāyāt pare yadi* - **study of Vedas (knowledge) is futile, if one does not develop devotion unto the Lord. It is like milking a milk-less cow.**"
3. The Brahmanas *assimilate* the Vedic conclusions, they are also to be considered the Vedas personified.
4. The Brahmanas are situated in the supreme transcendental mode of nature - sattva-guṇa.
5. The following eight qualities of a Brahmana are explained. (as they are in sattva-guṇa)

- They are fixed in mind control [*śama*]
- Sense control [*dama*]
- Truthfulness [*satya*]
- They describe the Vedas in their original sense
- They preach the purpose of the Vedas to all conditioned souls out of mercy [*anugraha*]
- They practicing penance [*tapasya*]
- Tolerance [*titikṣa*]
- They realize the position of the living entity and the Supreme Lord [*anubhava*].

6. The Brahmanas assimilates the Vedic conclusions with the help of these qualities like mind and sense-control. Therefore among all living entities, no one is superior to the brahmanas.

7. The brahmanas are very dear to the Supreme Lord due to their high sattva-guṇa qualities, and they also engage in welfare activities for all conditioned souls in the material world.

8. One who actually *assimilated* the essence of the Vedas can preach the truth. A brahmana should take pity on the people and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in order to elevate them.

9. After assimilating the Vedic instructions, they assist the Supreme Lord in His endeavor to deliver conditioned souls.

Here we can see that Srila Prabhupada has used the word "*assimilation*" several times both in the translation and purport. "*Assimilation*" comes from the word "*similar*" which means "*same as*" or "*identical to*". The Brahmanas digest the teachings of Vedas and imbibe it in their lives completely which ultimately makes them as pure as the Vedas. Therefore Prabhupada says that "*the Brahmanas are to be considered Vedas personified.*"

Srila Prabhupadaki Jai!

Your humble servant,
Prabhupadananda das
Abu Dhabi.

Moderator's Note: HG Prabhupadananda Prabhuji is a simple and sincere devotee living in the middle-east. His entire family is totally dedicated in Krishna consciousness and he is also nicely preaching in the weekly satsang in Hindi which is managed by HG Hrishikesh Krishna das. His sankirtan is wonderful and he is very dynamic in devotional service. He also does a very regular and systematic study of Srila Prabhupada's transcendental books.

Keeping Devotional Integrity

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,
Dandavat pranams. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

Srila Prabhupada, when he started the Hare Krishna movement in the West, engaged hundreds and thousands of young boys and girls in devotional service by his pure love and devotion. After the Mangala arati, Srngara arati, Bhagavatam class and Prasadam, the devotees would go out enthusiastically to preach Krishna Consciousness to the public. In order to server their spiritual master, they would even go to the most down-trodden places of this material world like the pubs, dance clubs, cinema theatres etc., do harinam and preach the message of Lord Krishna. Even though they took such risks and had to deal with non-devotees for most part of their preaching, *they do not compromise their devotional principles, and thus keep their hearts aloof from the modes of material nature and bad association.* This was a very important lesson that Srila Prabhupada taught us to safeguard ourselves (from material influence) as preachers of Krishna consciousness.

There is a nice known story that how one may mix with non-devotees and yet keep one's devotional integrity :

Once there was a monkey living on a tree on the bank of a river. There was a crocodile living in the river and will come to the banks occasionally to talk to the monkey. In course of time, the monkey also started associating with the crocodile and soon they both became friends. The monkey was innocent in his friendship but the intention of crocodile was to somehow have the monkey for his meal.

So one day he invited the monkey to come for a ride on his back in the river. The monkey jumped down from the tree and went with the crocodile. Soon he found himself in the middle of the river. The monkey asked the crocodile, "**Where are we going?**" The crocodile replied, "**I am going to take you home, where my wife will cut your heart and eat it for lunch.**"

The monkey was frightened to hear this but he kept his cool and thought for a while. He got an excellent idea and replied to the crocodile, "**But I have left my heart on the sea shore. Will you please let me get it?**"

The crocodile thought this was a good proposal and allowed the monkey to get back to the shore and bring his heart. But as soon as he reached the shore the monkey jumped on his tree and waved a big 'bye, bye' to the crocodile. The crocodile was completely disappointed at his own foolishness and went back to the river.

So the moral of this story is that **you may associate with the non-devotees, but don't give them your heart.**

If a preacher finds himself being overwhelmed by the material energy, he should save himself instead of allowing maya to swallow him up.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Pratik Prashant Pore
Abu Dhabi.

Moderator's Note: Sriman Pratik Prabhu is a young devotee living in the middle-east. He is only 11 years old and is doing his 7th grade in high-school. He has a very sharp intelligence and is very good in his studies. He is also very devoted and humble due to the expert training of his parents. He recites verses nicely, sings kirtans very well and plays kartals expertly.

Harinama Amrta

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

With the arrival of Summer here in Minneapolis, we are trying to do outdoor harinama in a humble way as and when we get an opportunity. The experience of these harinam sankirtan program is very sublime - one has to actually do it to experience it. In my insignificant service, I perceived at least three important effects of these harinams.

1. **We can realize that we are not this body.**

When we go out and sit or dance on the streets and chant, different people will definitely look at us as if we are "strange entities" or something "extra-ordinary" or even crazy. Initially we may feel shy or even embarrassed when people look at us like that. But if we keep in mind that we are serving Srila Prabhupada and Lord Sri Krishna by spreading His glorious holy names the shyness will gradually go away and we will truly start relishing the sankirtan. Ultimately we will completely forget ourselves having been immersed in the nectarian ocean of sankirtan, what then to speak of thinking about this physical body?

2. **We can realize the transcendental potencies of the holy names.**

When we chant on the streets enthusiastically, we can see how the chanting naturally catches on with the public. No matter who they are, the chanting will have a great impact on them. *It is just like how the snake charmer nicely brings a venomous snake under his control by his pleasing music.* In the same way, this harinam sankirtan also will hypnotize all the living entities. Almost every devotee who had gone on a harinam will bear witness to this simple fact. I can tell for sure from my experience that every time I have been in a harinam party, when we go out dancing and chanting enthusiastically, the public, whatever mood they might be in, they will either start smiling or waving and clapping their hands, and many of them even come out to dance and chant with us.

In Jan 2003, when we were in Dwarka for the Annual Ratha-yatra festival, HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj requested all of us to travel to Rajkot the next day to do a Maha-harinam in the city. Although at the end of the day most of the devotees had left for their home-town due to busy schedule, just a handful of enthusiastic youth devotees and some congregation members went on a harinam. Initially I was apprehensive as to how are we going to manage a good harinam party with just a few devotees. But the enthusiasm of the small group caught up with the public so much that so many of them came up and danced and chanted wildly to the loud and exuberant kirtans and really made it a Maha-Harinam. *"Golokera prema-dhana, hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana* - This harinam sankirtana has descended directly from Goloka Vrindavan"!!

3. **The relationship among devotees will strengthen.**

This is another subtle effect we can perceive. Even if there are apparent differences between devotees, if they somehow get together and do harinam, all the misgivings and misunderstandings will be shattered automatically. This is because when we chant together enthusiastically, the joy of serving the holy name brings a lot of *positive energy* in those engaged in the service and gradually destroys all the material feelings and emotions. I have personally witnessed devotees from various camps and sampradayas having apparent differences in their approach and philosophy, ultimately become friendly and co-operative when they engaged in chanting the holy names together. Srila Prabhupada himself once said, *This chanting should go on. Instead of meetings, resolutions, dissolutions, revolutions and then no solutions, there should be chanting.*

There are many more miraculous effects of harinama - after all, Harinama is Cintamani! To end with, I would like to

point out one of the greatest miracle of Harinam through the words of Srila Prabhupada himself. This was from his Nectar of Devotion lecture in Vrindavana on 8th November, 1972:

Never mind what you are. You may be Christian. You may be Jews. You may be Muhammadan or Hindu, Muslim. Whatever you may be, it doesn't matter. Please come and join with us, the Hare Krsna chanting. Actually, that has become successful. In Tompkins Square, I was sitting underneath a tree and chanting Hare Krsna mantra alone. And these young men, they used to assemble and dance also in the tune, for three hours from two to five. In this way, we got our followers, associates. And gradually it developed into organization.

Yes! This worldwide Hare Krsna movement actually started from the **Harinam** performed by one pure devotee by name A C Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada under the Elm tree in Tompkins Square in 1966. HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj used to give the example of how a harinam in London built the temple in Mauritius. The same way, this harinam in the Tompkins Square built an International Society for Krishna Consciousness!

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,
Please accept my humble obsequies. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

All glories to His Divine Grace Srila Sachidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakur!!

Today is the disappearance day of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur. It is auspicious to remember this great acharya in our disciplic succession on this important day. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's glories are unlimited. He was the father of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, the spiritual master of Srila Prabhupada.

Three centuries after Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu left the world, due to the nature of the material world, lots of apasampradayas entered into Gaudiya Vaishnavism and it endangered the very existence of the pure bhakti cult that Mahaprabhu preached to this world. But as the Lord says in the Gita - *yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata*, He sent one of His dear representatives Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura to re-establish the pure bhakti principles. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura did it in a most glorious way that he pioneered the spreading of Lord Chaitanya's mission to the whole world. Srila Bhaktivinoda's entire life is full of instructions for us and it will take lifetimes to appreciate and follow them. His bhajans are non-different from shastras. At times we tend to overlook how much his bhajans have become part of the lives of devotees - *jaya rādhā-mādhava, śārīra abidyā-jāl*(Prasadam prayers), *kiba jaya jaya gorācānder āratiko śobhā* (Gaura arati), *Yashomati yaśomatī-nandana* just to name a few. Today I just wanted to refer to one of his bhajans which is very instructive for our spiritual lives. This is from a collection of his bhajans named **Gitavali**.

*gāy gorā madhur sware
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

*gṛhe thāko, vane thāko, sadā 'hari' bole' dāko,
sukhe duḥkhe bhulo nā'ko, vadane hari-nām koro re*

*māyā-jāle baddha ho 'ye, ācho miche kāja lo 'ye,
ekhona cetana pe'ye, 'rādhā-mādhav' nām bolo re*

*jīvana hoilo śeṣa, nā bhajile hṛṣīkeśa
bhaktivinodopadeśa, ekbār nām-rase mātō re*

Lord Gaurasundara sings in a very sweet voice, Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

Whether you are a householder or a sannyasi, constantly chant "Hari! Hari!" Do not forget this chanting, whether you are in a happy condition or a distressful one. Just fill your lips with the hari-nama.

You are bound up in the network of Maya and are forced to toil fruitlessly. Now you have obtained full consciousness in the human form of life, so chant the names of Radha-Madhava.

Your life may end at any moment, and you have not served the Lord of the senses, Hrsikesa. Take this advice of Bhaktivinoda Thakura: "Just once, relish the nectar of the holy name!"

The last line says it all! **ekbār nām-rase mātō re** - Just once relish the nectar of the holy name!" How kind and compassionate Srila Bhaktivinoda is?! He is pleading to us to relish the holy name at least once. What it really means is that if we truly taste the Harinam amṛta even once, we will be relieved of all our material distresses and we will never

want to stop chanting again. But the fact that we are still struggling hard to even concentrate on the sound vibration during our japa means that we have not tasted the real nectar of the holy name yet! So let us take this humble advice of this great acharya and strive to chant the mahamantra without offenses that one day we can really taste the nectar of holy name.

Krishna will definitely help us if we sincerely try our best!

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das.

Why should we Glorify Krishna?

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

In 2nd Canto, Chapter 4 of Bhagavatam verses 12 - 23 there is nice mangalacharan (Prayers for Invoking auspiciousness) by the foremost of Bhagavatam Speakers, Srila Sukadev Goswami. In these prayers Srila Sukadeva glorifies Krsna, not just sentimentally but decorating each statement of his with reasons as to why the Supreme Absolute Truth, Krsna, is the only personality worthy of glorification. Listening about Krsna in such glorification, results in invocation of extraordinary auspiciousness for the hearers - *tasmai subhadra-śravase namo namaḥ*. Sukadev Goswami repeats this fact again and again in his prayers. The last verse of these prayers is very significant. Srila Sukadev prays:

*bhūtair mahadbhir ya imāḥ puro vibhur
nirmāya śete yad amūṣu pūruṣaḥ
bhuñkte guṇān ṣoḍaśa ṣoḍaśātmakaḥ
so 'lañkṣīṣṭa bhagavān vacāmsi me*

May the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who enlivens the materially created bodies of the elements by lying down within the universe, and who in His puruṣa incarnation causes the living being to be subjected to the sixteen divisions of material modes which are his generator, be pleased to decorate my statements.

Reasons why Krsna is worthy of such glorification:

1. Krsna is *ṣoḍaśātmakaḥ* - the 'generator of sixteen material elements' which are meant for the enjoyment of the living entities. The sixteen principal creative elements, namely earth, water, fire, air, sky, and the eleven sense organs are created by Krsna.

2. Krsna is *bhuñkte guṇān* - Furthermore, 'Krsna helps the living entity to enjoy His material creation' - without His sanction and mercy the living entities are incapable of doing any activity like breathing, seeing, hearing, tasting, walking, talking, touching, eating, digesting etc. He causes the living being to enjoy and/or be exploited by material elements and nature. He is the source of power and energy behind these gross and subtle sense organs.

mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ - material nature which is one of His energies, is working under His super-intendence (Bhagavad Gita 9.10).

Knowing the above two reasons, we realize how dependent we are on Krsna for basic things that we otherwise take for granted. One of His names is *dīna-nātha*, 'the refuge of all the fallen souls' - because we have forgotten Him we are fallen. Nonetheless He still remains our refuge. He allows and assists us to have a separate existence from Him, although this kind of existence is condemned. He allows us to breath, He allows us to eat, He allows us to see, He allows us to hear. Therefore if nothing else, then the least we could do is fold our hands and express our gratitude towards Him.

Srila Sukadev, being the self-realized soul, knows perfectly well that he cannot speak about Krsna at all (let alone speak effectively) unless Krsna bestows His causeless mercy upon him. Sukadev therefore prays - *so 'lañkṣīṣṭa bhagavān vacāmsi me* - O Lord be pleased - to decorate (*lañkṣīṣṭa*), my speech (*vacāmsi me*)."

Srila Prabhupada writes in his purport, *As a fully dependent devotee, Sukadev Goswami (unlike a mundane man who is proud of his own capability) invokes the pleasure of the Personality of Godhead so that his statements may be successful and be appreciated by the hearers. The devotee always thinks of himself as instrumental for anything successfully carried out, and he declines to take credit for anything done by himself. Sukadeva prays for the mercy of*

the Lord, not only for being helped personally in presenting the truth, but also for helping others to whom he would like to speak.

May Guru, Krsna and all the Vaishnavas bless us so that we may always be thankful for their causeless mercy. May they bless us so that we may also write and speak about Bhagavatam nicely for their pleasure - for on our own accord this would not be possible.

These prayers of Srila Sukadev Goswami are so nice. We are eternally indebted to our spiritual master for revealing to us many treasures like these buried in Srila Prabhupada' s Bhagavatam.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Viraja Krsna das

Sydney.

Moderator's Note: HG Viraja Krsna Prabhu is one of the most inspiring devotees I have come across in my life. He is extremely kind-hearted and soft-spoken. His humility is very deep. Although he is so well-read with the scriptures and so expert in performing devotional service, he is very down-to-earth and does not 'show-off' his abilities. He silently goes about doing his service. He is a perfect model for neophytes like myself. It is only by his inspiration, guidance and moral support that we are able to run this Granthraj forum successfully so far. He runs the group in Sydney wonderfully and every year they conduct a huge Bhagavat-saptah for 7 days with nectarean discourses given by HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj attended by more than 800-1000 people.

Krishna - The Supreme Designer

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

I found the following intriguing analysis in HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj's diary.

Have you ever taken a look at the inside of a watch? When you take the back off, you see an intricate array of cog-wheels, spring, balance-wheel and levers. In a moment of reverie you exclaim, "It must have been some genius who invented the first clock!".

Have you ever thought about our universe and its intricacies and mused that there must be a mastermind behind it? Our Earth for instance, rotates perfectly (inspite of the gravitational pull of the passing planets) so that we have unerring day and night with a loss of only a fraction of a second in a millennium. Even more spectacularly accurate is the movement of the Earth through space which creates our year. In its huge millennium orbit around the Sun, traveling at 67,000 mph, our Earth closes its yearly voyage without the loss of a thousandth of a second in thousands of years! Clearly there must be an inventor!

When one begins to study astronomy and learns of the numberless stars, star systems and galaxies and the immense distances involved and the sometimes complex orbits they follow, our minds boggle at it all. If we are honest with ourselves we shall conclude that there must be a controller.

Who equipped the bat with "radar", so that he could fly at top speed around the corners of a barn and never have an accident? Who told the bee that 'as well' as gathering honey, it should pollinate flowers, and how is it that it "knows" it must visit only a certain kind of flower each day? Surely the natural world dictates there is an intelligence behind it.

Next take a look at man himself. We take ourselves for granted, but truly we are wonderfully made. Man, with all of his inventive genius and miniaturization, has not only failed to reduce machines to a comparable size, but also is completely unable to copy some processes such as automatic repairing when incisions, cuts or damage occur. To show how far off man is from making copies of his organs, it has been said that to produce a machine that would perform all the functions of just one small organ, it would need to be as big as St.Pauls. A few years ago, a model was made of the human brain to demonstrate how the brain receives and evaluates information, and acts on it. It stood 12 feet high, had 38 miles of wiring and contained more than 30,000 tiny light bulbs. Then it could only do some of what the human brain does regularly and easily. There must be a designer! (end)

In relation to this idea of Krishna as the Supreme Designer, Srila Prabhupada says as follows in chapter 24 of his book - Teachings of Lord Caitanya, *According to a mantra in Taittiriya Upaniṣad (Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante) this cosmic manifestation is but an emanation from the Supreme Absolute Truth, and it rests in the Supreme Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth has been called the ablative, causative and locative performer. Thus as a performer, He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for these are symptoms of personality. As the ablative performer of this cosmic manifestation, all thinking, feeling and willing come from Him. Without thinking, feeling and willing, there is no possibility of arrangement and design in the cosmic manifestation. Then again, He is causative, for **He is the original designer of the cosmos**. And He is locative: that is, everything is resting in His energy. These attributes are all clearly attributes of personality.*

All these above examples are just a few indications of the unlimited wonders in this world that leads us to the understanding of the Supreme Absolute Truth. And this Supreme Absolute Truth is unambiguously and elaborately described in the pages of Srimad Bhagavatam. All the other scriptures in the world give only a vague description of who that Absolute Truth is whereas Srimad Bhagavatam, in its very first verse, gives us the exact answer that

That Supreme Absolute Truth

(*param satyam*) **is Vāsudeva - Lord Sri Krishna!** *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya... satyam param dhīmahī.* The rest of the entire Srimad Bhagavatam elaborates on the attributes and activities of this Supreme Absolute Truth Lord Sri Krishna. This great monumental work was written by Srila Vyasadev on the advice of his spiritual master Narada muni to satisfy all the classes of men (both learned and wretched) in SB 1.5.40 thus:

*tvam apy adabhra-śruta viśrutam vibhoḥ
samāpyate yena vidām bubhutsitam
prākhyāhi duḥkhair muhur arditātmanām
saṅkleśa-nirvāṇam uśanti nānyathā*

Please, therefore, describe the Almighty Lord's activities which you have learned by your vast knowledge of the Vedas, for that will satisfy the hankerings of great learned men and at the same time mitigate the miseries of the masses of common people who are always suffering from material pangs. Indeed, there is no other way to get out of such miseries.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das.

The Potency of Mahaprasadam

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

Once Sripad Ramanujacharya was walking along with his 5 top sannyasi disciples. Stopping by a pond, he took some prasadam and threw half of it in the water for the fishes. Then he got up to walk on. Just then the fishes which had taken the prasadam assumed four-handed forms and rose up in the air, returning home, back to Godhead. The sannyasis were stunned to see this miraculous incident. They asked Sripad Ramanujacharya, "We are thunder-struck. Please explain what we have just seen." Ramanujacharya answered, "You've seen the power of taking mahaprasadam." They asked further, "But we are taking your mahaprasadam daily, and this is not happening to us." Ramanuja said, "*These creatures have no free will, and therefore make no offense. Nor do they doubt the transcendental power of mahaprasadam. So they get full benefit at once. But you with your free will and human intelligence make offenses and are lacking in faith, and thus you hinder your own progress.*" Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gives a fantastic explanation on the glory of Mahaprasadam in CC Antya lila 16th chapter verse 59-63:

*kṛṣṇera ucchiṣṭa haya 'mahā-prasāda' nāma
'bhakta-śeṣa' haile 'mahā-mahā-prasādākhyāna'*

The remnants of food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa are called mahaprasadam. After this same mahaprasadam has been taken by a devotee, the remnants are elevated to mahā-mahaprasadam.

bhakta-pada-dhūli āra bhakta-pada-jala bhakta-bhukta-avaśeṣa, — tina mahā-bala

The dust of the feet of a devotee, the water that has washed the feet of a devotee, and the remnants of food left by a devotee are three very powerful substances.

ei tina-sevā haite kṛṣṇa-premā haya punaḥ punaḥ sarva-śāstre phukāriyā kaya

By rendering service to these three, one attains the supreme goal of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. In all the revealed scriptures this is loudly declared again and again.

tāte bāra bāra kahi, śuna bhakta-gaṇa viśvāsa kariyā kara e-tina sevana

Therefore, my dear devotees, please hear from me, for I insist again and again: please keep faith in these three and render service to them without hesitation.

tina haite kṛṣṇa-nāma-premera ullāsa kṛṣṇera prasāda, tāte 'sākṣī' kālīdāsa

From these three one achieves the highest goal of life-ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa. This is the greatest mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The evidence is Kalidasa himself.

"Prasadam" means Kṛṣṇa's mercy because Kṛṣṇa is so kind that He helps us to make spiritual advancement even by eating.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Prabhupadananda das

Abu Dhabi.

Symptoms of Advancement in Devotional Service

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obsequies. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

Many devotees ask a common question. How to judge our progress in devotional service? Put differently, How to identify a pure devotee? Of course many times we get the answer that an advanced devotee will display all the 8 transcendental ecstatic symptoms like hairs standing on end, tears flowing from the eyes, voice faltering etc. This is of course true, but at the same time this is largely misused by sahajiyas who display these advanced symptoms cheaply for material gain. Srila Prabhupada once nicely said that *Crying is a very good sign of devotion. But all those who cry are not devotees!*.

Another thing is that devotees are often perplexed as to whether they are progressing in their devotional service or not. Most of the time the judgement is made by how much glorification one has received i.e., how many books he has distributed, how many life-members he has made or even how many years he has been visiting the temple etc. These are not accurate indicators of one's advancement in devotional service. To avoid confusions, our acharyas have given a very clear idea of real symptoms of advancement in bhakti. Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gives a list of *nine symptoms of advanced devotion* when he taught Srila Sanatana Goswami on the principles of devotional service (CC Madhya 23.18-19):

*kṣāntir avyārtha-kālatvaṁ viraktir māna-śūnyatā
āśā-bandhaḥ samutkaṅṭhā nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ
āśaktis tad-guṇākhyāne prītis tad-vasati-sthale
ity-ādayo 'nubhāvāḥ syur jāta-bhāvāṅkure jane*

When the seed of ecstatic emotion for Kṛṣṇa fructifies, the following nine symptoms manifest in one's behavior:

1. **Forgiveness** (*kṣānti*)
2. **Concern that time should not be wasted** (*avyārtha-kālatvaṁ*)
3. **Detachment** (*virakti*)
4. **Absence of false prestige** (*māna-śūnyatā*)
5. **Hope** (*āśā-bandhaḥ*)
6. **Eagerness** (*samutkaṅṭhā*)
7. **A taste for chanting the holy name of the Lord** (*nāma-gāne sadā ruciḥ*)
8. **Attachment to descriptions of the transcendental qualities of the Lord** (*āśaktis tad-guṇākhyāne*)
9. **Affection for those places where the Lord resides; that is, a temple or a holy place like Vrindavana** (*prītis tad-vasati-sthale*)

These are all called anubhāvā, subordinate signs of ecstatic emotion. They are visible in a person in whose heart the seed of love of God has begun to fructify.

The important point to note here is that these are *subordinate* (or preliminary) signs of ecstatic emotion. It is common sense understanding that unless we develop these preliminary signs, we cannot develop the higher level symptoms. So next time when we wonder why our hairs are not standing on ends or tears are not flowing from our eyes, we better check if we have developed these above nine qualifications. Are we still expecting respect and glorification from others for our "so-called" service? Are we still attached to our material possessions? Are we happy by chanting the holy names or are we happy because we "*finished*" chanting our rounds?

These are questions we can ask ourselves to see where we truly stand!

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das.

Prasadam - The Secret Weapon

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

The mail from HG Prabhupadananda Prabhu on the glories of Mahaprasadam was fantastic. There is another glorious Mahaprasadam pastime by Lord Sri Caitanya and one of His dear devotees Sri Sivananda Sena.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was living in Puri during His later days and every year there would be a big gathering in Puri with a large group of devotees from Bengal traveling there to take darshan of the Lord. Sivananda Sena, an exalted devotee living in Bengal usually made the arrangements for the journey. He maintained everyone and provided residential quarters. While going to Jagannatha Puri, Sivananda Sena allowed a dog to go with him. He supplied it food to eat and maintained it. One day, when they needed to cross a river, an Orissan boatman would not allow the dog to get in the boat. Sivananda Sena, unhappy that the dog had to stay behind, paid the boatman ten pana of conch-shells to take the dog across the river. One day while Sivananda was detained by a tollman, his servant forgot to give the dog its food. At night, when Sivananda Sena returned and was taking his meal, he inquired from the servant whether the dog had gotten its meals. When he learned that the dog had not been supplied food in his absence, he was very unhappy. He then immediately sent ten men to find the dog. When the men returned without success, Sivananda Sena became very unhappy and fasted for the night. In the morning they looked for the dog, but it could not be found anywhere. All the Vaishnavas were astonished. Thus in great anxiety they all walked to Jagannatha Puri, where Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu met them as usual. And the next morning all the devotees came to see the Lord. When all the devotees came to the place of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, they saw the same dog sitting a little apart from the Lord. Furthermore, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was throwing remnants of green coconut pulp to the dog. Smiling in His own way, He was saying to the dog, "*Chant the holy names 'Rama,' 'Krsna' and 'Hari.'*" Seeing the dog eating the green coconut pulp and chanting "*Krsna, Krsna*" again and again, all the devotees present were very surprised. *When he saw the dog sitting in that way and chanting the name of Krsna, Sivananda, because of his natural humility, immediately offered his obeisances to the dog just to counteract his offenses to it.* The next day, no one saw that dog, for it had obtained its spiritual body and departed for Vaikuntha, the spiritual kingdom. Such are the transcendental pastimes of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the son of mother Saci. He even delivered a dog simply by inducing it to chant the mahamantra, Hare Krsna.

Srila Prabhupada says in his purport for CC Antya 1.32:

*This is the result of sadhu-sanga consequent association with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and promotion back home, back to Godhead. This result is possible even for a dog, by the mercy of the Vaishnava. Therefore, everyone in the human form of life should be induced to associate with devotees. By rendering a little service, even by eating prasadam, what to speak of chanting and dancing, everyone can be promoted to Vaikunthaloka. It is therefore requested that all our devotees in the ISKCON community become pure Vaishnavas, so that by their mercy **all the people of the world will be transferred to Vaikunthaloka, even without their knowledge.** Everyone should be given a chance to take prasadam and thus be induced to chant the holy names Hare Krsna and also dance in ecstasy. By these three processes, although performed without knowledge or education, even an animal went back to Godhead.*

One of the important points to understand from this pastime is how we should treat the living entities. Many times we are neglectful and lack compassion or respect for the living entities when it comes to feeding them prasadam.

It results from our lack of faith in the potency of Prasadam that it will cleanse all the contamination from the hearts of the living entities. Sri Sivananda Sena treated even a dog with so much respect, then what to speak of human beings?

In this Kali yuga, living entities are predominantly in the *modes of passion and ignorance*. Whereas to understand the

Supreme Personality of Godhead and perform devotional service, the bare minimum requirement is to be *at least in the mode of goodness*. So how to build the bridge between the two sides? The only solution is "**Prasadam**". Because the potency of prasadam is to soften and cleanse the heart of a person even without his knowledge, thereby bringing him to the platform of sattva guṇa. At that stage, he is ready to receive the message of transcendence. There are unlimited examples in the history of bhakti cult in this regard. Srila Prabhupada is the greatest exponent of Prasadam distribution. At first, when he started the Krishna Consciousness movement in the western world, he did not impose any rules and regulations. All those who came were drunkards, drug addicts and hippies. All he did was feed them with prasadam and sing kirtans. Moreover once the feast was over, they would leave the plates and cups as it is. After everyone had left, Srila Prabhupada would clean all the plates, utensils and the entire room by himself.

A few years later as the movement spread all over the world, once several devotees had gathered in his room for his darshan. At that time, Srila Prabhupada went around each one of them in the room, pointing at them asking, "How did you come to Krishna consciousness?". By the time he reached the last person, every single devotee in the room had given the same answer - "**Prasadam!**". Srila Prabhupada concluded, "*See, every one of you became a devotee because of Prasadam. **That is my Secret Weapon!***"

Maha-prasadam ki jai!! Srila Prabhupada ki jai!!

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das.

Steps to Progress in Devotional Service

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

The following is a verse from Sri Brahma Samhita which gives the preliminary process for attaining the highest devotion, which is the ultimate well-being for all the living entities.

BS 5.59

*pramāṇais tat-sad-ācārais tad-abhyāsair nīrantaram
bodhayan ātmanātmānaṁ bhaktim apy uttamāṁ labhet*

The highest devotion is attained by slow degrees by the method of constant endeavor for self-realization with the help of scriptural evidence, theistic conduct and perseverance in practice.

1. **pramāṇaiḥ**- We should have the scriptural evidence in the form of Srimad Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam as the *basis of our bhakti* and we should study them with faith repeatedly.
2. **sad-ācāraiḥ** - After going through the scriptural evidence which convinces us, we should *put them into practice*. This can be effective only if we associate with the pure devotees who are all 'acharyas', who follow all the principles of devotional service. We have to imbibe the good qualities from such exalted devotees and improve our behaviour.
3. **abhyāsaiḥ nīrantaram** - This practice has to go on constantly, in other words we have to habituate ourselves with them through *constant endeavor with perseverance*.
4. **bodhayan ātmanātmānaṁ** - In this way, we have to awaken our dormant love of Godhead, *by instructing our mind with our intelligence*. We have to force our inattentive mind with **scriptural evidence, theistic conduct and constant endeavor**.

If we do the above, which are all conducive to the realization of loving devotion, then by slow degrees, "**bhaktim api uttamāṁ labhet**"- The highest devotion which is the fruit of the above endeavors is attained.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Vaijayantimala devi dasi.

Abu Dhabi.

Door to Liberation

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

Recently I came across two interesting verses in Bhagavad Gita 16th chapter. I'll try to share the imports with all of you. In BG 16.21, Krishna says,

*tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet*

There are three gates leading to hell- lust, anger and greed. Every sane man should give up these, for they lead to the degradation of the soul.

In the next verse, the Lord proceeds to say that one who gives up these three things can gradually attain the Supreme, by performing activities conducive for liberation. There are many methods prescribed in the scriptures to give up these three enemies. They include study of scriptures, fasting, performing severe austerities, giving charity, observing silence, respecting elders etc., One should diligently follow them to become free from these three bad qualities. All these methods are different steps in our path of progress in bhakti-yoga which is perfected by the understanding that Krishna is the Enjoyer, Proprietor and Controller of everything. In BG 5.29 the Lord explains,

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati*

One who understands me to be the enjoyer of all austerities and sacrifices, the Supreme Lord of all planets and devas and the best well-wishing friend of all living entities attains peace from pangs of material miseries.

1. ***bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ*** - One should understand that Lord Vishnu is the enjoyer of all sacrifices and austerities. The Taittiriya Aranyaka says, "*yajo vai viṣṇu viṣṇur vai yajñam*" (**sacrifice means Lord Vishnu**). Lust is the propensity by which we think that we are the enjoyers of the results of all our sacrifices and austerities.

If we understand that Lord Vishnu is the real bhokta of tapas and yajna, we can overcome lust. Great devotees like Maharaj Ambarish, Parikshit and Yudhistira were adorned by this understanding.

2. ***sarva-loka maheśvaram*** - We should understand that the Lord alone is the proprietor of all the universes and He bestows good and bad things to the jivas. And He sets aside the quota for everyone based on one's karma. Greed is the uncontrollable desire towards amassing more and more possessions without recognizing the Lord's controllership and ownership. The *īśāvāsya* upanishad states that one should not covet other's wealth but should be satisfied with whatever the Lord allots. So ***when we understand that Krishna is the proprietor of everything, we can give up greed.*** Devotees like Sudama were living examples. They were satisfied in any position put in by the will of providence.

3. ***suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ*** - When one understands that Lord Vishnu is the supreme father and everyone is His part and parcel, he can see the divinity in everybody. And knowing that Krishna is the supreme friend of everyone, one can learn how to show compassion to everyone. In Bhagavatam, we can see Lord Brahma addressing the pracetas to give up their anger. He says, **Hari is the innerself of every living being and understanding this please give up your anger.**

So by a systematic understanding and realization of the above three points one can give up the three bad qualities

(lust, anger and greed) and attain the supreme abode. This is possible by hearing about the Lord in the association of devotees and serving the Lord to the best of one's ability. Srila Prabhupada created a nice society of devotees by which one can understand Krishna as mentioned above and become free from the influence of lust, greed and anger and thereby achieve the supreme perfection.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

L.Harikumar

Chennai.

Real Wisdom

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

I happened to talk to HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj today and he gave some wonderful words of wisdom worth meditating upon.

As we were talking, Maharaj made some deep and profound statements - *There is a vast difference in meaning between 'intelligence' and 'wisdom'. Intelligence anybody can have. But Wisdom is very rare in this material world.*" He continued, *"Wisdom means to be wise. What is 'wise' mean? You know, this famous proverb in English - Early to Bed and Early to rise, keeps a man happy, healthy, wealthy and wise."* He said further, **"This is real wisdom. If we get up early and do our mangala arati, chanting etc, then automatically we can become wise. There is no special endeavor needed to become wise. In fact, by this way, one can become wise even if he is not intelligent.**

These powerful words made me think. I have heard this proverb so many times in the past but Maharaj gave a whole new idea out of it. It is a general tendency in most of us to readily link that proverb to the 'health' aspect but mostly we do not focus on the other three items - happy, wealthy and wise.

Maharaj would many times say in his discourses that getting up early is important for keeping good health. According to Ayurveda shastra, If we sleep beyond 4 'o clock in the morning, the body develops more mucus. And if we are awake beyond 9 pm then our blood starts boiling. Both of these are not good for our health. So for healthy upkeep of our body, getting up early in the morning is essential. But keeping the body fit is not enough. Event hough the body is fit, if the mind is focussing on all filthy and unwanted things in this world then it will again lead us towards suffering. Hence, in our shastras, the importance is stressed on getting up during brahma muhurta and at the same time perform humble devotional service like mangala arati, chanting etc so that by focussing on the Lord, our mind will also become pure.

Srila Prabhupada gives the same idea in his punch in the purport for SB 1.3.44 - *No one can give rapt attention who is not pure in mind. No one can be pure in mind who is not pure in action. No one can be pure in action who is not pure in eating, sleeping, fearing and mating.*

The health of our body and mind depends upon how much we use them in Krsna's service. If we use our body and mind in the service of Krsna as much as possible, then Krsna will think, *If I give this person a healthy body and mind then he will use it properly in My service.*" So He will be forced to give us good health.

Tail piece: Incidentally, when I searched in the Vedabase folio for the word "wisdom", almost every time Prabhupada has used the term "*Vedic Wisdom*". It goes without saying that whatever is prescribed in our Vedic scriptures is the real wisdom.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das.

Following the Order of the Spiritual Master

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obsequies. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

Today I would like to write the following punch by Srila Prabhupada in CC Adi lila 12.9 Purport:

*When disciples do not stick to the principle of accepting the order of their spiritual master, immediately there are two opinions. **Any opinion different from the opinion of the spiritual master is useless.** One cannot infiltrate materially concocted ideas into spiritual advancement. That is deviation. **There is no scope for adjusting spiritual advancement to material ideas.***

To one who has staunch faith in the words of the spiritual master and the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the secret of success in Vedic knowledge is revealed. **The Krsna consciousness movement is being propagated according to this principle, and therefore our preaching work is going on successfully,** in spite of the many impediments offered by antagonistic demons, **because we are getting positive help from our previous acharyas.** One must judge every action by its result.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Kalacakra Krsna das.

Forgetful Nature of the Conditioned Soul

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

I was going through the "Arunodaya kirtana" song (*jīṅ jāgo jīṅ jāgo*) of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and found the following two lines very thought provoking as it was reflecting my "forgetful" nature.

bhajibo boliyā ese samśāra-bhitare bhuliyā rohile tumi avidyāra bhare

Addressing the sleeping souls, Lord Gauranga said, " You came into this world of birth and death saying 'My Lord, I will certainly worship You', but you have forgotten this promise and remained in great ignorance.

The key word here is "*forgotten*". Since we have forgotten our spiritual relationship with the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, we have fallen down from the spiritual world to the material world. Even now, inspite of knowing the fact that constant remembrance of the Lord and chanting His holy names is our prime duty, we forget this basic necessity and remains absorbed in material activities.

In Srimad Bhagavatam Canto 3 Chapter 31, Lord Kapila dev, while instructing his mother Devahuti about the movements of the living entities, explains to her how the unborn child in the womb, prays to the Lord that he would prefer not to come outside the womb, for fear of getting into the clutches of maya and desires to keep his consciousness fixed in the lotus feet of the Lord.

Srila Prabhupada has very nicely explained the sufferings of birth in the Purport of Srimad Bhagavatam 3.31.23:

When the child comes out of the abdomen through the narrow passage, due to pressure there the breathing system completely stops, and due to agony the child loses his memory. Sometimes the trouble is so severe that the child comes Out dead or almost dead. One can imagine what the pangs of birth are like. The child remains for ten months in that horrible condition within the abdomen, and at the end of ten months he is forcibly pushed out.

In the subsequent verses Kapila Muni explains so many other pains which the child undergoes after the birth. Every one of us have undergone this pain during birth. But we don't remember that pain now. What to speak of the pain we underwent during birth, we even tend to forget the pains which we might have undergone few days ago and continue to think that this material world is a comfortable place to stay and remain absorbed in fruitive activities.

Srila Prabhupada explains further in the purport of 3.31.27:

*The word **vigata jñānam** means that the spiritual knowledge which the child developed in the abdomen is already lost to the spell of maya. Owing to various kinds of disturbances and to being out of the abdomen, the child cannot remember what he was thinking of for his salvation. It is assumed that even if a person acquires some spiritually uplifting knowledge, circumstantially he is prone to forget it. Not only children but also elderly persons should be very careful to protect their sense of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and avoid unfavorable circumstances so that they may not forget their prime duty. Avoiding unfavorable circumstances" is one of the items in the process of **'Surrender'**. In every situation of our lives, we encounter various unfavorable circumstances which covers our real knowledge and subsequently leads to our forgetting Lord Krishna. Hence we should always pray to the Lord for His mercy so that we will not forget Him in any circumstance and render loving devotional service unto Him.*

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Sudarshana devi dasi.

Moderator's Note: Srila Prabhupada's most famous catchword was "Always remember Krishna and Never forget Krishna".

Jagad Guru Srila Prabhupada

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

I was watching one of the recent video series on "The Memories of Srila Prabhupada" - recollections by his various disciples. One of the recollections by HG Atma Tattva Prabhu was simply astounding. I may not be able to recreate the whole pastime verbatim but I will try my best.

Atma Tattva Prabhu's recollection:

In the year 1977, Srila Prabhupada had traveled to the Kumba-mela festival along with several of his disciples. Thousands of pilgrims had gathered to take bath at the confluence of the sacred rivers. Since the Hare Krsna movement had become quite well-known by then, lots of pilgrims came to take darshan of Srila Prabhupada. One of the days, a well-mannered devotee from the Ramanandi sect had come along with his young son who was hardly 8 or 9 years old, to have darshan of Srila Prabhupada. The Ramanandi's are worshippers of Lord Rama and they have a big group in Bengal and other parts of India. When the man came to Prabhupada, he took his young son near him and the boy washed His Divine Grace's feet and paid dandavat pranams to him. Srila Prabhupada was extremely pleased and affectionately rubbed the boy's head. While they were about to leave, may be Srila Prabhupada saw some special potency in that boy. He told that man, "*Why don't you give your son to me, I will make him an acharya!*". The man was pleasantly surprised to hear this but he said to Prabhupada, "Swamiji, I will be definitely glad to give him to you, but he is very small now. He has not even learnt the basics in sanskrit. If he has to become an acharya he should be an expert in writing commentaries etc. I will train him at least in the basics, grammar etc and then he is yours." Then Srila Prabhupada was talking to him about a few other things and again he came back to the same point - to give his son to him. The man again said the same thing with great respect. They went back and forth like this and by the time that Ramanandi devotee was about to leave, Srila Prabhupada had said at least four times - "***I will make him an acharya***". And then the devotee promised that he will definitely give his son to His Divine Grace in a couple of years, as soon as he gets done with his basic studies. Finally Srila Prabhupada said, "Alright!" and let him go.

A few months after this incident, Srila Prabhupada left the planet in the same year (1977). I was living in Mayapur teaching the gurukulis for several years. By then, we heard that the Ramanandis had broken up into several sects due to internal issues but that particular year they all came together and this was made possible by the expertise of one young devotee who was able to convince and unite them all. They had also selected him as the acarya of the entire Ramanandi sect. We were very surprised to hear of this and were curious to see who was this person that did this miraculous act. I had taken some of our gurukuli boys to one of their big gatherings where all their top sannyāsīs and devotees meet. We were given a very warm welcome and our gurukulis recited the sannyāsa sukta to glorify the sannyāsīs seated there. Then I saw their acharya who was seated in the center in an elevated seat. *He was none other than the same young boy whom I met in Kumba mela with his father who had come to take darshan of Srila Prabhupada!* He reciprocated to the gurukulis' prayers by composing a sanskrit verse glorifying Srila Prabhupada, on the spot! The rough meaning of the verse is that, "***I pay my humble obeisances to that supreme acharya AC Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada who spread the Krishna Consciousness to the whole world, a person like whom has not appeared in the past nor will there be one in the future (na ca bhūto na bhavisyati)***!"

He then went on to speak on the glories of Srila Prabhupada, his character, deeds and the Hare Krishna movement etc to all his followers and ended by saying, "*The reason that I am in this position is only by His Divine Grace's mercy. If not for him, I would not have achieved what I have done so far.*" I then went over to him and spoke to him for a bit. He was recollecting the same pastime in Kumba-mela where he met Srila Prabhupada with his father and Srila Prabhupada told his father, "I will make your son an acharya". He concluded, "*I am an acharya now only because Srila Prabhupada told so!*"

Note: I sincerely apologize for my short-coming in presenting this astounding pastime of Srila Prabhupada. There are unlimited such pastimes of Srila Prabhupada being recorded for our benefit. This amazing incident proves how **universal is Srila Prabhupada's mercy**. He gave his mercy to anyone and everyone without any consideration. **And he eternally lives with those who sincerely follow him**. As it is said, "**The Acharya is not frozen in time.**"

Jagad Guru Srila Prabhupada ki Jai!!!

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das.

Voluntary Endeavor - The Only Qualification for Spiritual Perfection

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obsequies. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

HH Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj during his visit sometime back to Auckland called me specially and recited the following verse from Srimad Bhagavatam 3.9.38:

*yac cakarthāṅga mat-stotraṁ mat-kathābhyudayāṅkitam
yad vā tapasi te niṣṭhā sa eṣa mad-anugrahaḥ*

O Brahma, the prayers that you have chanted praising the glories of My transcendental activities, the penances you have undertaken to understand Me, and your firm faith in Me—all these are to be considered My causeless mercy.

Prabhupada explains the verse very nicely in his purport that *When a living entity desires to serve the Lord in transcendental loving service, the Lord helps the devotee in so many ways as the caitya-guru, or the spiritual master within, and thus the devotee can perform many wonderful activities beyond material estimation. By the mercy of the Lord even a layman can compose prayers of the highest spiritual perfection. Such spiritual perfection is not limited by material qualifications but is developed by dint of one's sincere endeavor to render transcendental service.*

Voluntary endeavor is the only qualification for spiritual perfection. Material acquisitions of wealth or education are not considered.

Considering my limited intelligence, it took me sometime to realize that the above verse is significant in two different ways:

First of all, when speaking to the public with the intent of introducing them to Krsna Consciousness, we repeatedly get unfavourable responses from them. Here the following words are important:

Transcendental loving service i.e. without a tinge of material love, which is based more on, "if you do this for me, I will do this for you". Or put in a different way - "*You scratch my back and I will scratch your back.*" The only necessity is a serving attitude to Krsna out of humility.

Sincere endeavor i.e. without any ulterior motives like wanting to be popular or have a large following, nor there is a need for any marketing techniques, but only a sincere desire and determined effort is required to spread Krsna's message as it is in the scriptures.

Voluntary endeavor i.e. the desire should not be forced by an external source rather it should naturally come from the heart of every individual resulting in favourable action.

And if one is sincere in his effort Krsna also guarantees in verse 18.68 of Bhagavad Gita that "**For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to me.**

Secondly, possessing material qualifications or not possessing them does not determine whether a person is ready for Krsna Consciousness. How many times we have come across people who hold themselves back from Krsna Conscious activities, simply due to lack of material qualifications? Not realizing the fact that it is those very excuses that are given is what they would be purified from by doing transcendental loving service to the Lord.

And Srila Prabhupada explains very nicely in his purport to the third chaturloki, verse 10.10 of Bhagavad Gita that "*if a devotee is not intelligent enough to make progress on the path of self-realization but is sincere and devoted to the activities of devotional service, the Lord gives him a chance to make progress (by giving instructions from within) and ultimately attain to Him*".

So let us not hesitate to distribute Krsna Consciousness or to accepting it, with sincerity, love and devotion, as in both ways we are sure to reach Krsna by "His" causeless mercy.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Gopal Krsna das

Auckland.

Steps to Attain Pure Devotional Service

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept my humble obsequies. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev.

In the 3rd canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, Bhagavan Kapila dev's instructions to His mother Devahuti on the subject matter of Devotional Service is full of very deep and powerful instructions. In the beginning of the 29th chapter, Mother Devahuti asks a few questions of which the most significant is - "**to explain the path of devotional service.**" Kapila dev begins with a beautiful explanation of the different types of devotional service performed under the different material modes. Then He goes on to explain what is **pure devotional service** in verses SB 3.29.11-12.

*mad-guṇa-śruti-mātreṇa mayi sarva-guhāśaye
mano-gatir avicchinnā yathā gaṅgāmbhaso 'mbudhau*

*lakṣaṇam bhakti-yogasya nirguṇasya hy udāhṛtam
ahaituky avyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame*

The manifestation of unadulterated devotional service is exhibited when one's mind is at once attracted to hearing the transcendental name and qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is residing in everyone's heart. Just as the water of the Ganges flows naturally down towards the ocean, such devotional ecstasy, uninterrupted by any material condition, flows towards the Supreme Lord.

Then in verses SB 3.29.15-18, He gives a detailed account of how the devotees must behave in order to attain this pure devotional service. Here is the list given by Kapila dev:

- 1. A devotee must execute his prescribed duties, which are glorious, (when performed) without material profit.*
- 2. Without excessive violence, one should regularly perform one's devotional activities.*
- 3. The devotee should regularly see My statues (deities) in the temple, touch My lotus feet and offer worshipable paraphernalia and prayer.*
- 4. He should see (everything) in the spirit of renunciation, from the mode of goodness, and see every living entity as spiritual.*
- 5. The pure devotee should execute devotional service by giving the greatest respect to the spiritual master and the acharyas.*
- 6. He should be compassionate to the poor and make friendship with persons who are his equals.*
- 7. All his activities should be executed under regulation and with control of the senses.*
- 8. A devotee should always try to hear about spiritual matters and should always utilize his time in chanting the holy name of the Lord.*
- 9. His behavior should always be straightforward and simple.*
- 10. Although he is not envious but friendly to everyone, he should avoid the company of persons who are not spiritually advanced.*

Again after giving these instructions Kapila muni reconfirms the result in 3.29.19: **When one is fully qualified with all these transcendental attributes and his consciousness is thus completely purified, he is immediately attracted simply by hearing My name or hearing of My transcendental quality.**

In Srimad Bhagavatam, we are given **everything** we need to attain pure devotional service. All we need to do is repeatedly study these valuable instructions and practice them.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Kalacakra Krsna das.