

Hope against Hope

Date: 04 Jan 2004

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

Dear Devotees,

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

It is needless to say that all of us would have been busy receiving and sending greetings of yet another new year few days back. People normally say, "Wish you a very happy and prosperous new year". There are few things to consider in these wishes which is inadvertent to us. For materialistic people this wish is an irony or anomaly whereas it fits in perfectly well for devotees. Materialistic people wish a 'happy new year'. But they forget to realize Krsna's instructions in the Gita, that this material world is "*dukhālayam aśāsvatam* - temporary and full of miseries." So where is the point of a 'happy new year' when every day people are suffering? And also, they are happy to welcome a new year, when they hardly realize that one more year is gone from the quota of their 'so called' enjoyment. In this connection, Bhagavatam gives the example of '*mrga trshni rupa*' - Just like an animal in the desert gets cheated by the illusory mirage! This may sound pessimistic but these very words are the source of hope for devotees. Their words are true when they say, "Happy New Year", because as every new year comes they get so many more chance to glorify the Lord and serve His devotees.

One more year has come and we will get another Janmashtami, another Radhashtami, another Gaur purnima, Ram Navami, Govardhan puja, a number of Ratha-yatras all over the world, so many Vaishnavas' appearance and disappearance days... the list is endless.

Not only that, as every year goes by, they are more than happy to welcome the new years, because, they know that as the years go by, they are getting closer and closer going back home, back to Godhead. So it is indeed true that the very thing that is a suffering for the materialist is a source of bliss for the devotees.

In reality the source of this bliss is the "**Great Hope**" that devotees possess in terms of being protected by the Supreme Lord. Srila Rupa Goswami has described this Great hope as one of the nine characteristics of a person who has actually developed his ecstatic love for Krsna. Srila Prabhupada has given a lucid and excellent description of these qualities in 'The Nectar of Devotion' and also in CC when Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu teaches Sanatana Goswami in the Madhya lila chapter 23.

To explain this hope, the topmost acharya in our sampradaya, Srila Rupa Goswami has given a beautiful verse himself which is mentioned in CC Madhya lila chapter 23, verse 29 and also in Nectar of Devotion, chapter 18. I would like to refer the verse and the translation here to help us understand the real mood of an uttama bhakta. I am giving the translation here from Nectar of Devotion as I felt Prabhupada has given further explanation on its meaning.

*na premā śravaṇādi-bhaktir api vā yogo 'tha vā vaiṣṇavo
jñānaṁ vā śubha-karma vā kiyad aho saj-jātir apy asti vā
hīnārthādhika-sādhake tvayi tathāpy acchedya-mūlā satī
he gopī-jana-vallabha vyathayate hā hā mad-āśaiva mām*

I have no love for Krsna, nor for the cause of developing love for Krsna - namely hearing and chanting. And the process of bhakti-yoga, by which one is always thinking of Krsna and fixing His lotus feet in the heart, is also lacking in me. As far as philosophical knowledge or pious works are concerned, I don't see any opportunity for me to execute such activities. But above all, I am not even born of a nice family. Therefore I must simply pray to You, Gopijana-vallabha[Krsna, the maintainer and beloved of the gopis]. I simply wish and hope that someday or other I may be able to approach Your lotus feet, and this hope is giving me pain, because I think myself quite incompetent to approach that transcendental goal of life.

Now one may wonder why Srila Rupa Goswami is saying, 'this hope is giving me pain'. The reason is that, he has listed so many disqualifications in this verse, that he is feeling ashamed of even having that hope. This is the real mood of an acharya, so humble and down to earth! And if at all we really would want anything from Krsna, it must be a drop of this humility and meekness. Rest everything will then automatically come. *Avaśya rakṣibe kṛṣṇa viśvāsa pālana!*

Thank you very much.

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

Will of the Supreme

Date: 07 Jan 2004

Author: Narahari Krishna das

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

I want to share an interesting point about Bhakta Prahlada. All of us know that he was put into great difficulties by his non-devotee father Hiranyakashipu. In spite of all these difficulties, he incessantly remembered Lord Vishnu and hence the Lord protected him from all the punishments imposed on him by his father. One such punishment is that the boy was put in fire so that his body will be burned to ashes. However the fire didn't burn him and he came out without any injuries. This incident stunned everyone. Even when we hear such things, it seems an impossible thing that fire didn't burn him. However, the scriptures tell us how it was possible for Prahlada to escape from fire itself. The very nature of fire is to burn and irrespective of who touches it or whom it touches, the objects gets burned. There is a nice sloka in the Bhagavatha purana which explains this point clearly.

SB 2.10.12

*dravyaṁ karma ca kālāś ca svabhāvo jīva eva ca
yad-anugrahataḥ santi na santi yad-upekṣayā*

One should definitely know that all material ingredients, activities, time and modes, and the living entities who are meant to enjoy them all, exist by His mercy only, and as soon as He does not care for them, everything becomes non-existent.

So the different things in this manifestation gets their inherent nature by the will of God. So the innate nature of fire which is to burn also exist by the will of God. In other words, fire is fire because of His will.

When His dear devotee was tormented by fire, the Lord willed that the fire does not exhibit its nature on His devotee alone and it happened. So the Lord can even change the nature of things to protect His devotee. Similarly, the material world has got its inherent nature, which is to be miserable(*dukhālayam*). However, when a person becomes pure devotee of the Lord, by Lord's will this material world, which gives nothing but dukha to its inhabitants, stops troubling the devotee(while others continue to be troubled) and the devotee experiences spiritual bliss even in this world no matter where he lives. And he considers all places equal because Lord Narayana is present everywhere. Again the great amala purāna explains it.

SB 6.17.28

*nārāyaṇa-parāḥ sarve na kutaścana bibhyati
svargāpavarga-narakeṣv api tulyārtha-darśinaḥ*

Devotees solely engaged in the devotional service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana, never fear any condition of life. For them, the heavenly planets, liberation and the hellish planets are all the same, for such devotees are interested only in the service of the Lord.

However, in the initial stages of devotion, we see relativities in terms of time and space and that's why we're facing the real nature of the material world and its inherent difficulties which we experience in the form of dualities.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
L.Harikumar
Chennai.

Time Utilization

Date: 08 Jan 2004

Author: Radha Madanmohan das

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

While reading 3rd Chapter of 2nd Canto verses spoken by Saunak Maharishi attracted me. I would like to share some of those verses:

SB 2.3.17

*āyur harati vai puṁsām udyann astam ca yann asau
tasyarte yat-kṣaṇo nīta uttama-śloka-vārtayā*

Both by rising and by setting , the sun decreases the duration of life of everyone, except one who utilizes the time by discussing topics of all-good Personality of Godhead.

Purport: This verse indirectly confirms the greater importance of utilizing the human form of life to realize our lost relationship of Supreme Lord by acceleration of devotional service. Time and tide wait for no man. So the time indicated by the sunrise and the sunset will be uselessly wasted if such time is not properly utilized for realizing identification of spiritual values.

Prabhupada further says, in Bhagavad-Gita (2.40) the Lord has explained such contact (contact with Lord through His Name, Form, Quality, etc.) in following words, *Endeavours in devotional service are never baffled. Nor is there failure. A slight beginning of such activities is sufficient even to deliver a person from the great ocean of material existence." As a highly potent drug injected intravenously acts at once on the whole body, the transcendental topics of the Lord injected through the ear of the pure devotee of the Lord can act very efficiently. Aural realization of the transcendental messages implies total realization, just as fructification of one part of a tree implies fructification of all other parts. This realization for a moment in the association of pure devotees like Sukadev Goswami prepares one's complete life for eternity. And thus the sun fails to rob the pure devotee of his duration of life, in as much as he is constantly busy in devotional service of the Lord, purifying his existence.* In the verse below from Srimad Bhagavatam 2.3.19:

*śva-vid-varāhoṣṭra-kharaiḥ samstutaḥ puruṣaḥ paśuḥ
na yat-karṇa-pathopeto jātu nāma gadāgrajaḥ*

Men who are like dog, hogs, camels and asses praise those men who never listen to the transcendental pastimes of the Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer from the evils.

In the verse below from Srimad Bhagavatam 2.3.20,

*bile batorukrama-vikramān ye
na śṛṅvataḥ karṇa-puṭe narasya
jihvāsati dārdurikeva sūta
na copagāyaty urugāya-gāthāḥ*

One who has not listened to the messages about the prowess and marvellous acts of the Personality of Godhead and has not sung or chanted loudly the worthy songs about the Lord is to be considered to possess earholes like the holes of snakes and a tongue like the tongue of a frog.

Punch: The frog loudly croak, with the result they invite the snakes to eat them. The human tongue is specially given for chanting the Vedic Hymns and not for croaking like frogs. The word asati used in this verse is also significant. Asati means a woman who has become a prostitute. A prostitute has no reputation for good womanly qualities. Similarly, the

tongue, which is given to the human being for chanting the Vedic hymn (or to Glorify Krsna), will be considered a prostitute when engaged in chanting some mundane nonsense.

There are hundred and thousands of sources for distributing mundane news of the world, and people of the world are also receiving it. Similarly , the people of the world should be taught to hear the transcendental topics of the Lord, and the devotees of the Lord must speak loudly so that they (people of the world) can hear.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
Radha Madanmohan das
Abu Dhabi.

Real Unity

Date: 12 Jan 2004

Author: Devakinandan das

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

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

It is the nature of the living entity to be a social animal - and that is why all over the world, we see that people try to unite for so many causes. In Srimad Bhagavatam, 4th Canto 30th Chapter, the Pracetas, the sons of King Pracinabarhi, obeyed their father and carried out great austerities to satisfy the Supreme Lord within the seawater. At the end of 10,000 years the Supreme Lord appeared before them and among other things, nicely made this point in the 4.30.8 verse of this chapter,

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
varaṁ vṛṇīdhvaṁ bhadraṁ vo yūyaṁ me nṛpa-nandanāḥ
sauhārdenāpṛthag-dharmās tuṣṭo 'haṁ sauḥṛdena vaḥ*

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear sons of the King, I am very much pleased by the friendly relationships among you. All of you are engaged in one occupation - devotional service. I am so pleased with your mutual friendship that I wish you all good fortune. Now you may ask a benediction of Me.

In the purport, Srila Prabhupada makes special mention of such relationship between the devotees and says: *The unity of the individual souls attempting to satisfy the Supreme Lord or rendering service to the Lord is real unity. In the material world, such unity is not possible. Even though people may officially unite, they all have different interests.*

So, as long as we, aspiring to be devotees make the focus of our relationship with each other to render devotional service to the Lord, such a relationship will always be blessed by the Lord. If however, we become intimate with our and each other's personal interests, and not the Lord's, then that intimacy is detrimental to our devotional service, for that is no different than the relationships based on material friendship.

In 3.27.7, this point is established by Kapila Dev to Devahuti when He says:

*sarva-bhūta-samatvena nirvairēṇāprasaṅgataḥ
brahmācāryeṇa maunena sva-dharmeṇa balīyasā*

In executing devotional service, one has to see every living entity equally, without enmity towards anyone yet without intimate connections with anyone. One has to observe celibacy, be grave and execute his eternal activities, offering the results to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

So, we are all together for one purpose - united in our efforts to devote our lives to the Lord and His devotees. To that extent, if we are engaged in loving dealings with each other for that purpose, then there is no intimacy otherwise it becomes a subtle form of attachment and distraction from our "eternal activities".

While we may be fixed in our goal, even then, sometimes, even in a society like ours, as Srila Prabhupada points out in the purport to 4.30.8, *Even in a society of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, members sometimes appear disunited due to their having different opinions and leaning towards material things. Actually, in Kṛṣṇa consciousness there cannot be two opinions. There is only one goal: to serve Kṛṣṇa to one's best ability. If there is some disagreement over service, such disagreement is to be taken as spiritual. Those who are actually engaged in the service of the Supreme Personality of*

Godhead cannot be disunited in any circumstances. So, we should learn somehow with the grace of guru and Krsna to rise above our petty frailties and unite for the right and only cause - devotional service! The result?

Srila Prabhupada says, This makes the Supreme Personality of Godhead very happy and willing to award all kinds of benediction to His devotees, as indicated in this verse.

All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudeva,
Devakinandan das
Singapore.

The Test of Spiritual Advancement

Date: 16 Jan 2004

Author: Devakinandan das

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

I was reading the local forum for the young devotee Prabhus in Singapore, Bhakta Vatsala, and a very nice matured devotee HG Sivakumar Prabhu posted this gravity filled point that Srila Prabhupada makes - it is truly a solid punch!!

" Q) How can one test if he or she is making spiritual advancement? *Answer by Srila Prabhupada - So the test is within our hand. If during mangala-arati we feel, laziness, that means I'm not yet spiritually advanced. And if one feels enthused, "Now it is the time for mangala-arati, let me stand up, let me do this " then it is spiritual. Anyone can test. bhaktih paresanubhavo viraktir anyatrsyat (Lecture:London, Aug 26 1973)"*

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

Association of Devotees

Date: 20 Jan 2004

Author: Narahari Krishna das

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

The scriptures glorify the association of devotees and its effect in many different ways. I came across an interesting story in this regard. The following sloka from Bhagavatam has a striking connection with this story.

SB 1.18.13

*tulayāma lavenāpi na svargaṁ nāpunar-bhavam
bhagavat-saṅgi-saṅgasya martyānām kim utāśiṣaḥ*

The value of a moment's association with the devotee of the Lord cannot even be compared to the attainment of heavenly planets or liberation from matter, and what to speak of worldly benedictions in the form of material prosperity, which are for those who are meant for death.

Once a saint was travelling across a long river in a boat. He was a great scholar in the vedas and a staunch devotee of the Supreme Lord. On his travel, he was talking to the boatman. He asked the boatman, "Do you know Bhagavad Gita?" He said, "No". Then the saint said, "Oh no. No problem, I'll teach you". Then he explained Gita in a beautiful way in which he can understand. Then he asked, "Do you know Ramayana?". He said, "No". Then he explained Ramayana in simple terms. Then he asked, "Do you know Mahabharata?". He said, "No". Then he explained the essence of Mahabharata also. Then after sometime, the waves started becoming aggressive and the boat struck on a rock. This created a hole in the boat through which water started pouring in. Then the boatman asked the saintly person "Sir, do you know swimming?". He said, "No". The boatman replied, "Oh no. Ok no problem. I know how to handle the situation." The he taught the saint how to row the boat. Then he plugged the hole in the boat with his thumb and the saint rowed the boat. They came across a wooden log and the he helped the saint to get onto the log and he also moved. Throughout the night he was holding the log and he guarded the saint with his dhoti so that he'll not shiver. In the morning things were ok and he helped the saint reach the destination. When the saint got down from the boat, he saw that the boatman's fingers were bleeding and his body was wounded badly because of the difficulties he faced the previous night. The saint felt very compassionate and expressed his gratitude to the boatman and the boatman replied, "Swami, the instructions you gave me changed my mind completely and I decided to take to spiritual path. Had you not told me the instructive stories, I would have simply jumped and saved my life alone when the waves attacked the boat. Because of your instructions, I got the conviction that I should serve saintly persons and make my life more selfless.". Then the saint blessed him to take the name of God which he practiced till the end of his life and attained perfection. So the saint transformed his life completely during his short travel.

Similar was the association that Prabhupada and other acharyas gave to the general public. Krishna also confirms this in the 11th canto of Bhagavatam (Uddhava Gita). In the Lord's incarnation as Lord Rama all the monkeys who assisted him and Jambavan-the bear who helped him attained perfection. They attained perfection only by His association though their birth was not an elevated birth. One cannot get God's association directly. So first one gets he association of his devotees and these devotees gives the association of the Lord in the form of his holy name and shastras.

Yours in service of Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev,
L.Harikumar
Chennai.

Path to Salvation

Date: 23 Jan 2004

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

Hare Krishna Devotees,

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

I was reading Srimad Bhagavatam verse 1.9.27 today. It is a verse in which Suta Goswami mentions about the different subject matters Sri Bhishmadev spoke to Maharaja Yudhishtira before passing away. The highlight of the verse is its purport. A particular section of that purport by Srila Prabhupada was really awesome and one cannot imagine what an essence Srila Prabhupada has given to us in the form of his books!

In that piece of purport, Srila Prabhupada talks about the hurdles in the path of salvation (like lust, anger, unlawful desires, avarice and bewilderment etc.) and the ways to overcome them. I am putting them as points for easy reference.

1. One should learn how to **forgive** to get freedom from **anger**.
2. One should **stop making plans**, to become free from **unlawful desires**.
3. By **spiritual culture** one is able to conquer **sleep**.
4. By **tolerance**, one can conquer **desires and avarice**.
5. By **regulated diets**, disturbances from various **diseases** can be avoided.
6. By **self-control** one can be free from **false hopes**.
7. By avoiding **undesirable association**, one can **save his money**.
8. By practice of **yoga**, one can control **hunger**.
9. By culturing the **knowledge** of impermanence, **worldliness** can be avoided.
10. By **rising early**, one can conquer **dizziness**.
11. By **factual ascertainment**, one can conquer **false argument**.
12. By **gravity** and **silence**, one can avoid **talkativeness**.
13. By **prowess** one can avoid **fearfulness**.
14. By **self-cultivation** one can attain **perfect knowledge**.

Now another interesting thought occurred to me - Srimad Bhagavatam is so versatile that it gives more than one solution for the same problem/misery, just to make sure that we get rid of these hurdles one way or another. In SB 7.15.22-25 Srila Narada Muni talks about several of these same disturbances but gives slightly different solutions.

Thank you very much.

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

Knowledge of Godhead

Date: 25 Jan 2004

Author: Vaijayantimala devi dasi

Dear Prabhujis and Matajis,

Hare Krishna! Please accept my humble pranams! All Glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev!

The following is a beautiful verse recited by Lord Brahma to Srila Narada muni while Lord Brahma was ecstatically describing the various scheduled incarnations of Lord Krishna:

SB 2.7.42

*yeṣāṁ sa eṣa bhagavān dayayed anantaḥ
sarvātmanāśrita-pado yadi nirvyalīkam
te dustarām atitaranti ca deva-māyām
naiṣāṁ mamāham iti dhīḥ śva-śrgāla-bhakṣye*

But anyone who is specifically favored by the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, due to unalloyed surrender unto the service of the Lord, can overcome the insurmountable ocean of illusion and can understand the Lord. But those who are attached to this body, which is meant to be eaten at the end by dogs and jackals, cannot do so.

In the previous verse Brahmaji is telling that neither Brahma nor all the sages born before Narada know fully the omnipotent Personality of Godhead. In this verse Brahmaji is explaining the following nicely.

1. Why we are not able to understand the Lord?

mamāham iti dhīḥ śva-śrgāla-bhakṣye

We are attached to this body, which is meant to be eaten at the end by dogs and jackals. This misconception of identifying the material body with the spirit soul prevents us from understanding the Lord.

2. What is the result of not understanding the Supreme?

naiṣāṁ te dustaram atitaranti ca devamāyām

If we do not have the knowledge of Godhead, we will be eternally submerged in the ocean of illusion.

3. Then what is the way out of this ocean of illusion?

sarvātmana-aśrita-pado yadi nirvyalīkam

We should surrender ourselves to the Lord without any reservations and serve Him without any pretensions.

4. Now what is the connection between surrendering (and performing unalloyed service) to the Lord and acquiring knowledge of Godhead? This can be understood more clearly from the verses in BG 10.10-11:

*teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te*

*teṣāṁ evānukampārtham aham ajñāna-jaṁ tamaḥ
nāśayāmy ātma-bhāva-stho jñāna-dīpena bhāsvatā*

To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me. To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with shining lamp of knowledge, the darkness born of ignorance.

This same point is stressed by Lord Brahma also in this verse when he refers to the Lord as - *dayayed anantaḥ* (unlimitedly merciful). When we surrender to such a Lord, due to His unlimited mercy, He reveals us the transcendental knowledge to overcome the illusion.

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

Srila Prabhupada's Nectar

Date: 26 Jan 2004

Author: Krishna Candra das

Hare Krishna,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev! Sorry for the long interval.

The following is Srila Prabhupada's nectar which really attracted me. Srila Prabhupada would speak from a large repertoire of traditional stories and apply them in different ways. His use of the story about the brahmana who lost his caste illustrates this nicely.

In India, there is a custom that Hindus never take their meals in the house of a Muhammadan or Christian or anyone other than a Hindu brahmana. But one brahmana was very hungry, and he went to a little known acquaintance and asked for some food. The man supplied the brahmana with a little foodstuff, but still hunger was not satisfied. When the brahmana asked the man for more food, the man said that he was sorry but he had no more. "Oh," said the brahmana, disappointed. Then he asked, "Sir, which caste do you belong to?"

"I am Muhammadan," the man replied. Then the hungry man lamented, "Oh, I have lost my caste, and still I am hungry!" Srila Prabhupada told this story on one occasion to a devotee-artist. She had suggested to Prabhupada that she should improve her artistic craftsmanship by painting and selling non devotional pictures, and then after becoming talented and famous, she could better paint for Krsna. Srila Prabhupada replied that to come to the point of being a reputed artist would take a long time, but a devotee's time is short - and is only for serving Krsna. As for fame, Prabhupada said, according to Caitanya-caritamṛta a man is famous who is known as a great devotee of Krsna. So, if she insisted on becoming a great artist, she would be like the brahmana who lost his caste but his belly remain unfilled.

- From the Nectar by HH Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami.

Srila Prabhupada's point from Sri Caitanya Caritamṛta is the question Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu asks of Srila Ramananda Raya and his reply.

Mahaprabhu asked, "*kīrti-gaṇa-madhye jīvera kon baḍa kīrti?*" (**Out of all glorious activities which is the most glorious?**)

Ramananda Raya replied, "*kṛṣṇa-bhakta baliyā yānhāra haya khyāti*" (**That person who is reputed to be a devotee of Lord Krsna enjoys the utmost fame and glory**).

We have practical proof to this point. Devotees like Prahlad Maharaj are glorified every day all over the world even after millions of years whereas materialistic personalities are forgotten in no time.

Thank you very much.

Your servant,

Krishna Candra das.

There is No difference Between the Book Bhagavata and the Bhakta Bhagavata.

Date: 28 Jan 2004

Author: Sudarshan das

Hare Krishna Prabhujis and Matajis,

Please accept our most prostrated humble obeisances unto your lotus like feet. All glories to Srila Prabhupada and Srila Gurudev. All glories Sri Guru Vrnda. All glories to devotees like yourselves, who, simply by using your sandals, can lift up conditioned souls like us from this perilous worldly existence.

With our small intelligence while trying to comprehend the sublime lives of the Saints, we came across a direct instruction from Sri Krsna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. We hope by sharing this nectar with all of you, we will be able to serve your goodselves in a menial way.

One day, five years after he took sannyasa, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu returned to Navadwipa-dhama from Jagannatha Puri. Upon his return the devotees felt that their lives had returned. Their joy knew no bounds. In order to see the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu thousands of people gathered there. Whoever had previously committed offenses to the lotus feet of the Lord when he had manifested his lila in Navadwipa was eager to be forgiven. They all came there to beseech the Lord's forgiveness for whatever offenses they might have committed. At that time, in the place known today as the aparādhā-bhanjanam, or the place of amnesty, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu granted forgiveness to all who gathered there and instructed them in the science of devotion.

At that time, Devananda Pandita took darshana of the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Offering his obeisances unto the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya at a distance, Devananda cowered and shrank away from the Lord, standing off to one side. At that time the Lord saw him and said, "You are the servant of my dear devotee Vakresvara Pandita. By your service to him you have greatly pleased Me. As a result of your service to him you have come close to Me. Vakresvara is empowered by Krsna-Sakti. By serving my dear devotee Vakresvara Pandita you have attained the mercy of Krsna."

Hearing these words, Devananda was overwhelmed with the sentiments of bhakti. His voice was choked with divine emotion, and he said, "O My Lord; O Supreme Master—You have appeared in Navadwipa just to deliver all the fallen souls. I am a sinner. I have committed great sins against divinity. I have failed to worship your lotus feet. As a result of this, I have cheated myself out of your causeless mercy. O Lord of all creation; Supersoul of all that lives! You are supremely merciful. By your causeless mercy I have been able to take darshan of your holy feet on this day. O Supremely merciful one - please be kind upon me and instruct me in the goal of life. Please explain the meaning of Srimad-Bhagavatam to me as well.

Hearing this humble request of Devananda Pandita, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu spoke as follows:

"Listen carefully, O brahmana. Always praise Srimad-Bhagavatam. Never let any explanation of Srimad-Bhagavatam other than bhakti issue forth from your lips. From beginning, middle to end, this is its meaning: constant devotion to Krsna is eternally perfect flawless, and infallible. It is the highest goal of life. The Supreme Lord appears in innumerable avatars beginning with Kurma. His appearance and disappearance are transcendental. In the same way, Srimad-Bhagavatam is not a material creation: it is completely divine. In a trance of bhakti-yoga, Vyasa compiled the Srimad-Bhagavatam. It appeared on his tongue as a result of the mercy of Krsna. If one doesn't understand that the Srimad-Bhagavatam is divine truth on the level of God Himself he will never realize its meaning. This is the verdict of all authorized scriptures. One who understands Srimad-Bhagavatam in that way has real knowledge. If one approaches Srimad-Bhagavatam with material knowledge he will never understand it. If, however, one is unlearned but takes shelter of the Srimad-Bhagavatam he will be enlightened with its meaning."

The Srimad-Bhagavatam is filled with divine love, prema. It is an extension of Krsna Himself and it reveals his

confidential pastimes of divine love.

Your lowborn servant,
Sudarshan das
Singapore.

Moderator's Note: HG Sudarshan Prabhu is a nice senior devotee from Singapore. He runs his grahasta ashrama very nicely filled with Krishna Consciousness. His whole family has taken up Krishna Consciousness seriously and they are part of a highly charged up congregation in Singapore.

Gravity

Date: 30 Jan 2004

Author: Kalacakra Krsna das

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

Few days back I wrote a mail titled "Path to Salvation" on Granthraj. In my recap, the line, "By **gravity** and **silence**, one can avoid **talkativeness**", caught my attention.

I was thinking a little deeper into the words, **gravity** and **silence**. How are the two related and what is the difference between the two?

By Krsna's mercy, a beautiful verse from Gita came to my notice. It is from BG 17.16:

*manaḥ-prasādaḥ saumyatvaṁ maunam ātma-vinigrahaḥ
bhāva-saṁśuddhir ity etat tapo mānasam ucyate*

Satisfaction, simplicity, gravity, self-control and purification of one's existence are the austerities of the mind.

Krsna talks about the austerities of mind and He lists *maunam* (**gravity**) as one of the austerities. Srila Prabhupada has translated *maunam* as **gravity**. It is very interesting to note that the sanskrit word *maunam* is used in two different contexts. *maunam* is translated as **silence** when used in reference to controlling our tongue, and when it is used in reference to controlling our mind, it is translated as **gravity**.

The word **gravity** sounded very interesting to me. Almost all of us are familiar with the **law of gravity, gravitational force** etc. I found a very interesting commonality in the way **gravity** is being used in the scientific sense and the philosophical sense. In scientific terms, the **force of gravity** is responsible for keeping us on the ground/earth. If that force is absent, we will be floating in the sky. Similarly, by the **gravity of thoughts**, we can also be **down to earth** in our minds. In other words, stay humble. If we are proud, we walk ten feet high. Gravity (or humility) is absent when pride is present. We also see the common usages like "So and so is a down to earth person", to refer to a humble personality. Another interesting usage is the word '**grave**'. When a person's body is buried after his death, we call it 'his grave'. In other words, it means the person has gone down the earth and will not be speaking anymore.

When I told this interesting relationship to Maharaj, he transcendently quipped, "Yes! Better be grave when we are alive, otherwise we will be forced to be grave (in the graveyard)"! Srila Prabhupada's every word has volumes of meanings and as we get more and more interested in understanding and following his instructions, he reveals them gradually by his causeless mercy.

Thank you very much.

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