

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 1

Date: 2012-08-09

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

Dhruva Maharaj is known for his steady and firm determination. He was blessed with a wonderful mother like Suniti who instructed him that without thinking anything inauspicious for his step-mother Suruchi, he has to go to forest and do penance to see Supreme Lord. Without any fear, Dhruva started to the forest, fully determined to see the Lord face to face. All merciful Lord blessed him with the opportunity to meet the ideal spiritual master Devarshi Narada Muni, from whom he further learnt the process of devotional service. Even though he was a small child, he sincerely followed the instructions of his mother and spiritual master and with fixed determination, performed devotional service and obtained the perfection of life. There are many great devotees in Srimad Bhagavatam who have offered wonderful prayers to Supreme Lord - Devotees like Kunti, Bhishmadev, Sukadev Goswami, Prahlad Maharaj, Dhruva Maharaj and so many others. Among these most of us could relate our situation to that of Dhruva Maharaj as we approach Supreme Lord mainly to fulfill our material desires. But unfortunately for us due to these material hankerings, mind keeps wavering and there is no steadiness in our devotional service. So let us take shelter of Sri Narada Muni, Dhruva Maharaj, Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev and learn from them as to how we can become steady in devotional service.

When Narada Muni first meets Dhruva Maharaj, he tries to convince him to go back to his home as it would be difficult for him to undergo austerities at such a young age. But Dhruva Maharaj honestly replies to Narada Muni, that being a kshatriya, he is unable to forget the insulting words of his step-mother. So he requested him to teach the way by which he could meet Supreme Lord and request Him to give a position more exalted than his father and grand-father. Pleased with his determination, Narada Muni begins to instruct him. Our love for a person sprouts and becomes firm when we come to know about the person's features, qualities and activities. So as an ideal spiritual master Narada Muni, before giving Dhruva Maharaj the mantra to meditate, begins to explain the glorious features and qualities of the Lord. In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.8.46 he says,

*taruṇam ramaṇīyāṅgam aruṇoṣṭhekṣaṇādharāṃ
praṇatāśrayaṇam ṇṛmṇam śaraṇyam karuṇārṇavam*

Narada Muni continued: The Lord's form is always youthful. Every limb and every part of His body is properly formed, free from defect. His eyes and lips are pinkish like the rising sun. He is always prepared to give shelter to the surrendered soul, and anyone so fortunate as to look upon Him feels all satisfaction. The Lord is always worthy to be the master of the surrendered soul, for He is the ocean of mercy.

In the first two lines, Narada Muni explains about the bodily features of the Lord. In the last couple of lines he describes the glorious qualities of the Lord.

ṇṛmṇam means transcendently pleasing and *karuṇārṇavam* means ocean of mercy. Only when a person is merciful and pleasing we feel like surrendering to that person. *śaraṇyam* means the person unto whom it is just worthy to surrender. *praṇatāśrayaṇam* means He is always prepared to give shelter. Lord is so merciful that He is always ready to protect His devotees who are surrendered to Him. He is available for us all the time because He knows that in this material world there is danger at every step for us and that we are like persons who need emergency care in the hospital. So unless the hospital and doctors are available 24*7, the patients are bound to suffer. So the Lord being Supreme loving father keeps Himself available all the time.

In case of Prahlad Maharaj, Narasimhadev was inside every pillar in the assembly of Hiranyakashipu, so that He can immediately jump out from the pillar and save His devotee. In his wonderful purport to verse 2.2.6 of Srimad Bhagavatam, Srila Prabhupada gives a very nice example of how Lord helped Srila Haridas Thakura. "*Haridasa Thakura, a great devotee of Lord Sri Caitanya, used to live in such a cave, and by chance a great venomous snake was a co-partner of the cave. Some admirer of Thakura Haridasa who had to visit the Thakura every day feared the snake and suggested that the Thakura leave that place. Because his devotees were afraid of the snake and they were regularly visiting the cave, Thakura Haridasa agreed to the proposal on their account. But as soon as this was settled, the snake actually crawled out of its hole in the cave and left the cave for good before everyone present. By the dictation of the Lord, who lived also within the heart of the snake, the snake gave preference to Haridasa and decided to leave the place and not disturb him. So this is a tangible example of how the Lord gives protection to a bona fide devotee like Thakura Haridasa.*"

So the first important lesson we learn from these great souls is that we should surrender unto the Supreme Lord in all situations and fully depend on Him for protection.

Krishna willing we will try to meditate on other verses spoken by Narada Muni in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,

Kalacakra Krsna das and Sudarshana devi dasi.

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 2

Date: 2012-08-10

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

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

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional Service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.8.47, Narada Muni glorifies the Lord as follows,

*śrīvatsāṅkaṁ ghana-śyāmaṁ puruṣaṁ vana-mālinam
śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-padmaṁ abhivyakta-caturbhujam*

The Lord is further described as having the mark of Shrivatsa, or the sitting place of the goddess of fortune, and His bodily hue is deep bluish. The Lord is a person, He wears a garland of flowers, and He is eternally manifest with four hands, which hold [beginning from the lower left hand] a conchshell, wheel, club and lotus flow.

On the chest of Supreme Lord there is mark of Shrivatsa which is the sitting place of Lakshmi devi. There is a nice pastime behind this. Once Bhrgu muni, the son of Brahma was present in the assembly of sages near the shore of river Sarasvati wherein the sages decided to send Bhrgu Muni to test all three predominating deities and report to the assembly as to who is the greatest. Bhrgu decided to test the Lords' tolerance, for that quality is a sure sign of greatness. First he entered the court of Lord Brahma, his father, without offering him any respect. This enraged Brahma, who suppressed his anger because Bhrgu was his son. Next Bhrgu went to Lord Shiva, his older brother, who rose from his seat to embrace him. But Bhrgu rejected the embrace by saying, "My dear brother, you are always very impure. Because you smear your body with ashes, you are not very clean. Please do not touch me." Shiva became very angry with him. It is said that an offense can be committed either with the body, with the mind or by speech. Bhrgu Muni's first offense, committed toward Lord Brahma, was an offense with the mind. His second offense, committed toward Lord Shiva by insulting him, criticizing him for unclean habits, was an offense by speech. Just as Shiva was about to kill Bhrgu with his trident, Goddess Parvati interceded and pacified her husband.

Next Bhrgu went to Vaikuntha loka to test Lord Narayana. When Bhrgu went back to the assembly of sages and told them all that had happened, they concluded that Lord Vishnu is certainly supreme. There Bhrgu Muni purposely committed the greatest sin by offending Lord Vishnu by his bodily activities. The first offense committed by Bhrgu Muni was mental, the second offense was vocal, and the third offense was corporal. These different offenses are progressively greater in degree. An offense committed within the mind is a positive offense, the same offense committed verbally is comparatively more grave, and when committed by bodily action it is superlative in offensiveness. So Bhrgu Muni committed the greatest offense by kicking the chest of the Lord with his foot in the presence of the goddess of fortune. Of course, Lord Vishnu is all-merciful. He did not become angry at the activities of Bhrgu Muni, for Bhrgu Muni was a great brahmana. A brahmana is to be excused even if he sometimes commits an offense, and Lord Vishnu set the example. Instead of becoming angry, he welcomed Bhrgu Muni, asked forgiveness for not noticing his arrival and massaged his feet. He said, "**My dear lord, My chest has now become sanctified because of the touch of your feet, and I am now assured that the goddess of fortune, Lakshmi, will be very glad to live there perpetually.**"

Srila Prabhupada very nicely mentions in the Krishna book that, "After hearing the details from Bhrgu Muni the sages were astonished because although Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva were immediately agitated, Lord Vishnu, in spite of being kicked by Bhrgu Muni, was not agitated in the least. The example is given that **small lamps may be agitated by a slight breeze, but the greatest lamp or the greatest illuminating source, the sun, is never moved, even by the greatest hurricane. One's greatness has to be estimated by one's ability to tolerate provoking situations.** The sages gathered on the bank of the river Sarasvati concluded that one who wants actual

peace and freedom from all fear should take shelter of the lotus feet of Vishnu... it is stated in the Bhagavad-Gita that anyone who accepts Lord Vishnu or Krishna as the supreme friend attains the highest perfection of peaceful life."

By constantly meditating on the glorious qualities of Lord and His devotees, by Their mercy such good qualities will also get manifested in us. Srila Haridas Thakura was beat in 22 market places by the guards as per the order of Kazi. When he remained alive even after those beatings, the offenders became worried that Kazi would kill them. So hearing this, Thakura became very compassionate upon them and immediately dropped down dead. His body was then dropped in Ganges, but by mercy of Supreme Lord, he came back alive. Then the Kazi realized his mistake and sought forgiveness. The important point to be noted here is that Haridas Thakur's spiritual potency is so great that strikes made by the offenders did not have any effect on him. But he was so kind that he did not want the offenders to suffer in the hands of Kazi. If we are not kind and tolerant to other living entities then it is not possible to chant the Holy Names of the Lord continuously,

*jīve dayā nāme ruci vaiṣṇava sevana
iha chāra dharma nāhi śuna sanātana*

Hear, Sanatana! Kindness to all living beings, taste for the holy name, and service to Vaishnavas—apart from these there is no other religion.

So on this auspicious occasion of Sri Sri Krishna Janmashtami, let us pray at the lotus feet of Supreme Lord, Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva that we understand the import of the above verse and practise the same in our lives. Then Supreme Lord will appear in our heart on each and every day.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 3

Date: 2012-08-11

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional Service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In the previous offerings we saw that in order to become steady in devotional service,

- a) We should surrender to Krishna, fully dependent on Him without any reservations.
- b) Lord is tolerance personified and is mercifully tolerating our inebrities. Remembering this we should learn to be tolerant to other living entities.

Now let us continue to hear more from Narada Muni about the description of the Lord. In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.8.48 and 49 Narada Muni glorifies the Lord as follows,

*kirīṭinaṁ kuṇḍalinaṁ keyūra-valayānvitam
kaustubhābharaṇa-grīvaṁ pīta-kaūṣeya-vāsasam
kāñcī-kalāpa-paryastam lasat-kāñcana-nūpuram
darśanīyatamaṁ śāntaṁ mano-nayana-varadhanam*

The entire body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva, is decorated. He wears a valuable jeweled helmet, necklaces and bracelets, His neck is adorned with the Kaustubha jewel, and He is dressed in yellow silk garments. The Lord is decorated with small golden bells around His waist, and His lotus feet are decorated with golden ankle bells. All His bodily features are very attractive and pleasing to the eyes. He is always peaceful, calm and quiet and very pleasing to the eyes and the mind.

Krishna is the source of all beauty and hence His form is matchless. The pure devotees of the Lord are blessed with direct audience of the Lord. So what they describe is not something imaginary. Those who sincerely listen to their descriptions, with unflinching faith will also be able to see the Lord. In his wonderful purport to verse 4.8.46 of Srimad Bhagavatam, His Divine Grace very nicely clarifies this point. He says, "*The description given by Narada Muni is not imaginary. The form of the Lord is understood by the parampara system. Mayavadi philosophers say that we have to imagine the form of the Lord, but here Narada Muni does not say that. Rather, he gives the description of the Lord from authoritative sources. He is himself an authority, and he is able to go to Vaikunthaloka and see the Lord personally; therefore his description of the bodily features of the Lord is not imagination. Sometimes we give instructions to our students about the bodily features of the Lord, and they paint Him. Their paintings are not imaginary. The description is given through disciplic succession, just like that given by Narada Muni, who sees the Lord and describes His bodily features. Therefore, such descriptions should be accepted, and if they are painted, that is not imaginative painting.*"

Spiritual world is inconceivable realm for ordinary souls like us. The paintings of Supreme Lord and His associates done by disciples of Srila Prabhupada attract people all over the world even to this day. In India atleast we can say for sure that almost every household has atleast one of those paintings. Because of his pure devotion Srila Prabhupada was able to direct his disciples to draw such wonderful paintings inspite of the fact that they had no clue of Vedic culture. Just like how Narada Muni is compassionately helping Dhruva Maharaj, in this Kali yuga, Srila Prabhupada due to his insurmountable compassion is helping suffering souls like us by giving us the gift of devotional service. If not for his mission, we would never have known about Mahamantra, Gita or Bhagavatam. He has dedicated his whole life in helping the people to chant, hear, study and speak about the Lord. As an acarya he has also shown how to practice the

scriptural injunctions in the daily life. On this auspicious occasion of the His Divine Grace's appearance day, let us whole-heartedly thank him for all that he has given us. Following his footsteps, if we sincerely listen to descriptions of the Lord, then we will also be able to meet the Lord.

Jagat Guru Srila Prabhupada ki Jai! Srila Gurudev ki Jai!

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 4

Date: 2012-08-13

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In the previous offerings we saw the following points which will help us to become steady in devotional service,

- a) We should surrender to Krishna, be fully dependent on Him without any reservations.
- b) Lord is tolerance personified and is mercifully tolerating our inebrieties. Remembering this we should learn to be tolerant to other living entities.
- c) Lord's beauty is matchless and by sincerely hearing His glories from pure devotees, we will be able to meet the Lord.

Now let us continue to meditate on some more qualities of the Lord as described by Narada Muni in verse 4.8.49 of Srimad Bhagavatam,

*kāñcī-kalāpa-paryastam̐ lasat-kāñcana-nūpuram
darśanīyatamam̐ śāntam̐ mano-nayana-varadhanam*

The Lord is decorated with small golden bells around His waist, and His lotus feet are decorated with golden ankle bells. All His bodily features are very attractive and pleasing to the eyes. He is always peaceful, calm and quiet and very pleasing to the eyes and the mind.

The transcendental qualities '*śāntam̐*' and '*mano-nayana-varadhanam*' mentioned by the Lord in the above verse is worth meditating.

śāntam̐- In the word to word equivalents, His Divine Grace very nicely translates the meaning of this word as peaceful, calm and quite. Lord is atmarama - self satisfied and is very tolerant. So He is always shaantah - peaceful, calm and quite. In order to be steady in devotional service, it is very important for us to meditate and imbibe these qualities. How to be *śāntam̐*?

i) In the previous offerings on this topic, we saw the importance of being tolerant even to people who offend us. When we practice tolerance then automatically we become *śāntam̐* - calm, quite and peaceful. When we are not tolerant, we become agitated and noisy and lose our peace of mind. We think that offender as the root cause of all problems and we try to revenge them, fight with them and in the process we fail to remember Krishna, to serve Krishna. In his wonderful purport to verse 3.24.44, Srila Prabhupada says, "*One should become like the ocean. The ocean is filled by many thousands of rivers, and millions of tons of its water evaporates into clouds, yet the ocean is the same unagitated ocean. The laws of nature may work, but if one is fixed in devotional service at the lotus feet of the Lord, he is not agitated, for he is introspective. He does not look outside to material nature, but he looks in to the spiritual nature of his existence; with a sober mind, he simply engages in the service of the Lord. Thus he realizes his own self without false identification with matter and without affection for material possessions. Such a great devotee is never in trouble with others because he sees everyone from the platform of spiritual understanding; he sees himself and others in the right perspective.*"

As the proverb goes, "Haste makes waste", whereas "Slow and steady wins the race." In this race of human birth, our destination and only goal is to reach the lotus feet of Krishna. In that race, if we keep proceeding with patience and faith, following the instructions of Guru and shastras then we are sure to reach the goal. On the other hand if we fall

prey to anger and agitation, then we are bound to fall and suffer.

ii) When we are satisfied with whatever Lord blesses us, then we are shaanta. When we keep on hankering for more and more, then we will always be in anxiety. Sometimes we may be working very hard day and night in order to achieve something. At that point it is important to have a check on ourselves to know whether we are doing it for our need or out of greed. To meet basic necessities of life, we have to do our prescribed duties. No doubt. Krishna confirms the necessity of the same in whole 3rd Chapter of Bhagavad Gita. But when it goes to the extent of affecting our own health, and sadhana then we should draw a line. Sadhana helps us to associate with Krishna. Whereas material hankerings take us away from Krishna. His Divine Grace very nicely says in purport to verse 4.24.20, "*A devotee's mind is always calm, quiet and desireless because he is always anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam [Cc. Madhya 19.167], having no desire other than to serve Krishna as His personal servant, friend, father, mother or conjugal lover. Due to his association with Krishna, a devotee is always very calm and cool. **It is also significant that within that reservoir all the aquatics were also very calm and quiet. Because the disciples of a devotee have taken shelter of a great soul, they become very calm and quiet and are not agitated by the waves of the material world.***"

Krishna willing we will continue to meditate on the other glorious qualities of the Lord as described by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva, so that we can become steady in devotional service.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 5

Date: 2012-08-14

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In the previous offerings we saw the following points which will help us to become steady in devotional service:

- a) We should surrender to Krishna, fully dependent on Him without any reservations.
- b) Lord is tolerance personified and is mercifully tolerating our ineptitudes. Remembering this we should learn to be tolerant to other living entities.
- c) Lord's beauty is matchless and by sincerely hearing His glories from pure devotees, we will be able to meet the Lord.
- d) Lord is *śāntam* - calm, quite and peaceful. When we practice tolerance and satisfaction, then we also become *śāntam*

Now let us continue to meditate on some more qualities of the Lord as described by Narada Muni in verse 4.8.50 of Srimad Bhagavatam,

*kāñcī-kalāpa-paryastam lasat-kāñcana-nūpuram
darśanīyatamaṁ śāntam mano-nayana-varadhanam*

The Lord is decorated with small golden bells around His waist, and His lotus feet are decorated with golden ankle bells. All His bodily features are very attractive and pleasing to the eyes. He is always peaceful, calm and quiet and very pleasing to the eyes and the mind.

We see that in the verses starting from 4.8.45 through 4.8.49 Narada many times glorifies the pleasing nature of the Lord -

SB 4.8.45 - *prasanna-vadane* - **pleasing face**

SB 4.8.46 - *ṛṣṇam* - **transcendently pleasing in all respects**

SB 4.8.49 - *mano-nayana-varadhanam* - **very pleasing to the eyes and mind**

Our beloved spiritual master H H Mahavishnu Goswami Maharaj says, that Lord Krishna smiles at everyone. He would give the example of how different kinds of people come to temple to take darshan of Lord and irrespective of whether the person is a thief, rogue or criminal Krishna always smiles. Whether people glorify Him or blame Him, He smiles. Apart from His matchless transcendental, beautiful features, His smile makes Him very attractive and easily approachable by all. Now we can in no way compete with beauty of Lord. So to be pleasing to all, does not mean that we need to be very beautiful. Irrespective of the fact that whether we are ugly or good-looking, Lord has blessed a great gift to all human-beings and that is the ability to smile. It takes lesser number of muscles to smile than to frown. So it is always better to have a smiling face. If we go with a morose face then Maharaj encouraging us to smile says, "*Why is your face like rotten banana? Look at Krishna's face - He has nice water-melon like face. How nicely He is smiling! Please, please we don't want rotten banana faces. We want water-melon like face.*" Maharaj also quotes the below Hindi couplet,

*chār mile - chousaṭ khile bīs rahe kar joḍ
hari se harijan mile nāche sāth karoḍ*

When devotees see each other their face blooms with joy and they fold their hands and offer obeisances. When Lord's devotees meet Him - the seven crore hair follicles in their body start dancing out of ecstatic joy.

When we meet any living entity we should be really thankful to Lord for that opportunity. Instead if we frown at each other, then the relationship gets all the more strained. There is a nice saying that smile is a small curve which can straighten up so many things. Also smile is free of cost. We don't lose anything by smiling. Infact it makes us as well as the people whom we interact with feel better. We might have experienced that when we are in critical condition in hospital, a small smile from nurse or doctor or anyone around us, psychologically gives us some hope and courage. Can we imagine how worse it will be if people frown at us in that condition? Just like how staying in hospital is miserable, every living entity is suffering in this material world. So a gentle smile and pleasing words will be like a oasis in this desert. Maharaj always quotes the below verse from shastras.

*priya vākya pradānena sarve tuṣyanti jantavaḥ
tasmāt tadeva vaktavyam vacane kim daridratā*

By speaking pleasing words, all the living entities are satisfied. Therefore always speak sweetly, why are you so poor in your sentences?

As practising devotees it is all the more important for us to imbibe this quality of having a pleasing demeanor to all as that will give courage and hope to the living entities whom we meet and will also inspire them to take to the process of bhakti.

Krishna willing we will continue to meditate on the other glorious qualities of the Lord as described by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva, so that we can become steady in devotional service.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 6

Date: 2012-08-15

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In the previous offerings we saw the following points which will help us to become steady in devotional service:

- a) We should surrender to Krishna, fully dependent on Him without any reservations.
- b) Lord is tolerance personified and is mercifully tolerating our ineptitudes. Remembering this we should learn to be tolerant to other living entities.
- c) Lord's beauty is matchless and by sincerely hearing His glories from pure devotees, we will be able to meet the Lord.
- d) Lord is shaantah - calm, quite and peaceful. When we practise tolerance and satisfaction, then we also become shaantah.
- e) Lord is pleasing to eyes and mind. Remembering this we should always be smiling and pleasing in our behaviour to others.

In Srimad Bhagavatam verses 4.8.51-52 Narada Muni says,

*smayamānam abhidhyāyet sānurāgāvalokanam
niyatenaika-bhūtena manasā varadarśabham
evaṁ bhagavato rūpaṁ subhadraṁ dhyāyato manaḥ
nirvṛtyā parayā tūrṇaṁ sampannaṁ na nivartate*

The Lord is always smiling, and the devotee should constantly see the Lord in this form, as He looks very mercifully toward the devotee. In this way the meditator should look toward the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the bestower of all benedictions. One who meditates in this way, concentrating his mind upon the always auspicious form of the Lord, is very soon freed from all material contamination, and he does not come down from meditation upon the Lord.

In the above verse Narada Muni is very nicely stressing on the importance of taking darshan of the Lord. When we are chanting the Mahamantra also devotees advise us that to fix our mind on chanting we should try to chant sitting in front of the Deity or any picture of the Lord or Tulsi devi. Because if we keep seeing other things then *dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ*, mind is so tricky that our thoughts wander hither and thither and we will no longer be chanting with proper concentration on the Holy Names. It is recommended by shastras that grahasthas should carry on Deity worship at their homes as well. Deities are not like show-case dolls, but they are merciful manifestation of Lord Himself in our home. Presence of Deity has a great impact on each and every person in the family. If even some person is atheistic or does not have faith in Lord, simply if they take darshan of the Deity, honour Lord's prasadam has a gradual impact and brings a change in consciousness of all.

In his wonderful purport to the above verse His Divine Grace very nicely says, "The word *niyatena* is very significant in this connection, for it indicates that one should execute the meditation practice as stated above. One should not manufacture a way of meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but should follow the authorized shastras and personalities. By this prescribed method one can practice concentration upon the Lord until one is so fixed that he remains in trance, thinking always of the form of the Lord. The word used here is *eka-bhūtena*, which means "with great attention and concentration. **If one concentrates on the descriptions of the bodily features of the Lord, one will never fall down.**"

Srimad Bhagavatam verse 2.3.22 very nicely mentions that, "**The eyes which do not look at the symbolic representations of the Personality of Godhead Vishnu [His forms, name, quality, etc.] are like those printed on the plumes of the peacock.**" In the purport His Divine Grace very nicely mentions, "All the members of the household should be engaged in the daily service of the Lord, beginning from morning (4 am) till night (10 pm) by performing *maṅgala-ārātrika*, *nirañjana*, *arcana*, *pūjā*, *kīrtana*, *śṛṅgāra*, *bhoga-vaikāli*, *sandhyā-ārātrika*, *pāṭha*, *bhoga* (at night), *śayana-ārātrika*, etc. Engagement in such worship of the Deity, under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master, will greatly help the householders to purify their very existence and make rapid progress in spiritual knowledge. Simple theoretical book knowledge is not sufficient for a neophyte devotee. Book knowledge is theoretical, whereas the *arcana* process is practical... If one is unable to maintain a temple at home, he should go to another's temple where all the above performances are regularly executed. Visiting the temple of a devotee and looking at the profusely decorated forms of the Lord well dressed in a well-decorated, sanctified temple naturally infuse the mundane mind with spiritual inspiration."

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 7

Date: 2012-08-23

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional Service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In the previous offerings we saw the following points which will help us to become steady in devotional service.

- a) We should surrender to Krishna, fully dependent on Him without any reservations.
- b) Lord is tolerance personified and is mercifully tolerating our ineptitudes. Remembering this we should learn to be tolerant to other living entities.
- c) Lord's beauty is matchless and by sincerely hearing His glories from pure devotees, we will be able to meet the Lord.
- d) Lord is shaantah - calm, quite and peaceful. When we practise tolerance and satisfaction, then we also become shaantah
- e) Lord is pleasing to eyes and mind. Remembering this we should always be smiling and pleasing in our behaviour to others.
- f) If we constantly see the Lord's beautiful form, we will be freed from material contamination.

In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.8.54, Narada Muni gives the mantra to worship the Supreme Lord and also explains the process to be followed for worshiping Him,

*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya
mantreṇānena devasya kuryād dravyamayīm budhaḥ
saparyām vividhair dravyair deśa-kāla-vibhāgavit*

Om namo bhagavate vaasudevaaya. This is the twelve-syllable mantra for worshiping Lord Krishna. One should install the physical forms of the Lord, and with the chanting of the mantra one should offer flowers and fruits and other varieties of foodstuffs exactly according to the rules and regulations prescribed by authorities. But this should be done in consideration of place, time, and attendant conveniences and inconveniences.

In his wonderful purport to the above verse Srila Prabhupada says, "*The prescribed rules, as stated here by Narada Muni, are that one should accept the mantra through a bona fide spiritual master and hear the mantra in the right ear. Not only should one chant or murmur the mantra, but in front of him he must have the Deity, or physical form of the Lord...Not only must one receive the mantra from the bona fide spiritual master like Narada Muni or his representative in the disciplic succession, but one must chant the mantra. And not only must one chant, but he should also offer whatever foodstuff is available in his part of the world, according to time and convenience.*"

In this verse we find that Narada Muni is teaching us the importance of chanting (kirtanam) as well as Deity worship (arcanam). We might wonder if chanting the Holy Names of Lord alone could give us love for Godhead, why should we take to initiation or Deity worship. Srila Prabhupada in his unparalleled purport to verse 7.5.23, while explaining the process of arcanam clarifies our doubt. His Divine Grace says, "*One might ask, then what is the necessity of being initiated? The answer is that even though the chanting of the holy name is sufficient to enable one to progress in spiritual life to the standard of love of Godhead, one is nonetheless susceptible to contamination because of possessing a material body. Consequently, special stress is given to the arcana-vidhi. One should therefore regularly take advantage of both the bhagavata process and pañcātrīki process.*"

His Divine Grace also mentions that if any householder devotee is circumstantially unable to worship the Deity, then he must at least see the Deity worship and in this way he may achieve success also. Deity worship brings discipline in us and instills cleanliness and purity in us. It should be done according to the suitable arrangements given by the spiritual master. He says, "*Grhastha devotees, however, are generally engaged in material activities, and therefore if they do not take to Deity worship, their falling down is positively assured. Deity worship means following the rules and regulations precisely. That will keep one steady in devotional service.*"

Krishna willing we shall continue more on this topic in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 8

Date: 2012-08-24

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional Service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In the previous offerings we saw the following points which will help us to become steady in devotional service.

- a) We should surrender to Krishna, fully dependent on Him without any reservations.
- b) Lord is tolerance personified and is mercifully tolerating our ineptitudes. Remembering this we should learn to be tolerant to other living entities.
- c) Lord's beauty is matchless and by sincerely hearing His glories from pure devotees, we will be able to meet the Lord.
- d) Lord is shaantah - calm, quite and peaceful. When we practise tolerance and satisfaction, then we also become *shaantah*.
- e) Lord is pleasing to eyes and mind. Remembering this we should always be smiling and pleasing in our behaviour to others.
- f) If we constantly see the Lord's beautiful form, we will be freed from material contamination.
- g) Deity Worship regulates our life and instills cleanliness in us.

Let us continue to hear more from Sri Narada Muni. In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.8.55 and 56, Narada Muni says,

*salilaiḥ śucibhir mālyair vanyair mūla-phalādibhiḥ
śastāṅkurāṁśukaiś cārcet tulasī priyayā prabhum
labdhvā dravyamayīm arcāṁ kṣīty-ambv-ādiṣu vārcayet
ābhṛtātmā muniḥ śānto yata-vān mita-vanya-bhuk*

One should worship the Lord by offering pure water, pure flower garlands, fruits, flowers and vegetables, which are available in the forest, or by collecting newly grown grasses, small buds of flowers or even the skins of trees, and if possible, by offering tulasi leaves, which are very dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is possible to worship a form of the Lord made of physical elements such as earth, water, pulp, wood and metal. In the forest one can make a form with no more than earth and water and worship Him according to the above principles. A devotee who has full control over his self should be very sober and peaceful and must be satisfied simply with eating whatever fruits and vegetables are available in the forest.

Narada Muni knew that Dhruva Maharaj is in forest. So he might not be able to offer bhoga cooked in elaborate manner. Nor can he get Deity made of pulp, wood or metal. So as a kind spiritual master, knowing the position of his dear disciple, Narada Muni advises him to make a form of Lord with earth and water and offer whatever flower, fruit, leaf and water is available in the forest. The words *śucibhir* means purified and *śastā* means newly grown grass. Be it fruit, flower, leaf or water whatever is being offered to the Lord must be pure and fresh. Narada Muni also mentions that offering should include tulsi leaves which are very dear to Lord. Through these descriptions Narada Muni is also revealing the simple and kind hearted nature of the Lord. He does not demand for any elaborate preparations, but is satisfied with these simple offerings done by His devotees with love. In Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna Himself declares in verse 9.26,

*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ*

If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, fruit or water, I will accept it.

Lord is simple and so is the process of worshiping Him as well. So we should not unnecessarily complicate the process whimsically. His Divine Grace very nicely clarifies in the purport to the above verse as to what should be the mood of the devotee. He says, "*The devotee should not be anxious about cooking food; whatever is available in the forest or in the city among the fruit and vegetable groups should be offered to the Deity, and the devotee should be satisfied eating that. He should not be anxious to have very palatable dishes. Of course, wherever it is possible, one should offer the Deities the best foodstuffs, prepared within the category of fruits and vegetables, cooked or uncooked. The important factor is that the devotee should be regulated (mita-bhuk); that is one of the good qualifications of a devotee. He should not hanker to satisfy the tongue with a particular kind of foodstuff. He should be satisfied to eat whatever prasada is available by the grace of the Lord.*"

In this regard we came across a nice pastime about Lord Jagannath as mentioned in Skanda Purana (Utkala khanda). In Treta yuga there was a king named Shweta who was a great devotee of Lord Jagannath and who served the Lord faithfully following all the rules and regulations laid down by King Indradyumna. Daily he would prepare one bhoga offering to Jagannatha. Early one morning, the king was observing the puja offered to Jagannatha. He saw thousands of demigods offering many nice articles to the Lord. The king thought to himself, "The Lord has been offered these wonderful gifts from the demigods. What can I offer my Lord from this earthly planet that might please Him as much as the gifts of the demigods?" While thinking thus the king offered his obeisances and left the temple room. However, before he turned away at the doorway to the temple, he saw Lakshmi devi serving the food he had prepared for Lord Jagannatha. The Lord along with His vijaya-vigrahas was relishing the food. The king felt blessed to see this incident, satisfied that he had offered something to the Lord that pleased Him.

It doesn't matter for the Lord, whether it is one item or ten items, or whether it is prepared by human-being or demigod. The Lord accepts the offerings when it is done with genuine love, humility and devotion. When we cook bhoga for the Lord, or go to market for buying grains, vegetables, fruits etc, our motive should be to please the Lord and not to satisfy our own senses. Then our consciousness will be purified. We should not do these things in a mechanical manner, like a ritual. But we should always remember that Deity is non-different from Supreme Lord and has kindly manifested in our homes in that form. So with gratitude and devotion, if we prepare and offer the bhoga to the Lord, then by His grace we will be able to relish the bliss of the service, the taste of prasadam and gradually become steady in devotional service.

Krishna willing, we shall continue to hear more from Narada Muni on this topic in subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 9

Date: 2012-08-25

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional Service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In the previous offerings we saw the following points which will help us to become steady in devotional service.

- a) We should surrender to Krishna, fully dependent on Him without any reservations.
- b) Lord is tolerance personified and is mercifully tolerating our ineptitudes. Remembering this we should learn to be tolerant to other living entities.
- c) Lord's beauty is matchless and by sincerely hearing His glories from pure devotees, we will be able to meet the Lord.
- d) Lord is shaantah - calm, quite and peaceful. When we practise tolerance and satisfaction, then we also become *shaantah*.
- e) Lord is pleasing to eyes and mind. Remembering this we should always be smiling and pleasing in our behaviour to others.
- f) If we constantly see the Lord's beautiful form, we will be freed from material contamination.
- g) Deity Worship regulates our life and instills cleanliness in us.
- h) Offerings to the Lord (leaves, fruits, flowers and vegetables) should be pure, fresh and should be done with loving devotion.

In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.8.58 Narada Muni says,

*paricaryā bhagavato yāvatyah pūrva-sevitāḥ
tā mantra-hṛdayenaiva prayuñjyān mantra-mūrtaye*

One should follow in the footsteps of previous devotees regarding how to worship the Supreme Lord with the prescribed paraphernalia, or one should offer worship within the heart by reciting the mantra to the Personality of Godhead, who is nondifferent from the mantra.

In this shloka Narada Muni reveals to Dhruva Maharaj about the simplicity and potency of devotional service unto Lord. He says that in situations wherein one is not able to worship physical form of the Lord, one can still worship the Lord within the heart, by reciting mantras and the merciful Lord who is also non-different from the mantras accepts such kind of mental worship as well. In his wonderful purport to verse 7.5.23, while describing the arcanam process, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada mentions, "*In the Narada-pancaraatra it is stated by Lord Narayana that worship of the Deity within the mind is called maanasa-puja, One can become free from the four miseries by this method. Sometimes worship from the mind can be independently executed. According to the instruction of Avirhotra Muni, one of the nava-yogendras, as mentioned in Srimad-Bhagavatam, one may worship the Deity by chanting all the mantras. Eight kinds of Deities are mentioned in the shastra, and the mental Deity is one of them.*"

His Divine Grace also mentions about the description given in Brahma-vaivata purana about a poor, innocent brahmana who lived in the city of Pratisthaana pura. Once in the assembly of brahmanas he heard about how the Deity is worshiped in the temple and how worship could be done within the mind as well. After this incident, the brahmana, having bathed in the Godavari River, began mentally worshipping the Deity. He would wash the temple within his mind, and then in his imagination he would bring water from all the sacred rivers in golden and silver waterpots. He collected all kinds of valuable paraphernalia for worship, and he worshiped the Deity very gorgeously, beginning from bathing

the Deity and ending with offering arati. Thus he felt great happiness. After many years had passed in this way, one day within his mind he cooked nice sweet rice with ghee to worship the Deity. He placed the sweet rice on a golden dish and offered it to Lord Krishna, but he felt that the sweet rice was very hot, and therefore he touched it with his finger. He immediately felt that his finger had been burned by the hot sweet rice, and thus he began to lament. While the brahmana was in pain, Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha began smiling, and the goddess of fortune inquired from the Lord why He was smiling. Lord Vishnu then ordered His associates to bring the brahmana to Vaikuntha. Thus the brahmana attained the liberation of *saamipyā*, the facility of living near the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

On the battlefield of Kurukshetra also when Bhishmadev was lying on the bed of arrows, he was unable to use any physical paraphernalia to welcome or worship the Lord and all the wonderful sages and devotees who had come to meet him. But according to time and place, he received all of them and offered wonderful prayers to the Supreme Lord. One should not do mental worship, out of laziness or miserliness. Lord is omniscient and so He can very well detect the motive and mood of the person doing the offering and He will reject such offerings. So the point to be learnt is that we should offer the best of things to Lord for worshiping Him, but in cases where facilities are not available, we can still worship Him mentally by offering prayers. In any case the worship or connection with Lord should not stop, but should continue with full velocity.

Krishna willing we shall continue more on this topic in subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 10

Date: 2012-08-26

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

This is in continuation of the previous topic, "Steadiness in Devotional Service", wherein we were meditating on the wonderful verses spoken by Sri Narada Muni to Dhruva Maharaj, describing the form and glories of Supreme Lord. In the previous offerings we saw the following points which will help us to become steady in devotional service.

- a) We should surrender to Krishna, fully dependent on Him without any reservations.
- b) Lord is tolerance personified and is mercifully tolerating our ineptitudes. Remembering this we should learn to be tolerant to other living entities.
- c) Lord's beauty is matchless and by sincerely hearing His glories from pure devotees, we will be able to meet the Lord.
- d) Lord is shaantah - calm, quite and peaceful. When we practise tolerance and satisfaction, then we also become shaantah.
- e) Lord is pleasing to eyes and mind. Remembering this we should always be smiling and pleasing in our behaviour to others.
- f) If we constantly see the Lord's beautiful form, we will be freed from material contamination.
- g) Deity Worship regulates our life and instills cleanliness in us.
- h) Offerings to the Lord (leaves, fruits, flowers and vegetables) should be pure, fresh and should be done with loving devotion.
- i) If physical paraphernalia are not available, then we can do maanasik pooja (worship within the mind) by chanting prayers.

In Srimad Bhagavatam verse 4.8.57 Narada Muni says,

*svecchāvatāra-caritair acintya-nija-māyayā
kariṣyaty uttamaślokaś tad dhyāyēd dhṛdayaṅ-gamam*

My dear Dhruva, besides worshiping the Deity and chanting the mantra three times a day, you should meditate upon the transcendental activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His different incarnations, as exhibited by His supreme will and personal potencies.

Narada Muni advises Dhruva Maharaj that besides doing deity worship and chanting, it is also important that we meditate upon the transcendental activities of the Lord. Scriptures like Bhagavad Gita and Srimad Bhagavatam are full of transcendental activities of the Lord. Since we are present in the material body and susceptible to contamination, there is always a chance that we might tend to loose our faith and taste in process of bhakti if we don't meditate on the transcendental activities of the Lord. On the other hand, by regularly and seriously meditating on the transcendental activities of the Lord, our faith in the bhakti process will improve in leaps and bounds. Srila Prabhupada in his wonderful purport to verse 1.18.11 says, "*The more we hear about the transcendental activities of the Lord, as they are stated in the Bhagavad-Gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam, the more we can know about His transcendental nature and thus make definite progress on the path back to Godhead.*" So by regularly hearing about His pastimes, activities and His nature, we will also gradually develop the transcendental nature and qualities of the Lord.

Such remembrance of Lord's activities will have a positive effect in improving the quality of chanting and deity worship as well. All Vaishnava acharyas like the six Goswamis of Vrindavan, HDG Bhaktivinoda Thakura, HDG Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada, HDG Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada all were engaged in deity worship. Still they spent so

much time in studying, writing and speaking about the transcendental activities of the Lord. This shows the importance of meditating and remembering the transcendental attributes and qualities of the Lord.

In fact, if we chant the holy names nicely without offenses, then gradually we will become more and more inquisitive to know and learn about the transcendental qualities of Krishna and then ultimately in the advanced stage of devotional service it becomes so difficult for us to keep away from speaking and hearing about the glories of the Lord. That is what Srila Prabhupada beautifully says in his purport to SB 2.1.11, "*Hearing of the holy name gradually promotes one to the stage of hearing about His form, about His attributes, His pastimes and so on, and thus the **necessity of the chanting of His glories develops successively.***"

Srila Prabhupada says that the '**necessity**' of the chanting of His glories develops successively, which means that *chanting the glories of the Lord becomes a necessity and not an option at the advanced stage of hearing*. One cannot help but keep glorifying the Lord continuously. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu was so intense in His eagerness to glorify Krishna that at times He would speak as if He had a thousand mouths. Lord Anantadev is glorifying the Supreme Lord with his thousand mouths for thousands of milleniums but still he is not satisfied with this service. So we can see from the advice of Narada muni and also from Srila Prabhupada's transcendental purports that the processes like shravanam, kirtanam, archanam, smaranam etc are interlinked and performing one process nicely, positively feeds onto the other with the ultimate result of developing steady transcendental love and devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 1

Date: 2014-04-15

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

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

The following is a humble effort to transcribe an inspiring class given by our Godbrother HG Devakinandan Prabhuji on Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41.

1. **Chant and be peaceful:** We are all fortunate because, wherever we are, wherever topics about Krishna are discussed, wherever chanting of Krishna's names and glories are being sung and heard, everyone becomes happy. Isn't it true that we are all very peaceful at the moment? Completely. Very peaceful. Why? Because for the past few hours we have been doing nothing but chanting Krishna's names. And when we chant Krishna's names we automatically become peaceful. Why? Because chanting is non-different from seeing Krishna. This is the point we have to understand. *The only qualification that we require to continue in Krishna consciousness is to have this unbreakable, unswerving, unflinching resolve. Resolve means determination, to continue on this path.* It is very easy for us to feel very inspired when we are in the presence of devotees. Isn't it true? *At this moment, we are all very fired up and frankly speaking, because we are all remembering nobody and nothing but Krishna, we are all free of the three modes of material nature.* Now we are all free. We are not even in the mode of goodness, we are completely transcendental. But the moment we leave from here, we go back to our work, we go back to Singapore, we back to Kosovo, what happens? Then the challenge of the determination to continue - the fire stops. So how do we sustain the fire is the practical point that Bhagavad Gita touches.

2. **Bhakti has no boundaries:** Before we start I would like to introduce you all to 3 devotees who have come all the way from Kosovo. Now how many of you know actually where Kosovo is? Kosovo used to be part of Yugoslavia. But Kosovo is more traditionally a part of Albania, in terms of culture. Now how many of you know where Albania is? (laughter) We know it is somewhere in Europe. We have HG Muralidhar Krishna Prabhu, he is born Muslim and he has embraced Krishna consciousness so nicely that sometimes we forget that he is not Indian. (loud laughter) He was the first person from Kosovo to have met our Guru Maharaj. He was 19 when he met Maharaj in London. There was civil war in his country at that time and even now when you go there, I went there few years ago and we can feel a strong military presence there. At the time of immigration, I was waiting to get through and they were asking me many questions as to 'how do you know these people, how did you become friends with them.' They looked at me with great suspicion. (laughter) I was worried because there were guns all over the place and I was thinking did I make the right move? Murali prabhu and Vishwabhavana Prabhu were just there outside. But how to get to them? (laughter) And finally, they looked at my passport many times and finally decided that I am safe, they put a stamp and then smiled very broadly and said, "Welcome to Kosovo". That was how it was. (loud laughter).

Then we have HG Vishwabhavana Prabhu. He is a doctor by profession. Murali prabhu is a dentist by profession. So between both of them you are taken care of. (laughter) Vishwabhavana Prabhu stopped his practice as doctor and is continuing his father's business and is doing it very successfully. They have families. Their wives are also Krishna conscious and when I stayed there in Kosovo, everyday prasadam was first-class in Kosovo. Their children - Murali prabhu has two daughters - Mira and Maya. Vishwabhavana prabhu's daughter's name is Hare and she is eleven and half years old and his son's name is Arya. So this Vedic culture is very strong and they have all taken to this Krishna consciousness so well and frankly speaking they are really examples we have to follow. We have another devotee from Kosovo - Viraj prabhu. All of them are chanting very sincerely and have embraced Krishna consciousness so nicely and have come all the way from Kosovo. So Krishna is truly international! (loud laughter). This movement is not sectarian. It is not. That is a rubber stamp.

So the question we ask ourselves today is how to become determined in devotional service. These devotees have no association in Kosovo. They have to everything underground. Their altars have to be hidden. They have to be extremely careful. Because so much of military presence and guns there. It is not a safe place. But the challenge is not the guns. The challenge is how do we continue to remember Krishna everyday, with or without guns. Bhagavad Gita 2.41 gives us the nice clue.

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhuji in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 2

Date: 2014-04-16

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring class given by our Godbrother HG Devakinandan Prabhuji on Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41. In the previous offering we saw the below point.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.

Now let us continue to hear further.

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-śākhā hy anantāś ca buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām*

Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one. O beloved child of the Kurus, the intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched.

Srila Prabhupada gives a beautiful definition for faith in the purport to above verse. He says, "*Faith means unflinching trust in something sublime.*" He also says, "*If Krishna is satisfied by one's actions, then everyone will be satisfied*". *Service in Krishna consciousness is, however, best practiced under the able guidance of a spiritual master who is a bona fide representative of Krishna, who knows the nature of the student and who can guide him to act in Krishna consciousness. As such, to be well versed in Krishna consciousness one has to act firmly and obey the representative of Krishna, and one should accept the instruction of the bona fide spiritual master as one's mission in life.*"

3. **Stick to one - ekeha kuru-nandana:** This verse actually has given us all the answers as to how to become determined in Krishna consciousness. The way to become determined in Krishna consciousness is not to be many branched. This is very important point. My Guru Maharaj always gave this example. You know before the marriage, in case of arranged marriages, the boy or the girl, what do they do? Parents arrange, they select a few people. Then they say, "You go and see 2 or 3, choice number 1, 2 or 3". Then the girl or boy goes to see. Then after seeing, may be not so sure. Choice 1 is 80%. Choice 2 is 75% and choice 3 is 90%. But all of them have some things. So day and night the boy or girl thinks. Should we choose this one or that? Then they ask the father, "Can I do round 2 of interview?" And may be round 2 is there and they get a little bit of understanding and may be for the whole week, the boy or girl is thinking of few boys or few girls. That is the only time we are permitted to think of few boys or few girls. (laughter) That is before marriage. After marriage, no question. But before marriage we think of few of them. So at that point, Bhagavatam and Bhagavad Gita says that we are many branched. We have to be at that point, because we are not sure.

But the moment we decide, that night or that day, "He may be 75%. But that 75% is quality. So I am going to take 75%." So we tell our father or mother - "choice b." And then may be that person also says, "She is alright." Then what do they do? They fix us up. After fixing they get married. Now after marriage, they don't go to sleep thinking, "I should have taken choice a". (laughter) After 2 weeks they don't think, "My God, I should have taken choice c - This is bad choice". We don't think that way. If we think that way, then our marriage can never be stable. Isn't it true? It will always be unstable. Same thing is true with devotional service. Same thing. Very easy to understand. We may go everywhere, looking for happiness, we go to this person, that person, this devata, that devata, this personality, that personality - But Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavatam all our shastras make it very clear. *If you really want to become peaceful and advance in bhakti, if you want to become advanced in your consciousness away from this body, then you should decide once and for all - ekeha kuru-nandana. You please become fixed at the lotus feet of Krishna*

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhuji in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sudarshana devi dasi.

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 3

Date: 2014-04-17

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring class given by our Godbrother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41. In the previous offering we saw the below point.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - *ekeha kuru-nandana*.

Now let us continue to hear further.

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-śākhā hy anantāś ca buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām*

Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one. O beloved child of the Kurus, the intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched.

4. **Be chaste in bhakti:** The word '*vyavasāyātmikā buddhi*' used in the above verse means **chaste**. Chastity, Maharaj said, is a virtue which is celebrated even in this material world. Is it not true? *When someone is chaste, then you know that person is tejas. Why was Mandodari, the wife of Ravana was considered one of the most powerful women? Because till the end, for her, her husband was only Ravana.* She should have been the first candidate for divorce. (laughter) Think about it. She should have been the first candidate. But she was not. And at the end, if you read the ninth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, when Ravana was dying on the battlefield and when he died, it was Mandodari who led the prayers of lamentation. She lamented, "*You had so many things, so many virtues my Lord. But why did you have to run after something else that did not belong to you?*" Ravana was many branched and therefore he could not simply see Lord Ram as the object of worship, because his desires were everywhere.

Because we are not simply focused on Krishna, we waste the time in our lives. We are here, we are there, here and there. Just like how we tell unmarried children, "How long you are going to take to get fixed up?". We ask and they say, "I don't know whether it is going to be alright?" It is like the man who was on the beach for whole day, seeing the children play on the water. The children came out and asked him, "Uncle, why you are sitting there all the time?" He said, "I am just waiting for the waves to stop and then I will jump into the water." But frankly speaking the waves will never stop and you will never be completely convinced that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, until you practise the process. Isn't it true? We always have people coming and asking us, "How do you know it is Krishna?" We only say, "How do you know that it is not Krishna?". You won't know either way. The only way to test the theory is to practise it.

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhujis in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 4

Date: 2014-04-18

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring class given by our Godbrother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41. In the previous offering we saw the below point.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - *ekeha kuru-nandana*.
4. Be chaste in bhakti.

Now let us continue to hear further.

5. **Don't waste time - Just do it:** There is a famous story which my Guru Maharaj liked it very much. There was a mango tree with nice juicy mangoes. Three men were under the tree waiting for the mango to drop. They were waiting, waiting and nothing happened. Then all of a sudden there was a breeze and the myna bird sat on the branch. The moment it sat, the branch dropped, the breeze moved the branch and the mango dropped to the floor. The three men were *ekeha kuru-nandana* - their only thinking was on the mango. They were very chaste. Their chastity was in the mango. Now that the mango dropped, what should they do? Pick it up, divide and eat it. They were about to eat it. Then the first man said, "My friend, Before you eat, let me ask you, what was the reason for the mango dropping? We waited the whole day. What happened?" The second man said, "Very simple. Myna bird sat on the branch. It's weight pushed the branch down and the mango dropped." The third man said, "I disagree. It was the gust of the wind. Wind was the one which came few seconds before the bird came and it was the one which actually made the mango drop. First man, holding the mango said, "I disagree with both of you. It was a combination of the gust of wind and the myna bird's weight and so the mango dropped."

So they started discussing and discussing, leaving the mango down. One small boy came by. He saw three mature men, *ekeha kuru-nandana*, they were discussing, determined, very determined, resolute in the purpose - Mango is down and the men are discussing. Now what does the child do? Picks up the mango. What is the mango for? Is it for discussion? (laughter) He picks up the mango, bites it and says 'this is best mango'. And he takes the mango away. So after three men are fully satisfied with the chaste mind, about how they should divide the mango, how they should taste the mango and why the mango dropped in first place, by the time they looked down, there was no mango. *Is this how you want to lead your lives? We just waste the time, 'Is it Krishna? Is it not Krishna?'. No. Just we chant. Just we take up the practice.* After 1 week if you don't like Krishna, we have nothing to say. After 1 week if you say, "hmm..Krishna is not for me." What can we tell you? We can't tell you anything. But we are very confident, that after one week, you will come back and say, 'This is it. This is the way'. And if you still feel it is not the way, after we feed you prasadam at the end of this program, you will definitely say, 'This is the only way'. (loud laughter). Now how do you be determined that once you have captured the goal, you should keep it in the heart. *That way of being determined means, that in our heart there should only be place for one. One object of worship and that is Krishna.* Just like in our hearts we have place only for those we love, higher than all those we love is the object of all love and that is Krishna.

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhujis in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 5

Date: 2014-04-20

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring class given by our Godbrother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41. In the previous offering we saw the below point.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - *ekeha kurunandana*.
4. Be chaste in bhakti.
5. Don't waste time - Just do it.

Now let us continue to hear further.

6. **The Three D's:** Everything is coming from Krishna and that is why once we satisfy Krishna, everyone becomes satisfied. Sometimes people ask me, "Prabhu, you say that shastras say that if you satisfy Krishna, everyone will be satisfied. I am trying to satisfy Krishna. But my wife is not satisfied with me, my children are not satisfied with me. So how can this be true?" The answer is very simple. That means we haven't satisfied Krishna yet. Don't blame anyone else. You know why? Because when we come to Krishna, we want to actually satisfy our senses. When Ravana came to take Sita, he wanted to satisfy his senses. He did not want to do arati for Sita Mata. No. That was not in his mind. He wanted to enjoy Sita Mata. And when Sita Mata saw Mandodari in Ramayana, what does She say? She says, "*My God, Ravana must be blind. Because Mandodari is greater than the goddess of fortune. She is more chaste than me and she looks 100 times more better than me. This Ravana must be a mad man that he cannot be chaste to her.*"

Krishna is the most beautiful object of worship. Something must be really wrong with us, if we cannot make Him the center of our lives. Isn't it true? Something must be seriously wrong, because we lack the faith. *We lack faith because we don't have the determination to continue our Krishna consciousness. Determination is the most important factor in devotional service. That is why both starts in "D" - Devotional Service and Determination.* And the best way Bhagavatam tells us to know the example of one who is determined is to remember the great pastime of Dhruva Maharaj. King Uttanapada had two wives, Suniti and Suruchi. Dhruva Maharaj was born of Suniti and Uttama was born of Suruchi. So one morning when Dhruva's brother Uttama sat on his father's lap, Dhruva Maharaj also wanted to sit on his father's lap. And because Suniti and Dhruva were not favourable to the king, the king did not want Dhruva to sit on his lap. He was not so inviting. Dhruva was told by his step-mother that, 'you don't deserve to sit on the father's lap. Because you have to be born in my womb, to be of that position', because she was that much favoured by the father. So Dhruva Maharaj becomes very upset. What does he do? He goes to his mother Suniti and asks her, "Is it really true that I cannot sit on the lap of my father?" And she says, "Yes. It is very true, because the father likes your step-mother very much." "Is it very true mother, that step-mother Suruchi said, that 'you better pray very hard to the Supreme Personality of Godhead that you will take birth in my womb and then you can sit in your father's lap.'" To that extent she said, So is it true that I have to pray very hard to Krishna and then I can sit on my father's lap?"

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhujis on Suniti's response to Dhruva in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 6

Date: 2014-04-21

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring class given by our Godbrother HG Devakinandan Prabhuj on Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41. In the previous offering we saw the below points.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - ekeha kurunandana.
4. Be chaste in bhakti.
5. Don't waste time - Just do it.
6. The Three D's.

We were also looking into the pastime of Dhruva Maharaj. We shall continue to hear as to how Suniti consoled her son when he came crying to her.

6. **The Three D's:** Suniti could have told to Dhruva, "No. I am also the wife. What is this non-sense? But do you know what the mother told him? The mother told him, "*She is right. She is right.*" Which part is she right? "*That you have to pray to Krishna.*" See the mood of the devotee. When devotee hears something bad, he sees something good. This is devotee. He ignores the part that is bad. So Suniti said, "*She is correct. **Only by the agency and plan of Lord Krishna, you can sit on your father's lap.** She is right. She is right.*" I remember one time, one of our godbrother was very upset because he was sitting in a program somewhere and one devotee there made a powerful statement that Srimad Bhagavatam is only meant for those who are in Maya. Which means those who are in maya are the only ones who will read Srimad Bhagavatam. So he was very upset and he told us and we told our Guru Maharaj. "Maharaj, this is too much. Bhagavatam is the highest scripture and someone is saying that you have to be in maya to read Bhagavatam. And Maharaj shook his head and said, "It is correct, Devaki". I asked, "Why Maharaj?" Maharaj said, "*Because we are in maya, all the more we should read Bhagavatam, because Bhagavatam will take you out of the maya.*"

Great devotees have this ability to see good, even when it is bad. That it is why it is told in the purport of verse 2.41 that, "*In order to be determined, we have to follow the instructions of the great devotees, follow the instructions of our spiritual master.* That is the secret to be determined." Who was the first spiritual master for Dhruva? His good mother. Now mother gives him second instruction - "Dhruva, I know you are very upset. I am also very upset. But let's do one thing. The only person who could clear our feelings of upset, who can mitigate our miseries is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You go now and meditate on Him and only He can give you peace." This is the best guidance of spiritual master. The moment, the mother gave him this, Dhruva Maharaj's determination increased. *In his heart, he wanted to pray to Krishna, because he wanted to obey his mother.* He accepted the instructions of his mother. *We should be determined to accept the instructions of the spiritual master and to accept the instructions of the senior devotees.* If that determination is used, to accept instructions, it is well placed. If you are determined not to follow the instructions of the spiritual master, then that determination is misplaced. It is useless. So Dhruva's determination was well-placed and because of mother's influence and blessings, he goes to the forest.

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhuj about Dhruva Maharaj in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 7

Date: 2014-04-23

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring class given by our Godbrother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41. In the previous offering we saw the below points.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - *ekeha kurunandana*.
4. Be chaste in bhakti.
5. Don't waste time - Just do it.
6. The Three D's.

We have been hearing the pastime of Dhruva Maharaj, how with determination Dhruva went to the forest on the advice of his good mother, Suniti. Now let us continue to hear further.

6. **The Three D's:** When Dhruva Maharaj goes to the forest, Narada Muni hears about it. In those days no social media, no internet. Narada Muni didn't get any WhatsApp text from Krishna saying, "*Hey listen, somebody is walking out to the forest, 5 year old boy, Look out for him.*" (laughter) Nothing like that. Why? Because *Bhagavatam and Bhagavad Gita says the moment any living entity wants to come to Krishna with ekeha - determination which is single, then Krishna as caitya Guru in the heart, Paramatma immediately will know that this devotee is sincere. "What am I going to do for him? I will give him the guidance of another pure devotee"*. Krishna suggested in the heart of Narada Muni to go. See in those days, no internet was needed. Today internet means you are caught in the net. Where do you go? www.yahoo or google. www means world wide web. There is a web and that web will catch you. This is something we have to remember. *So internet, world wide web, these things catch us. They don't free us.* But because devotees believe in Krishna, Krishna suggested Narada Muni to go and guide this person.

So Narada Muni goes and sees in the forest this 5 year old child, very determined. 5 year old boy, will you send your sons to the forest? Will your sons go to the forest? No. (laughter) May be that is a better question. We won't go. No prasadam. Why to go there. But Dhruva Maharaj is *ekeha kuru-nandana*. But what was his motive? His motive was not bhakti. No. His motive was that, "I want a kingdom, bigger than my father, so that I don't want to sit on the lap of my father. I will be better than my brother." So motive was not right. But *ekeha kuru-nandana* was there. He was determined that he can only get this from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So that part, 50% was already correct. Now Narada Muni is coming. Narada Muni is telling, "*My dear Dhruva - you are just 5 years old. Please don't waste your time. This is not the age to remember Krishna. There is a retirement age. At that time you can come to the forest. You are a boy. Now go and play something. Don't waste your time. And don't you know that whatever you want is all destined. You will just get whatever you are destined to get. So why waste your time?*" Dhruva Maharaj was very straight forward. *Those who are determined, they are also honest.* He tells Narada, "*My dear Narada muni, I am kshatriya. These kshatriyas, we feel the pinch when somebody insults us. So I want a kingdom bigger than my brother. If you can help me there, then help me. Give me a honest way to achieve what I want.*"

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhujis about Dhruva Maharaj in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.
Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Sudarshana devi dasi.

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 8

Date: 2014-04-24

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring class given by our Godbrother HG Devakinandan Prabhuji on Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41. In the previous offering we saw the below points.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - *ekeha kuru-nandana*.
4. Be chaste in bhakti.
5. Don't waste time - Just do it.
6. The Three D's.

We have been hearing the pastime of Dhruva Maharaj and his meeting with Narada Muni in the forest. Now let us continue to hear further.

6. The Three D's: One who is determined and who has been touched by a pure devotee like Suniti, they develop the good qualities without even realising it. That is why Guru Maharaj always told us, "*Your behaviour changes without you realising it when you obey me and when you obey the shastras.*" They automatically change and not the other way round. That is why in Krishna consciousness we don't have character building seminars. We build on the faith of Krishna and then all character comes. Now Dhruva Maharaj has already told him, "This is what I want." Narada Muni had actually put him to a test. Before a guru decides to give a disciple *dikṣa* - he has to test him. Is he serious or not serious? But now Narada Muni knew that this boy is very serious. He is 5 years old. But highly mature. And most important thing is *vyavasāyātmika buddhi* - his intelligence is focussed on one object and that is Krishna. So Narada Muni knew that Dhruva has passed his test. So he said, "*My dear Dhruva, I have now initiate you in the path of bhakti. After initiating him, he now tells him, "You chant this mantra Om̐ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya."* And he gives him specific instructions on how to concentrate on the beautiful forms of the Lord in the heart.

Dhruva Maharaj accepts every single instruction and now he starts his austerity. He goes to the beautiful forest of Madhuvan and there he stands, even though there is so many many dangers of wild animals, of no food, *even though there is nothing favourable there, Dhruva Maharaj had faith in his spiritual master. This is the point of determination and again it is faith.* Because he has faith that Narada Muni has told him to stand here now, he knew that he would just be determined to meet Krishna. He was not doubtful. So what happened? In the first month, shastras tell us that Dhruva Maharaj ate only fruits and berries every third day. Can we do that? Oh very difficult. If we get a chance we will eat prasadam three times a day minimum and in between some prasadam snack. Isn't it? Night milk, morning milk etc. But he ate just every third day and that too berries and fruits. In the second month he ate only fruits and leaves, once every 6 days. We can't eat leaves. And in the third month Bhagavatam says he started taking water and that too every 9 days. For us after 9 hours without water, we are finished. In the fourth month, Dhruva Maharaj stopped eating and drinking. He only inhaled air and that also, he inhaled air once every 12 days.

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhuji about Dhruva Maharaj in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sudarshana devi dasi.

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 9

Date: 2014-04-25

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring class given by our Godbrother HG Devakinandan Prabhuji on Bhagavad Gita verse 2.41. In the previous offering we saw the below points.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - *ekeha kuru-nandana*.
4. Be chaste in bhakti.
5. Don't waste time - Just do it.
6. The Three D's.

We have been hearing the pastime of Dhruva Maharaj and the austerities he performed in the forest as per advice of Narada Muni. Now let us continue to hear further.

6. The Three D's: Dhruva Maharaja was *ekeha kuru-nandana*. There was no bodily conception of life. In the purport, Srila Prabhupada writes *that the obstacle to determination is the bodily concept of life*. Please remember that. *The more you think that you are this body, the less determined you are to do devotional service. The more you criticise, the more you find faults, it is all based on this body*. Dhruva Maharaj had no time to criticise. Anyway whom to criticise, nobody in the forest right? There were only animals there and he was just concentrating and finally by the time fifth month came, he was standing on one leg, without movement, mind fully concentrated on Krishna. Bhagavatam tells us that his mind and senses became completely fixed on the lotus form of the Lord in the heart and in that way Bhagavatam says, he captured Krishna. And because he captured Krishna, out of his determination and on the platform of following the instructions of the spiritual master, the entire world began to tremble, because of Dhruva Maharaja's great austerity. Because he was one in his heart with Krishna, his body assumed the weight of the Supreme Lord. And just by his toe poking into the ground, the entire earth was going down.

Because he had closed all his senses the entire 3 worlds became choked up, because he was one in his mind with Krishna. Finally the devatas called up Krishna and said, "Krishna, this devotee boy is highly determined, but before we die, you please save us". And the Lord gets up on Garuda. And Dhruva Maharaj is fixing his mind on Krishna and at the very last moment he has the glimpse of the Lord in his heart. Dhruva Maharaj became ecstatic. *That determination has led to darshan. D - Determination and D - Devotional Service and the end result of this is D - Darshan of Krishna. Very Easy now - Three Ds - They are all in a line. And once these three D's are there Dhruva Maharaj became ecstatic. The moment he became ecstatic, Krishna disappeared from his heart and once He disappeared what did Dhruva do? He opened his eyes and who was in front of him? Krishna seated on Garuda. See how the Lord planned everything nicely. He first gave him the taste of Lord's form and as soon as he opened his eyes, the Lord was in front of him.*

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhuji about Dhruva Maharaj in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 10

Date: 2014-04-26

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring Bhagavad Gita class given by our God brother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on verse 2.41. In the previous offering we have heard the below points.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - *ekeha kuru-nandana*.
4. Be chaste in bhakti.
5. Don't waste time - Just do it.
6. The Three D's Determination - Devotion and Darshan.

We were hearing the pastime of Dhruva Maharaj wherein we saw how he accepted the instructions of his mother and his spiritual master Narada Muni and with determination performed devotional service and ultimately got the darshan of the Lord. Now we shall continue to hear further.

7. Need for Austerity: On having darshan of the Lord, Dhruva Maharaj became ashamed because his determination to come to Krishna was on a material platform. But because he was in sadhu sanga with his mother and Narada Muni, his heart became purified at the end of his austerities and that is why austerity is important. *To become determined, we must also become austere. Austerity means that you wake up for mangala arati and we chant Krishna's names.* Nobody here can say that we cannot have 15 minutes of appointment with Krishna in the morning. Are we so busy? Even Prime Minister and President of United States have 15 minutes to exercise. Are we really telling that we don't have 15 minutes to read Bhagavad Gita or Bhagavatam? How long does it take for us to chant Krishna's names? 8 rounds - may be in a hour. All we have to do is cut down one hour less of sleep and have one hour more for Krishna.

How many lives we were sleeping, oblivious to Krishna? In this life can we not just sacrifice one hour of sleep, just for Krishna? Is it so difficult? It is because we don't have the determination. We don't want to accept the instructions of the spiritual master seriously, because we lack faith. Once we lack faith, we are not serious. And once we are not serious, we don't follow the instructions. *Once we don't follow the instructions, we are not determined and once we are not determined, devotional service drops. Once it drops, we become morose and once we become morose, we leave the shelter of Krishna.* Do you see the sequence? This is the problem with us. Dhruva Maharaj did not have that. He was determined and Krishna appeared in front of him. Now that his senses were purified, he tells Krishna. Actually he could not tell anything, because he was such a young boy and in the presence of the Lord, what is there to be said. He wanted to say some prayers for Krishna's glorification.

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhujis in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.
Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Sudarshana devi dasi.

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 11

Date: 2014-04-28

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring Bhagavad Gita class given by our God brother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on verse 2.41. In the previous offering we have heard the below points.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - *ekeha kuru-nandana*.
4. Be chaste in bhakti.
5. Don't waste time - Just do it.
6. The Three D's - Determination, Devotion and Darshan.
7. Need for Austerity.

We were hearing the pastime of Dhruva Maharaj. Now we shall continue to hear further.

8. Use it or lose it: Upon seeing Krishna, Dhruva wanted to compose prayers to glorify Him. But he became tongue tight. He could not say anything. So Krishna who had come in the four handed form of Vishnu touched his head with His conch shell and the moment he was touched by the touch of Krishna, because the conch shell is different from the Lord, immediately the senses of Dhruva Maharaj became alive, not to the material world, but they become alive to the spiritual world. That is what we must do. *Our senses must be attracted to Krishna in the form of hearing, in the form of chanting and in the form of remembering. That will automatically take us out of the material concept of life.* Otherwise you and I can walk everywhere, whole day and keep saying, "I am not this body, I am not this body, I am not this body", but all it takes is for someone to come to you and give a tight slap and then you say, "My God, I am this body". (loud laughter) Highly painful, isn't it? *So artificial way of coming out of bodily concept of life is not the way Krishna consciousness, The way is to practise. That is the command. That is the way.*

So Dhruva Maharaj concludes after chanting beautiful prayers to Krishna. He says Krishna, "Krishna, I am fool number one. I came asking You for the world, but You have given me something much more than that and that is bhakti. I came looking for broken pieces of glass whereas actually diamonds were waiting for me. This is my foolishness" And Dhruva Maharaj's foolishness is ours to reflect. What are we running after in this world? We think that the money in the bank is going to save us till the end? Nothing is certain Prabhujis and Matajis. If you have something, Maharaj has said, "*Use it or lose it*". Isn't it true? So if you have time, if you have your faculties, come and sit here and hear about Krishna. That is much better. If you have so much money and don't know for some reason what to do about it, then use it for Krishna. That is it. *If you don't use it for Krishna, you will use it for Maya. And if you use it for maya, you will never be peaceful. This is the way for Krishna consciousness.*

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhujis in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 12

Date: 2014-04-29

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring Bhagavad Gita class given by our God brother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on verse 2.41. In the previous offering we have heard the below points.

1. Chant and be peaceful.
2. Bhakti has no boundaries.
3. Stick to one - *ekeha kuru-nandana*.
4. Be chaste in bhakti.
5. Don't waste time - Just do it.
6. The Three D's - Determination, Devotion and Darshan.
7. Need for Austerity.
8. Use it or Lose it.

We were hearing the pastime of Dhruva Maharaj and let us continue to see how he responded to Lord after being touched by His transcendental conch shell.

9. Krishna's Reciprocation: Dhruva Maharaj becomes very regretful and because he becomes regretful, he has become a devotee. *A devotee always regrets that he is not upto the mark. A devotee never says that, "I am up to the mark". Then he is not a devotee. Devotee is always knowing that, 'I am not upto the mark'.* Krishna is so kind that Krishna says, "Dhruva Maharaj, Don't worry. Whatever you wanted in the first place, I will give it to you, even if it is material. You will have the position of the pole-star, Dhruva loka. Even when the material manifestation crashes, and gets absorbed into Me, at the time of annihilation, Dhruva loka will remain." Dhruva loka never goes into even partial annihilation. Dhruva loka shastras tell us that it remains. Today we look into the sky, the most powerful and brightest is Dhruva loka.

Krishna says that, "Not only I will give you this Dhruva loka, but I will personally expand and make sure that I am there to always give you the protection." And that is why shastras say that Dhruva loka is akin to Sveta-dvip, the causal ocean. It is that part of the universe which is the closest to the spiritual world and the Lord is sitting there, taking care of His devotee even till now, now. Why? What is there about Dhruva, that is so special for Krishna? He had three things. *One was his resolute determination, two - to do what? to do devotional service and three - he followed the instructions of first - his mother and second, Narada Muni. This is how we have to live in devotional service.*

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhujis in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 13

Date: 2014-05-03

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring Bhagavad Gita class given by our God brother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on verse 2.41. In the previous offering we have heard about 9 points. We were hearing the pastime of Dhruva Maharaj and how Lord Krishna responded to his prayers. Now we shall continue to hear further.

10. **Anger stops our determination:** After Dhruva Maharaj becomes a great devotee, 36000 years he rules Dhruva loka. But in that 36000 years a terrible event occurs and we will end with that point, because it is very practical to us. His brother Uttama who used to sit on the lap of his father, he was also grown up and one day in a battle, Uttama is killed by a celestial being known as Yaksha. Dhruva Maharaj is very close to his brother. He becomes very upset. When we lose something which is precious to us, it is natural that we become upset. But he is a great devotee, kshatriya. So he says, "I will go to the Yaksha planet and kill the Yaksha who killed my brother." So he goes and kills. After killing the Yaksha who killed his brother, Dhruva Maharaj's anger continues and he kills the entire Yaksha population. Kshatriya, very powerful! He doesn't want to stop. At that point of time, Svayambhuva Manu comes and advises him. Dhruva Maharaj comes from a great established line of great devotees. Brahmaji is the great great grand father. Svayambhuva Manu is his great grand father. Therefore he is of good stock. But even then, despite having taken darshan of Krishna, he became a prey to anger. That is the other point that stops our determination - when we become angry. *When we are angry, when we are disturbed, we are not determined. We become determined to be angry. We become determined to be disturbed. But we are not determined to be with Krishna.*

So Dhruva Maharaj lost his cool. Svayambhuva Manu comes to him and says, "Dhruva, you are great devotee. What are you doing? Have you forgotten that you have met the Supreme Lord?" Now this is the third spiritual master in Dhruva Maharaj's life. And because Dhruva Maharaj hears him now, Svayambhuva Manu says that "*The Lord is not pleased, with one who behaves like you. The Lord is pleased if one behaves, titikṣayā karuṇayā maitryā cākhilajantuṣu* - **So one who is friendly to living entities, who is tolerant and one who is merciful, sarvātma samatvena - one who sees equally everyone, then bhagavān samprasīdati. Then that person becomes the source of pleasure to Krishna.**"

Very important advice for all of us. Whenever we want to become angry with a devotee, or upset with someone, always think - "Do you think your getting upset or angry with someone will upset Krishna?" - "Yes". Then don't do it. Our aim is to satisfy Krishna, not to satisfy ourselves. So Dhruva Maharaj comes to his senses again. He thanks Svayambhuva Manu and my Guru Maharaj has written in his notes that, "*Dhruva Maharaj was very determined to kill the Yakshas. There also he was determined. But that determination was misplaced. Determination which is misplaced is of no value. Determination which is placed in the right place, by the instruction of the spiritual master, that is valuable.*" So Dhruva comes out of the illusion of anger. And he continues to rule the polestar. And till today he remembers the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, in the continuous pastimes of Srimad Bhagavatam.

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear more nectar from Prabhujis in the subsequent offerings.

Thank you very much.

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

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 14

Date: 2014-05-05

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

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

This is in continuation of the transcription of the inspiring Bhagavad Gita class given by our God brother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on verse 2.41. In the previous offerings we were hearing the pastime of Dhruva Maharaj. Now we shall continue to hear further.

11. **Ways to sustain determination:** At the end of Dhruva Maharaja's life, in Bhagavatam when this narration ends, the very important point that we understand is that the planes from Vaikunthaloka, they come to pick up Dhruva Maharaj. Just imagine! When we die who comes to pick us up? Anyone wants to pick you up when you are dead? No. Only the burial people come to pick us up, right? For Dhruva Maharaj, they booked one plane from Vaikuntha, made sure it was ready in time, no driver needed, automatically it comes down. Dhruva Maharaj is about to get into the aeroplane, when Yamaraj himself comes before Dhruva and puts his head below. Dhruva Maharaj is such an exalted personality that he has conquered death. *But even though despite the fact that he started the devotional process in a mixed way, because he followed the instructions of his spiritual master, he becomes successful.*

Now this episode of Dhruva Maharaj's life is very important. As he is flying in the aeroplane, he is asking the Vaikunthapatis, "I am very happy to go back to Krishna. But where is my mother, because the mother was the person who set me on this path. Where is she?" And the Vaikunthapatis say, "Don't worry. Krishna has arranged everything. See, your mother is in the other plane and she is going before you." Dhruva Maharaj became very pleased and Maharaj ended his points by saying that *this is the mood of a devotee who is determined. A devotee who is determined in devotional service is always determined to ensure, that other devotees are always above him and that he is always below them. The kingdom of God is available to the humble and meek, not to the proud, not to the one who thinks, "I am the greatest."* No. Dhruva Maharaj sincerely felt that his mother was more advanced and therefore she should go to Goloka first. He was also grateful to his mother, that, "If not for her advice, I would have never gone to see Krishna." *And this is how we can sustain our determination, on the platform of gratitude, on the platform of following the instructions of the spiritual master and finally on the platform of always remembering that our goal of existence, must be to remember Krishna and that Krishna must be the only object of our love.*

Jai Granthraj Srimad Bhagavatam ki Jai! Jai Srimad Bhagavad Gita ki Jai! Jai Sri Sri Radha Shyama Sundar ki Jai! Jai Srila Prabhupada ki Jai! Jai Srila Gurudev ki Jai!

Krishna willing we shall continue to hear the questions and answers asked by devotees at the end of this class in the concluding part.

Thank you very much.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,

Sudarshana devi dasi.

Steadiness in Devotional Service - Part 15

Date: 2014-05-06

Author: Sudarshana devi dasi

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

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

This is in conclusion of the transcription of the inspiring Bhagavad Gita class given by our God brother HG Devakinandan Prabhujis on verse 2.41. In the previous offering we have heard many points and learnt nice lessons from the life of Dhruva Maharaj. Now we shall hear the questions asked by devotees to Prabhujis after the class.

Question 1: If Dhruva Maharaj went to Vaikuntha loka, then who is in Dhruvaloka?

Answer: Dhruva Maharaj's polestar continues to be there. But he is no longer physically necessary, to be there in the polestar, because that was a product of his material desire. But the real desire which he finally achieved was the product of determination to go back to Godhead. So the polestar is there. It is a reminder to all of us to remember the greatness of Dhruva Maharaj. But Dhruva Maharaj eternally is serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Question 2: Dhruva Maharaj had direct darshan of Krishna. By darshan of Krishna, all impurities go. How come he became angry and kill all the Yakshas?

Answer: How can someone who has taken darshan of Krishna again be influenced by Maya? Very good question. What have we been doing until the curtains were closed? We were all taking darshan of Krishna also. Because the Deities in the altar, Radha Shyamsundarji is non-different from Krishna. But after taking darshan of Krishna, still we are always ready to fall back into Maya. The reason is that the material world is so powerful that the nature of the material world is to make us forget Krishna. It is the nature of this material world. But Dhruva Maharaj is not actually forgetful of Krishna. Our shastras tell that great personalities like Dhruva Maharaj, Parikshit Maharaj, factually speaking, they never forget Krishna. But if they never forget Krishna and lead a perfect life, how will we learn? Because we are imperfect. That is why Parikshit Maharaj reacted to Shamika Rshi, by putting a garland of dead snake. Actually it was not necessary for him to do that. He is a devotee. But if he did not do that, then two things will not happen. One - we won't have Bhagavatam today and two - we will not learn that how despite the fact that he had done something which was faulty, he rose above the faulty nature to become a perfect devotee. So Dhruva Maharaj's practical realisation of this episode is that we get encouraged by him that despite the fact that we may sometimes go up and down in devotional service, our guidance of our spiritual masters will always keep us on track. Sometimes some movements are there. That is also because of the material modes. *Dhruva Maharaja's life is an example to teach us how we can also advance despite obstacles in devotional life. So it is a very practical way not to become discouraged.* Otherwise we will say, 'No point in reading Bhagavatam'. Why? 'Because all their lives are perfect.' What relevance is their life to us. But when we read about the life of a devotee, how he is put into difficulty, into challenges, and how he comes out of it, then we take courage from it - "Yes. This is the way. This is how we can overcome the miseries."

Question 3: What according to you is the best way to concentrate the mind upon Krishna. The more I try to concentrate, the more I get distracted.

Answer: Now if I say, "All of you don't think about anything for the next 10 seconds", what does the mind do? It tells us, "Think, Think". This is the nature of the mind. The nature of the mind is that it doesn't want to remember Krishna. Nature of mind is that canchal. It wants to give you problems. It is not the fault of the mind. It is how it is made. It is our fault for taking this sharir (body) and having this mind. It is our fault. *The best way to remember Krishna, is to chant His names.* When you chant His names, sometimes the mind will go here and there. But don't worry. *The progressive chanting eventually will still the mind. It cannot happen over-night. It is a life-long challenge.* But then in life, what else is not a challenge. Everything is a challenge. And especially that which is valuable, becomes more

challenge. So if we take with good attitude that, "Yes. Mind will give me trouble. But use intelligence." Intelligence is higher than the mind. Use it by chanting - Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. By doing so all our material hankerings will go away and our only prayer is to always engage in transcendental devotional service.

Our heartfelt thanks to HG Devakinandan Prabhuji for this class and our prayers to Srila Gurudev, Srila Prabhupada and Dhruva Maharaj to help us to follow these sublime instructions.

Thank you very much.

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