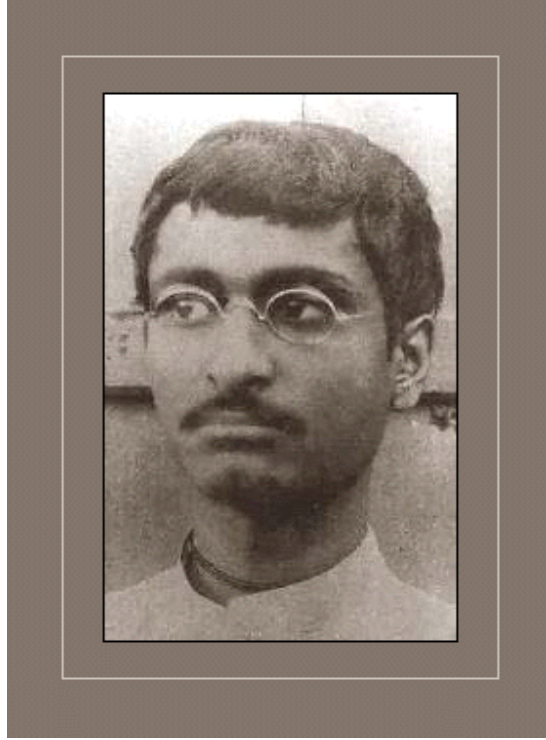


The Pathway to Highest Blessedness

By Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur



Bimala Prasada Dutta (Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati)

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Two ways are found in the world in order to earn knowledge about some particular object. One is to make an attempt for it with the help of our experience about the world; the other is that, realizing the inefficiency of the worldly experience, we should entirely surrender ourselves to the personage who has come down from the realm to which the required knowledge relates, and acquire it from him through the ear. Some one many [sic] question: “When we are inhabitants of this world, how, after fully relinquishing our experience about it, can we take refuge with some

super-mortal being?” In answer it is to be said that it will not do to get afraid of the difficulty; to know the truth, there should be a great strength of mind. You will not learn how to swim, if, seeing the water, you get afraid. Self-surrender is not a very difficult thing: that is rather very natural and easy for the soul. Whatever is contrary to self-surrender, is rather unnatural and difficult. If we want to learn about God, we will have to learn from His agent. When we listen to him, we must stop all our experience about the world and all misleading argumentations. It is by continually listening to the strong and forceful narratives about God’s glories that all the evils like of heart weakness will be liquidated. There will appear an unprecedented courage in the heart. Then will arise, in its full glow, self-surrender which is the natural virtue of the soul. Then will reveal itself in that self-surrendered heart, the self-manifested truth of the transcendental region of the fourth dimension. It is in this way that truth can be known; there is no other way in which can be realized the real truth beyond all deceitfulness. There is a distinction between divine and mundane topics. There are two senses in which a word is used; one refers to a transformable object of the world, creating forgetfulness about God; and the other to an eternal object leading to the conception of an excited feeling towards God’s own divine realm. One acquires fitness to take God’s Names after learning from the Acharya’s mouth about the difference between God as the Word of Vaikuntha or the transcendental World, and the mundane words of this world, limited by maya.

It is in the nature of jiva averse from God to cherish desires to majesty, power, knowledge, indifference to the world, fame and affluence. Man is divested of his virtue of sub-servience to God and Guru by such an enjoying mood as: “I shall remain independent; for dependence means serving the desires of others and my own desires to enjoyment are not fully satisfied thereby.” But such a jiva does not feel that these (majesty, power, etc.) cannot be owned by any jiva whose constitutional nature is eternal servitorship to God. They can stay only in God. These six excellences were glorified when they stayed naturally in Shrila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, for he never attempted to get them. All majesty, power supernatural, etc., were under his thumb. But he never hankered after these, nor was he anxious to make a display thereof, like the karmis, jnanis, yogis and tapasvis. These were gloried at the feet of Shri Raghunatha, staying there even in an unlimited degree beyond what these people would not be lucky enough to possess, but he never did any



trafficking in them; nor even did he ever make any attempt for abnegation like the pithless aspirers thereafter. But the climax of the achievement of all asceticism was glorified in his person.

Why did not Raghunatha attempt abnegation, etc. Every jiva is anxious to get his wished-for object. This is not bad, if it centers round Krishna. He attains to such a status as that of Raghunatha, who loves Krishna a hundred-fold better than himself. In his prayer to Shri Radha, Raghunatha said [1] “Somehow I have spent my life in high expectations of the ocean of nectar; if even yet you do not show kindness towards me, then what is the necessity of my life, of my residence in the Braja or even with Krishna?” Has any one ever heard of such a climax of the attainment of abnegation? He does not want even Shri Krishna without the service of Shri Radha. Such a maximum height of abnegation is not possible for a man of this world unless he has been, like Raghunatha, drenched with the moisture of the Grace of Shri Swarupa Goswami; none else can even explain this standard of abnegation. Is it possible for him to crave for the six terrestrial excellences as above, who does not want Krishna even without service to Radha? What an amount of service done to the highest darling of Krishna and what a degree of the highest love felt for her can endow one with such a spirit?

God has said [2]: “A truly intelligent person should shun evil company but seek association with holy saints who, with their instructions, gnaw the knot of the worldly attachments of our mind.” The meaning is that for our true well-being we should always accept the guidance of the true Guru (spiritual guide) and should not be misled by pseudo-gurus. The Guru never accepts the *preyah-panthaa* (way to pleasure), but he is a *shreyah-panthi* (i.e., he follows the way to the true well-being). He gives others (i.e., his disciples) the same instruction to walk along the real path as he has received from his own Guru, of course a true one. If a disciple asks permission of the Guru for drinking, he is sure to disapprove of it and never to grant it. When the Guru does not indulge the disciple in his prayer for things after his mind, he may dismiss the Guru. Such disciples accept only the gurus that are ready to supply fuel for their sensualism. Acceptance of a Guru has become a fashion now-a-days, not for the disciple’s true well-being, but for getting one’s sensual pleasures approved of. Such appointments satisfy only the social or family customs, like those of barbers and washers.



As soon as a truth is ascertained, it should be ardently given effect to then and there. The span of our life being very short, we should not mis-spend even a moment, of what still remains, in attending to our worldly affairs but utilize it in the performance of our service to Hari. King Khattanga and Ajamila attained their highest good by spending only one *muhurtha* (forty-eight minutes) and only the time of death respectively in Lord Hari's Service. Here is an anecdote to the point. One Sivananda Bhattacharya, a Sakta by faith i.e., worshipper of Goddess Kali or Durga, sent his son Ramakrishna to purchase some sacrificial beasts, goats and buffaloes, and other necessary articles against the coming Durga Puja. When Ramakrishna was returning home with the purchases, he met Shрила Narottama Thakura, a holy saint of the highest order, who after some instructive talk changed the youth's mind altogether, and the latter let off the beasts to obtain initiation from the Thakura and came back empty-handed. Sivananda, expectantly looking for his son's return with the goats and buffaloes and other articles for the Devi's Puja, asked him eagerly about them, seeing him return without them. Shри Ramakrishna replied that he had been blessed to have got the grace of the illustrious Vaishnava, Shрила Narottama, on which the father flared up in excessive wrath and called him a disgrace to the family for accepting one, not born in a Brahmana family as his Guru. Now Ramakrishna was fortunate enough to have been roused up from the worldly mire on hearing the truth from the mouth of the Thakura Mahasaya (Narottama) and to have at once given up the duties of the world as hateful and insignificant in order to be engaged in the service of Hari. We cannot rely on the time even of a breath, for it may be the last one; so we should utilise even this moment for attaining our true well-being, for which we should not listen to any one of this world who may give us contrary advice. In the Bhagavatam [3] God, as Rishbha Deva, teaches us thus: "We are encompassed by death and whoever does not deliver us from it cannot be obeyed as our well-wisher, let him or her be the Guru (like Sukracharya to Bali), or a near relative (like Ravana to Vibhishana), or the father (like Hiranyakasipu to Pradlada), or the mother (like Kaikeyi to Bharata), or a god (like Indra to Nanda) or a husband (like the sacrificial Brahman of Vraja to his wife devoted to Shри Krishna). Such was the case with Shри Ramakrishna Bhattacharya who wisely courted his father's certain displeasure to secure his true well-being.



Who is the true Guru? He who is constantly engaged in the service of Hari. Who is the truly [4] learned man? He who in the words of God Krishna is well conversant with the correct knowledge of the bondage of a jiva and his deliverance therefrom. We should accept only him as our Guru who employs cent percent of his time in God's service; otherwise we should fail miserably in following him. The Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita has taught us: "A true Guru teaches his disciple after his own behaviour and practice; one can not be the teacher of Dharma, if one does not perform it himself." [5]

From the Shruti we get the instruction that an enquirer after the true knowledge about *Tat* (God), should approach a Guru, with necessary articles for initiation, who is conversant in the Veda and steeped in *Brahman* (God). This instruction has also been given in the Shrimad Bhagavatam, [6] "An enquirer after the highest well-being should surrender himself to a Guru who is fully versed in the Veda as well as *Para-Brahman* and who has thereby become the shelter of true peace."

The platform speakers of improper conduct, skilled in speeches only, or the professional priests cannot be Gurus. When a man does not keep himself engaged all the while in Hari-bhajan (service of Hari), then he is anxious to be occupied with other things on the strength of Shri Nama and committing the great *aparaadha* (spiritual offence) utilizing Shri Nama in sinful affairs. A stipend-holder or a contractor cannot be a Guru, nor a blind reader of the Shrimad Bhagavatam. First of all refrain from approaching the professional priest. See whether he devotes his time fully to Bhagavata or not. All the time of one who is steeped or accomplished in *Para-Brahman* is fully occupied with the service of God.

From whom is the Bhagavatam to be heard? The Bhagavatam is to be heard from or to be studied with a true Vaishnava. The Bhagavatam cannot come out of the mouth of one who is not a Bhagavata or true devotee. Pretending to be a reader of the Bhagavatam one such leads others astray. He is deceived himself and, as such, he deceives others. How can the Bhagavatam which is not different from Shri Bhagavan have a full play on the tongues of the professional readers who pose as scholars conversant in reading it before others, but have no true devotion in Him, being engaged in worldly enjoyments? On the plea of discoursing the Bhagavatam, they only gratify their own senses, instead of the senses of Shri Krishna. A person anxious for his true well-being should never come



in contact with such professional readers and thereby court their own downfall, falsely thinking that they would get true benefit by accepting them as true Gurus and listening to them as disciples.

How can those act as Jagad-Gurus or true instructors of people who are busy with the maintenance of their wives and children, who give full steps to their desire for enjoyments arising out of illusion, who try to employ God Who is the highest Entity to be adored and served, for supplying them fuel for the fire thereof? What do we see in the Shrimad Bhagavatam and in the conduct and preaching of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His devotees? Such people as cherish in their hearts fear, affliction, wrong illusory ideas, desire, greed, feeling of discomfiture, concerning body, wealth, friendly relation, etc., on account of their attachment to some second object besides Him, have not surrendered themselves to God. Such non-dedicated persons cannot advise others to surrender themselves to God. Even if they give verbal instructions therefore, such conduct is not effective. Only such a Mahabhagavata (great devotee of God) as is a *nishkinchana* (having nothing to call his own in the world) and has sincerely surrendered himself to Krishna or is His exclusive servitor all the twenty-four hours of the day can legitimately occupy the Acharya's seat.

Those who attend to the service of God's Name, God's Dhama (Abodes) and God's Desire (Kama) are the only persons really adorable in the world. No being can extricate himself from wrong understandings due to maya without doing service to Shri Nama (Divine Name). As the result of service to Shri Nama, men can get rid of all prejudices and be settled in the service of Krishna-Desires (Krishna Kama Seva). From Dharma-Seva one can be rid of the clutches of the tremendously dangerous doctrine, "I am the Lord, there are no eternal Name, Form, Attributes, 'Sports, Majesty, etc., of God". And from Krishna-Kama-Seva, one can save oneself from the serious danger in the shape of the desire for gratifying one's senses; and being free from the temporal lust one can be firmly established in the service of the Transcendental Kama-deva (viz Krishna) and of Kama-Gayatri.

If we are fortunately able to secure attachment towards Krishna-Kama-Seva, then we can change the direction of the course of the different inferior desires that have arisen in us for sensual enjoyments in connection with our material body, and also that of the road we are



running along under the direction of our subtle body i.e., the mind, if it has grown apathetic towards attempts for God's services; they will then take just the contrary trend.'

And that Krishna-Kama-Seva is available, if we engage ourselves in the service of Dhama. Dhama means 'rays', 'prowess', 'influence', 'home', 'place', 'body', 'birth', etc. According to the sense accepted by the truly learned savants, Shridhama is that in which there is no malice, jealousy, nor evanescence, and that which is eternally self-manifested, spiritual and blissful. Shri Chaitanya Deva, having made His Advent in that Dhama, has made the world conscious of the spirituality of a holy place.

Failing to realize the dignity of Dhama, we had no predilection for Dhama Seva and not so much faith in the worshippable representative, (murti) of God, having remained engaged in studies, full of the understanding that we shall vanquish the people of the world by means of dialectics, splendour of erudition and glory of exemplary character. But some holy saints engaged in Dhama-Seva have enlightened us saying that it would bring us the highest welfare. He who seeks connection with Dhama, finds his attachment to grama (or domesticated life and connection therewith) soon liquidated. Then Shri Nama Seva, the means of attaining true blessedness, soon brings us our real end viz., Krishna-Kama.

Shri Vaikuntha-Nama alone has come down to this earth, and it is in Shri Dhama that Shri Nama has been deposited. The presence of Nama-Seva does not give the real end, viz. Krishna-Kama-Seva to one who disconnects oneself from Shri Dhama.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Vilapakusumanjali 102.

[2] Bh. XI. 26/26.

[3] vide V. 5/18.

[4] Bh. XI. 19.41.

[5] Mundaka. 1.2.12.

[6] Vide. XI. 3.21.



Part 2

By Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur

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Some people attempt at acquiring heroism through karma; some again strive for fulfilling other desires, some others (jnanis) for culturing Brahman; yet others (yogis) for getting accomplishment of oneness with God. But we know that worships for *dharmā*, *artha*, *kaama* or *moksha* are mere pretences; these are only connected with base selfishness. They have nothing to do with liberated souls, but are only the ravings of conditioned or fettered souls. Lord Shri Chaitanya gave instructions to people all over India to give every one, whom they would come across, advice to worship Krishna. He thus told them to make endeavour for God, even from the positions they were occupying, irrespective of differences of place, time or person. Now to carry out His commandment there is no other course than to cultivate what we have learnt at the lotus-feet of our Shri Gurudeva. The only work for a worshipper of God is to see that His worship increases more and more. Our prayer should ever be that our attachment towards Krishna may become more and more increased. We do not want power and pelf, no cessation of further births.

The special advice that Shri Chaitanya Deva has given us about the easy way of getting rid of desires, so natural to mankind, is nothing more than taking our shelter in devotion. He has said: [1] “The particular vision, i.e., company, of vishayis i.e., persons sunk deep in worldly affairs, and women is much more harmful and fitter for abandonment than even the sipping up of poison for men who are going to serve God having abandoned every worldly attachment with a desire of crossing the ocean of worldliness (*samsara*).”

One may take poison and die; but one should never keep company with a visayi and vishaya (object of worldly enjoyment). He, who after beginning Hari bhajana (the service of God Hari) becomes entangled with vishaya, is



ruined. It is for this reason that we receive the teaching from the lotus-feet of Shri Gurudeva that we have no other duty to perform than doing service to Krishna, His only blessing has been, “May your mind rest in Krishna!”

Shri Mahaprabhu has given the seekers after true well-being the advice to totally shun the company of the emancipationist seekers after oneness with non-distinct *Brahman* because they are more insincere than those who are desirous of worldly enjoyments. We should shun all such bad company and associate with true Sadhus (devotees of God). Their only duty is to cut through the kinds of accumulated evil designs of jivas; and only this is their natural motiveless desire.

The worldly people generally cherish doubleness of heart or duplicity, speaking out one thing abroad and concealing a different thing inside. And the funny part of it is that they are anxious to present this doubleness of heart to the public as liberality or the virtue of conciliation. These double-tongued men give to the creeds of persons, who are candid and do not adopt duplicity themselves, the designations of sectarianism, bigotry etc. But we should associate only with those who are candid, and not with the others.

The common decision of men, whether discriminative or otherwise, is not identical with Truth. The common sense of the people of blind following, like dumb-drive cattle, is always defective with errors and mistakes produced only by the faculty of the mind, and there may be in it some appearance of truth; but that is only relative or for the time being and no real truth. Human intellect, driven as it is by rajas and tamas cannot penetrate into the deliberations of unmixed *sattva guna*. So when one gives the advice to add the attempts of jnana, yoga, karma etc., of the world, born of the *gunas*, to pure Bhakti free from any of the three *gunas* of *prakriti* in order to make it complete it would be to our benefit not to accept such sweet food adulterated with a mixture of mortar. *Karma*, *jnaana*, *yoga*, etc. When, however, these acknowledge the supremacy of Bhakti, then that Bhakti, though mixed up with *karma* and *jnaana*, may be helpful to lead one along the road to pure Bhakti. When pure Bhakti is attained, the mixed state is no more there. This has been thus stated in the Pancharatra: “The acts that are prescribed in the Shastras for the service of Hari, constitute ordained Bhakti, through the performance of which true Bhakti is available.” [2]



The shrewd devotees of God must clearly point out to the absolute monists that their principle of *naiskarmya* or cessation of activities aiming at freedom from all desire for the fruit, is a misnomer, for there is in it ample touch of desire for fruits. Their attempt for peace with emancipation is nothing better than the gratification of their own senses devoid of their attachment to God. The principle of their Mayavada is this: “Inasmuch as we have to remain afflicted with the three kinds of trouble in the world, it is necessary to get rid of the evils of the world having origin in the three *gunas* (primordial elements, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, of which matter is composed). If we can do away with the triangle of knowledge, knowable and knower, we shall not have a separate existence and our doctrine of Buddhism in which the annihilation of sentience is emancipation. But the full manifestation of sentience is still in the Real Entity and it will ever remain so. They cannot understand how they got their conditioned state nor what would be their free state. Their conception of emancipation is totally wrong.

If some one raises the point that there is no need of devotion which induces taking shelter at the Feet of God and that one can cross the worldly ocean only by means of the dry-knowledge (of the absolute monists), he is referred to the answer given by Shri Brahma in his panegyric of Shri Krishna [3] : “O Lotus-Eyed God, those who do not take shelter at Your Feet, but cherish the self-conceit of having been emancipated, have dirty minds cherishing no love for You; in spite of acquiring a high position near to emancipation, they undergo a downfall from there on account of their having disdainfully slighted Your Feet. O Lord Madhava, Your devotees, bound to You with ties of friend-like love do not, like them, deviate from the right path, but, being protected by You, they rather fearlessly walk over the heads of the strongest of all interruptions and obstacles.”

The deliberations of devotees are not trifling. Those which point oneness with God are only for the time being, growing out of the desire for giving up the bitter experience of the world arrived at by proceeding with the empiric knowledge gathered with the deliberations about the external world. In the long run it is concluded that nothing will exist at the end. But the Entity of Plenary Sentience is and will ever stay. It is not wise to start an expedition against Him. The light of the sun cannot be destroyed, nor can the sun be covered with a screen, the rays come to the outside of



the screen and it cannot be taken near the sun. It cannot be a true proposition that Brahman has become jiva through ignorance, because in that case the existence of a second entity beyond Brahman, viz. His ignorance, has got to be admitted. It is not proper to say that Brahman has got ignorance, having been over-powered by Maya. The human race should be emancipated from such a proposition. Men should expand their power of intelligence and feel the needfulness of devotion. It will not do to turn aside as mere gossip the declaration that the world is not the place for men of intelligence to stay in, and that it is necessary to bid it adieu. But if instead we toil hard from sunrise to sunset for the improvement of this world, what shall we gain thereby? Gold (i.e. money), women, or at best honour and respect as a pious or holy man. But all these things are contemptible. Just before Bhakti (devotion) is generated, men get sufficient intelligence to understand that these are not important things. And what is emancipation too? The thirst after it grows with the inordinate desire that I should be free from all distresses leaving the others to suffer them.

Due to our radical unrighteousness, i.e., our predilection for keeping away from our eternal function of service to God, we are going astray, being misled by some environing affairs, i.e. we are trying to secure pleasures for ourselves in preference to those for God, having been thrown off from our true object. But the saintly personages who are free from all spitefulness do not suffer these inconveniences; they are established in the highest form of righteousness, having taken shelter with God. Spitefulness exists only among those who are averse to remembrance of God. Spitefulness comes when one is engaged as the servant of the five evils, viz. lustfulness, etc. We adopt the principle of clipping one's own nose for making another's journey inauspicious, believing in the concept of monopolizing all the pleasure to oneself and enviously hindering others' pleasure. Every human being should cultivate the highest form of righteousness. It is proper to bid farewell to such ideas as, "I shall be lustful, wrathful, covetous, distracted and proud"; everyone here has got the capability to be all this. When all these accumulate together, spitefulness appears. If we do not serve them, then there will be no spitefulness. But at present, it has become customary to dress up these foes of ours, and serve them, but not to serve God. Those who do not serve God necessarily become servants of the group of six enemies. Those who culture the Eternal Entity should not be servants of



this group. So long as men are not free from spitefulness, the instruction about the highest righteousness does not enter their ears.

Devotion to God is attainable through association with those who serve Him and His devotees. They have made the service of God the very essence of their life. They have made the narrations of the Names, Appearance, Attributes and sports of God the mainstay of their existence and are always engaged in discourses about Them. There is not only a great difference between the deliberations about God among the common people and those among the devotees, but they are of quite contrary natures. Many among the common people are inclined to worship God, Whom they know to be the giver of pleasure and happiness for mundane and celestial pleasure; those who are, however, more intelligent, i.e., who are outwardly renouncers, but are, at heart, the topmost enjoyers, pretend to worship God in order to be equal to the All-Enjoyer God and merge in Him. Men, midway between these classes, worship God with the purpose of acquiring eight modes of power for accomplishment of desires, like subtlety, lightness, etc. Though there is a pretence of worship in them they have not admitted the eternal Names, Appearances, etc., of God. They regard the Supreme Master of all as governed by karma. The so-called worshippers do not, in particular, serve God for His service and for His pleasure; on the contrary they make the Lord serve them.

The nature of the true devotees is different from theirs. They do not expect, nor do they regard as necessary, the attainment of pleasure of the body and home in this world, nor in the next, not even of emancipation which is so much praised as the highest attainment for man. They serve God from their very nature in every thought and sentiment of their heart. This strong propensity in them does not yield to any obstruction, but runs with impetuosity, forcibly removing all the obstacles before it, even like the swift and turbulent current of the river Ganga, which rapidly runs towards the sea inundating all the high and low resistance, undergoing no disaster, and never abating anywhere for taking some rest.

The devotees are ever engaged in the service of God. No tendency towards anything else, no other thought or deed, besides that service, finds any opportunity to cast a covering shadow over the souls of those Bhakti-yogis who are incessantly communing with God and are entirely dedicated to Him. The devoted servitors of God are ever engaged in offering service to Him and to His devotees too out of pure love. They



have no vitality to devote to their bodies, to those that are related to their bodies like wives, sons, home, etc., to others related to these, to domestic beasts and birds etc., to their occupation, class, etc. Having fallen in love with the Lord of their life, the very life of their lives, the life of all, they have surrendered themselves to Him with all their energies. Such devotees self-dedicated to God, have made Him alone the quintessence of their ambition, and He, too, having been arrested by their devotion, has made them His essential companions, though He Himself is the most essential Being for all.

The religion that the devotees adopt is found in the Shrimad Bhagavatam. That religion is not worldly nor does it pertain to the next world, nor is it means for any class of men, nor to be observed by men of a particular stage of life, nor is it prescribed for the people of a particular country of the world, nor is it special for either boys, or old people or young men, or women or males, or birds or beasts, or insects, or worms, but it is applicable to all countries, all times and all people for it is the religion of the soul, not of the body or the mind. That religion is the everlasting religion, Sanatana Dharma, religion for all creatures.

That religion is free from any craftiness, deceitfulness, or pretence. That religion does not promise to give the performers of its rites any pleasure of the body and the mind, or supernatural power or emancipation. That religion is not the fraudulent religion which at first deludes its observers with the gift of men and money to those who want them, keeps them infatuated with those transients, and eventually snatches these away back from them. Again, the religion that, giving the aspirants for *siddhi* (accomplishment of esoteric power) opportunities for acquiring the *siddhi*, makes them intoxicated with the enjoyment of power and pelf, and at last, when their passion for good fortune is finished up, gives them more troubles than before, -- such a religion which destroys the *siddhi* in the end, is not the religion of the Shrimad Bhagavatam.

That religion, too, is not the Bhagavata religion which, in the beginning, binds the practicant with the bondage of the rules of negation (like 'not this, 'not this'), and then takes him to the other side of the accomplishment of enjoyment making his desire all the stronger for being one with God, and through the will of God (whose will is law) confers on him an immovable body either of a tree or stone, etc., as the result of immense greediness. The Bhagavata-dharma is not of the nature of a jar of



poison with a little milk floating at the top like such religions, but, on the other hand, it is the highest religion made by the Highest Entity for our guidance, and followed by Only the Paramahamsas (devotees void of all blemishes). This religion not only delivers its followers from the sufferings of three kinds (i.e., those caused by the body and mind, by the gods and by nature), but finally eradicates these obstacles and bestows eternal good. The followers of this religion get the service of the Highest God on the other side of the ocean of greediness and infatuation, instead of falling victims to the temptations of *bhukti* (enjoyment), *mukti* (emancipation) and *siddhi* (esoteric power). For acquiring this religion we should carry out the command of Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu given in the short simple sentence, “Learn the Bhagavatam from a true Vaishnava.” So the service of God is easily available through association with His devotees who have made over their all for His service, who are themselves Bhagavatas (servants of Bhagavan) through the culture of the Bhagavatam in their company, and through the service offered to both the Bhagavatam and the Bhagavatas.

Whenever we talk about *aachaara* (approved usage), many take it to mean the performance of deeds ordained by the *smritis* (ritual codes). There is an essential difference between these people and those who observe the usages adopted by the followers of paramartha (the highest object of man, viz. attainment of divine Grace). In trying to determine the usages by means of mundane proclivities, differences are sure to arise among the ordinances derived from the scriptural codes according to the different tastes of different people. One’s taste is generated from one’s nature modified by association with the surrounding environments. Man’s nature is formed from the beginningless standing desire, and that nature of a jiva, being nourished by some unknown accumulated desire, unconsciously gets an association suitable to itself. The old desire endeavours to unite with the new beginning of acts as revealed in the world; the unknown desire, however, when favourable to it, gives fulfillment of the desire in the mundane world. Oftentimes, however, does the old desire offer obstruction to the revealed desire. This mutual impact generates unpleasantness in the world of differences. All classes of people in the world believe the desires to be the root of the worldly troubles. It is the function of every jiva to suppress the desires but all the activities of man aim at the gratification of the desires. Every desire, if not consumed, seeks gratification. The more a follower of Paramartha has been able to curb his



desires, the more has he been able to show in his character the easier way for consuming desires.

Three kinds of *aacharas* are noticed in men of this world, who gamble with the desires, depending on the worldly or secular conscience as the capital. Among the observers of the worldly *aacharas*, the number of the servers of desires is very large. Holding up the desires by all means as most predominant, they regard the gratification of the desires as the aim of their life. The knowledge of their very existence is the indicator of their pleasure. That in which there is no pleasure of self-gratification directly or indirectly, is to be abandoned in every way. In every creature is noticeable the quest for the pleasure of this gratification of desires from the very first day of the appearance of instinct till the end. The very moment a man feels his own existence, that very feeling leads him towards that pleasure. Gradually the inclinations growing out of the desire are fostered in association with the environments. The eyes grow alert in the cultivation of the objects of sight, activity is noticed in the ears towards the objects of audition, the function of the nose is awakened for picking up fragrances, the attempt of the tongue is observed for relishing tastes, and there is seen dermatic activity for appreciating touches. The organs of action like the foot, hand, voice, etc., give expression to their respective functions with the help of those of the organs of sense like the eyes, ears, etc. With the abundance of the feeling of existence, the perception of the nature of the desire terminates in only its own pleasure. The man is then engaged in his worldly activities. He begins work, being prompted by the feeling of egotism as the enjoyers of this mundane world. Being thwarted by the previous desires of former births he is at every step made to roam about from the shelter of one desire to that of another.

When the growing desire is not thwarted by the previous desires the jiva feels gratified at the fulfillment of both the desires. But when the two types of desires are antagonistic to each other, the jiva, hankering after satisfaction, getting dissatisfaction instead, banishes the desire even as a son carrying a wrong name is banished and becomes busy in endeavouring to obtain another son. In some cases, being successful in getting the son after his desire, he is encouraged in worldly matters with efforts for gaining the desired fruit to a large extent. Men with worldly attachments through desires apply the power of the newly grown desires



against their own previous desires. This struggle is the quest for pleasures as relished by the new desires.

Being led by their worldly or secular intellect, men are often seen to be on the alert to define non-secular or transcendental intellect depending, as they do, on their simplicity such as is prevalent in the material or secular affairs. When controlled by that alertness, their idiocy in the form of their mundane simplicity takes them towards the company of persons deceived like themselves. Trying in vain to define the transcendental nature and to describe the position free from the covetous spirit born of the desires, they fall into the deep gloom of unpleasantness. The state of apartness from covetousness, too, which they had built in their imagination with their simple intellect, becomes converted to a wave of the ocean of desires. The previous evil desires deceived them in such a way that they, unable to extricate themselves from the clutches of that deception, began to rise and sink in the quag of these desires. A man of simple consciousness, deceived to think himself free from covetousness, but smarting with the poison of desires, makes, out of simplicity, a mechanical distinction between worldly and transcendental things, and the world appears to his deceived faith as divided merely into lives of attachment and detachment. Such a man terms the world of attachment as of mundane nature, and adorns the state of detachment with the glorious appellation of 'transcendant'.

Man, as distinct from the lower creation, can ponder over the past and the present but we often notice striking difficulties among the decisions reached by human deliberations. Those who are anxious to be considered as civilized are of the opinion that, "If we can observe the civic rules, then there will be no mutual friction and we can live quite in comfort and happiness, even though godless." Such a consideration finds great favour with the advocates of the path of karma. There are again some others who consider that, "This world is a place of troubles; it is necessary to be ever away from here; for this the perception of non-distinctiveness of the reality is necessary, which means salvation: this salvation is to be wished for." The devotees of God express no such opinion. Those who want to remove their wants by means of enjoyment are desirous of the fruit of enjoyment, whereas those who want to do it by the process of renunciation are desirous of emancipation. But the devotees of God desire neither enjoyment, nor emancipation. When, for want of an exact



knowledge about the truth, we rely on relative knowledge, our want is not removed therewith; all our acts evaporate like camphor. The patch along which there will be neither want nor that merger with non-distinctiveness, is that of *chid-vilaasa* (pleasure of pure sentience). If we lose all the benefit of liberation, being liberated in name only, that liberation should not be called true liberation; it amounts only to self-destruction. It is not at all indicative of intelligence to do away with both the disease and the patient together.

Many, when troubled with the distresses and miseries of the world, think of being delivered from the world, like the old woman of the fable who, while gathering fuel logs from the wood, complained against God for giving her all her distress and hardships, and invoked Pluto (god of death) to come and take her away to his place; when Pluto actually came before her, she did not want to go with him, but asked him only to help her to lift the load to her head. Thus she wished to live among the privations and troubles of the world, though she was given the chance of being relieved there from. Such is the case with those who, being troubled with worldly hardships, want liberation; within them, too, the stream of worldly desires flows like the river Phalgu beside Gaya whose stream of water runs beneath the cover of a sandy surface. A jiva cannot get the eternal well-being, if he adopts the course of those who are desirous of the fruits of worldly enjoyments or of others averse to the enjoyment of the fruit. They are all, self-deceived and are hypocritical. Until they become sufficiently fortunate, their hypocrisy is not exposed before the public, when they may feel their mistake.

Those who have got self-realisation and know the truth about the soul serve God in this world, not busy in the enjoyment of the world like those that are desirous of the fruit of enjoyment, nor thrown off from the track of their true well-being by considering the ways and articles of the service of God as only worldly matters. They serve God in this world and also in the world beyond. They ever announce the truth that jivas have no other duty than to serve God-head. They are truly wise, ever anxious to see jivas acquire the true welfare. The human race mostly consists of mere infants in respect of *paramaartha* (spiritual outlook). Just as infants do not understand their own good, but at times make efforts to place their hands on flames or get impatient to grasp the moon within their hold, so men, too, always act in various ways like infants. But the wise person,



accomplished in soul-realisation, ever make efforts to do good to these infant-like men. Men attain their good, only when they give up the deliberations arising out of their mental nature, take advice from these wise persons, (viz.) the devotees of God who are true well-wishers of all and are ready to accept their guidance in all ways. All may acquire perfect welfare by obeying God's instructions embodied in the Vedic treatises. Beyond this, men have nothing else for guidance among themselves.

It is only those that can be said to have adopted the *Sreya Panthaa* or Better Road [4] leading to the true well-being of men, who are bent towards the service of God, being attracted towards Him with the tie of the purest love natural to his essential constitution as purely sentient (*chit*) jiva. In their heart has grown the true Rasa (pure *chit*, sentimental sweetness) as considered in relation to the final Reality; and they have had recourse to the Lotus Feet of Krishna as the ultimate refuge to the exclusion even of the good topics of *sattva* not to speak of *rajah* and *tamah*. Shri Syarupa Damodara, the closest associate devotee of the Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has called the plenary Grace of the Lord as the grace generating no evil in its wake, for the awakening of the people whose sentience has been clouded by primordial ignorance, who, having been guided by the mirage of the theory that the world is an illusion, have regarded that the knowledge of the Personality of God is inferior to that of His Impersonality free from any feature of distinctiveness that obtains in matter, as conceived in their own imagination. The knowledge of that final Reality, however, is accessible only in the doctrine of the Shrimad Bhagavatam, in the very first *Shloka* of which has been shown the mutual relation between God, jivas and matter. The material distinctiveness is, of course, unnecessary. So, when they experience the bitterness of matter, they take leave of material enjoyment, adopting the principle of 'not this, not that' in order to get rid of the idea of enjoyment of worldly objects. But those form a group and are included in the class of ignorant people, who labour under the idea that the final word is the cessation of the faculty of perception or the final goal is the exemption from any special research with that faculty; because, as they think distress is in the track of enjoyment or pleasure and the acceptance of the wished-for road brings about the three kinds of human sufferings (caused by the mind and body of creatures) by natural catastrophes [sic]. The most erring people are those who, adopting the doctrine of illusion, cling to matter mistaking it for *chit* (spirit). There is no reality in it. They wrongly opine that the



attempts for acquiring true knowledge through transcendental devotion are of the same class with those for the limited knowledge of material enjoyments. They have erroneously given the highest place to the doctrine of non-distinctive impersonality of disregarding the objects favourable to the service of God and ignorantly keeping aloof from that service. We should be anxiously craving for the real good that Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has shown by declaring the uselessness of their doctrine. They have found themselves in a fix who have indulged in the wrong thirst after showing the Plenary Entity as wanting in fullness. Such people are really miserable who have established themselves in the belief that there is variegation only in the world of matter and that the attribution of variegation to *chit* is only a phase of the deliberation of the inert nature of matter. The error of considering the distinctiveness of *chit* as that of matter brings about one's downfall without fail instead of producing the desired object. The sentimental sweetness of matter will have to be destroyed or dried up. But God Himself is the Embodiment of Tasty Sweetness (*rasovai Sah*) and, as such, that tastiness of Sachchidananda or Embodiment of Eternity, Sentience and Bliss, must continue for ever; otherwise your deliberation will end in the Buddhistic conception of the morphologists or mere logomachy of the Mayavadis. So long as the principle of material distinctiveness is not destroyed, men will have to keep away from the vicinity of Reality, being satisfied only with materialism; but the moment their sentience is roused up, they will understand the distinctiveness of *chit*, and it is then that they will acquire competence to listen to the Shrimad Bhagavatam. Other people have to enter either the fold of henotheism or impersonalism. We should cultivate the Transcendental Rasa after getting beyond the region of material distinctiveness. In the Chhandogya Upanishad (Dahar section) there is a list of many desires, for the attainment of each of which a special resolution is to be made. So long as these desires are indulged in, people will get their demands fulfilled in accordance with their desires, as said by God in the Gita [5] that those, who led by their *taamasa* nature worship Yakshas, Rakshas, Vinayakas and other *bhutas*, get their place with these. These desires continue till we get the inclination to satisfy the Desire of God.

It is necessary to get rid of the inconveniences of jivas here and of the dirt of the three kinds of human sufferings. Some think it worth while to keep within the evils of the material world and repeatedly come within their



region, so that they may, in future, chalk out means to secure enjoyment of pleasures. But this is not the trend of thought with those who are really liberated. If man, waking up from the depth of sleep, becomes alive to sentience and knows his identity with the knowledge of the soul, then he may bid adieu to the drawback of the perception of what is not the soul. All the variegations of Vaikuntha were even then existent, when the functions of maya were dormant and the cosmic evolution of matter did not begin; they are still there and they will continue to stay in the future, too.

When the principle of *Ekaayana* or intentness with singular concentration was prevalent, i.e., in the Satya-yuga (golden age), only Narayana was worshipped. *Ekaayana* means no numbering. When that principle was stopped, i.e., in the Treta-yuga, the intent concentration received a set back and misery visited men. Then Trayi (triple form of the Veda) came into existence, originating the *Karma-kaanda* thereof from Pururava. [6] Shridhara Swamipada in his *tika* (commentary) has thus given the gist of the two Shlokas: “In the Satya-yuga almost all the people, being of the *saatvika* nature, were given to contemplation; but in the Treta-yuga, when the nature of *rajas* was predominant, the Veda was divided and the department of *karma*, the ceremonial rites etc., was introduced.”

Then we have [7] : “What could be got by men meditating on Vishnu in the Satya-yuga, by people performing sacrifices in the Treta-yuga and by persons worshipping God in the Dvapara-yuga is available in the Kali-yuga from *Hari-kirtana*.” The only resource in the present era is *Hari-kirtana*. We should know the Reality therefrom. It is not necessary to take the help of what appears to be the truth. Those who adopt the way of *karma* labour under much trouble, while the idea of their oppositionists is impersonal. In the Gita [8] the Lord says: “The impersonalists have got to undergo a greater amount of difficulty, for the way of impersonalism is available to possessors of bodies only with a good deal of trouble.” The misery of those who are not devoted to Krishna are indescribable. They are suffering misery by their own conceptions. It is necessary to be free therefrom.

The Grace of Shri Chaitanya Deva causes no evil. In it there is no indulgence given to the karma-kanda. His endeavour was to make people keep aloof from worldly and heavenly enjoyments. Again the current of



thought of the culturists of jnana devastates the very principle of getting the inner eyes opened up of people blinded by the gloom of nescience with the pencil applying the collyrium of true wisdom; their motto is: “Guru and I are not separate, Guru is not eternal, I shall merge into *Brahman*, etc.” The attempt to grope in the dark, not being able to get any clue to Reality, is useless. Those, who have carefully studied such Shlokas of the Shrimad Bhagavatam as the following, know very well that one following the Mayavadi current of thought has got to be disappointed in the long run and permanently remain steeped in ignorance. Persons hankering after emancipation, adopting duplicity, waste time in henotheism (polytheism antecedent to monotheism) and, becoming impersonalists, they destroy their own entities and even the very conception of Guru. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has solved the problem of such contradictory positions.

Shri Brahma says to Shri Krishna - “O Lord, those who spend their lifetime in listening to the accounts of Your Glories coming out of the mouths of true saints, with low obeisance and giving up all attempts for acquiring jnana leading to emancipating, bring You under their control, though You are invincible elsewhere. But only the troubles are the dues for such people as giving up Bhakti, the only way to true wellbeing, take troubles for comprehending their oneness with God, just as no grain comes to the lot of persons thrashing the husk.’ [9] Further “O Lord, the intellect of those persons is impure, who think themselves emancipated and shake off devotion to You, and they sustain a complete downfall from their high position acquired with much difficulty, for disregarding their only shelter, viz., Your Feet” [10] Shri Narada tells Shri Vyasa Deva - “Even the perception of *Brahman* with the highest jnana free from all the dirt of *karma* is not at all praiseworthy, etc.” [11]

Shri Chaitanyadeva has given men the true *chit-rasa*, (transcendental tasty sweetness of *chit*) making them feel its difference from *jada-rasa* (the material sweetness of this world) and setting at rest all contending principles having their origin in attempts to understand in the inductive way the transcendental things that have come down to this region of *maya*, viz., the world. Mahaprabhu’s Grace has ever been giving us attachment towards God with a tendency for offering Him service. His Grace brings us real peace, which has been defined by God Himself as the result of fixing the mind with steadiness in Him. He has also said to Shri



Brahma [12] “The jnana about Me is the highest and it is perfectly esoteric and mysterious.” Among the jnanas about Bhagavan (God), Paramatma (All-pervading Super-Soul) and Brahman (Absolute Spirit), the jnana “about the Bhagavan” is the highest, the other jnanas are lower than that. There is no jnana of the Distinctive Features (*visesha*) of God in Impersonal Brahman. There is some in Paramatma, but it is without the esoteric element. In the jnana (about Bhagavan there are four differentiations viz., of *jnaana* (about His Svarupa or essential nature), *vijnaana* (about relations with His Potency), *rahasya* (about His relation with the jivas) and *tadanga* or *jnanaanga* (about His relations with Brahman i.e., Nature consisting of the three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which is the first cause of the material world). [13] It is not proper to ascribe the tendency towards material enjoyment, that is so prevalent in religion, to devotion to God. The yogis (culturists of Paramatma) are in favour of Majesty and they practice *yoga* for acquiring *vibhuti* (Super-human power). Devotees culture and worship Shri Krishna’s sweetness under which Majesty plays a subsidiary part. Shri Chaitanya Deva, out of His Grace which generates no evil like other graces as pointed out by Shri Svarupa Damodara, has widely propagated these teachings for the highest well-being of man. It is the worshippers of Adhokshaja Krishna who can understand all this; there is no competence for it in the jnanis who are deprived of the power of comprehending this superiority of the tasty sweetness of devotion, or are only immature in this respect.

Lord Shri Chaitanya Chandra, Incarnation of Love with generous magnanimity distributes His Grace among the fortunate jivas in three ways. Jiva being distressed with the privations of the world try to remove them by several means, but they fail therein. God’s Grace is not available with the attempts of jivas. It is when the fragrance of the Lotus-feet of Shri Krishna arises in their hearts through Divine Grace, that the dust of mental agonies easily flies away and the heart becomes free from all dirt. Then is awakened the highest bliss that grows from Shri Krishna’s service. The conflicts arising in the mind from the different interpretations of the scriptures give rise to controversies and interpretations of the scriptures of Divine Grace, the recipient heart becomes intoxicated with the tasty succulence of the love of God. And that intoxication, too, that vies it, owes its growth to the self-same Divine Grace. Consequently the scriptural disputes are all set at rest. The limit of the sweetness of love then gives such jivas constant rest at Shri Krishna’s Feet and, fortunate as



they are, they attain true satisfaction with unadulterated devotional Love. Krishna's Grace is free from all dirt, it gives tasty succulence and is replete with divine intoxication.

When the heart becomes pure with Shri Krishna's Grace, the dirt of vexation due to wants does no more linger. When through His Grace there grows the tasty sweetness of love, the settled decision about Bhakti becomes strongly firm, all scriptural contests being overcome. Consequently the mind becomes intoxicated with Love of Krishna. Acquiring tranquility through His Grace, one becomes constantly immersed in a feeling of excessive bliss in the glorious suavity of the Love of Krishna.

The jivas here are at first affected with attachment towards the objects of enjoyment due to their being averse from God. Then they become inquisitive about God, and at the end they engage themselves in His service. In the first stage, they are rid of the mischief of worldliness by Divine Grace; in the result the heart becomes clean and pellucid and as a consequence thereof, there is awakened the pleasurable sensation with attachment towards Krishna. In the second stage, they are established in the firm conviction about devotion to God through His Grace; in it is obtained the tasty sweetness of love leading to love-intoxication. In the final stage, through God's Grace, is achieved the strong attachment to Bhakti and the consequent awakening of the perception of the Divine Sports everywhere from which is available the culmination of extreme sweetness. With Shri Krishna's Grace, jivas may make their worldly desires inoperative, and thus liberated, may secure abstinence from things other than Krishna, through Krishna-*kirtana* (i.e., the chanting of His Names and Glories). They may also, when they are desirous of emancipation, give up such desire by taking this antidote against worldliness, may have the perception of God, and, when they are desirous of worldly enjoyments, may be stirred with pure devotion after giving up such desire with Krishna's Grace by means of the repetition of what has been carefully heard about Shri Hari's Glories pleasant both to the ear and the mind. Thus it is the Divine Grace that should be adopted as shelter and protection under all circumstances.

It is only those, who have been fortunate enough to have the opportunity of listening to the wonderful teachings of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu about the universal relativity (*sambandha*), means or expedient



(*abhidheya*) and need or object (*prayojana*), that know that men get non-plussed about their spiritual deity in the midst of their attempts for acquiring *trivarga* (the three main objects of human pursuit, viz., *dharma*, *artha*, and *kaama*, i.e., virtue, wealth and desire,) and that those who hanker after the fourth object, viz., *moksha* or emancipation, have gone all the more astray than they; whereas the persons who have adopted shelter with Bhagavan, are not only rid of the knowledge about non-distinctive Brahman available by perception, but are also above the craving for the mere vicinity or merger in Paramatma, a partial phase of God, being free from the wrong conception of His plenary character. Engaged, however, in the service of the Plenary Knowledge or Sentience, being well-established in their own eternal position, they have not kept their eternal endeavour, within the mere proximity to Paramatma as conceived with the predilection for non-distinctiveness or notion of the oneness of matter and non-matter. On the other hand they have ascertained, as their object, the need of eternally tasting the sweetness of the full sentient Bliss with their own nature as jivas of atomic eternal existence with sentient bliss. This is not an ephemeral conception generated by any physical or mental ideology. It is through a course of the cultivation of the thoughts about God that the desire, knowledge, and activities of the jivas in their essential and eternal nature become the subject-matter of one's everlasting conception. Then they are no more dragged into undesirable regions by temporal thoughts about *dharma*, *artha*, *kaama* and *moksha* (i.e., *chaturvarga*), while attempting to ascertain the proper object of human pursuit. Then no more do they deviate, under the influence of bodily and mental concerns, from the right rack leading to the ascertainment of the true object of life, nor do they fall off from eternal devotion in order to offer any respect to karma, jnana, etc., by creating some disturbance against the culture of Shri Krishna with a loving disposition, in the garb of karmis, jnanas and men with other desires. The teachings of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu are abundantly present in the Shrimad Bhagavatam and treatises following in its wake; they are available in the good company of the followers of the Shrimad Bhagavatam and center round the highest object of human pursuit, the achievement of self-conquest i.e., love of God.

The professors of non-distinction of Brahman call the annihilation of conception as emancipation with a desire for effecting a reconciliation between the principles of *sattva* and *tamah* (the highest and the lowest of



the three properties of matter). That is of two kinds, viz., non-sentience averse to the service of Vishnu or merger into matter, and the state of material conciliation apathetic to Vishnu's service or merger into sentience. When a jiva gets rid of the Mayavada of the principle of *tamah* and becomes established in the service of Absolute *Sattva* (God), he is able to do away with the opposition of the antagonists of the Vaishnavas with the aid of Sudarsana or Vaishnava-Darsana, and blind the eyes, intent on enjoyment and renunciation, of the philosophers of wrong vision by using that weapon (Vishnu's disc Sudarsana). Then that jiva, freed from the shackles of *avidyaa* (i.e., identification of the self with the body), gets a strong attachment for the eternal servitorship to Shri Gourasundara (Chaitanya Mahaprabhu) Who is identical with Shri Vrajendra-nandana, Shri Krishna.

FOOTNOTES

[1] C. Chandrodaya VIII.24.

[2] Also Bh. R.S. 1.2.28.

[3] Bh. X.2 32-33.

[4] Vide Katha 1.2.1-2.

[5] Vide IX.25.

[6] Bh. IX.14.48-49.

[7] Bh. XII.3.52.

[8] Vide XII.5-.

[9] Bh. X.14.3-4.

[10] Bh. X.2.32.

[11] Bh. I.5.12.

[12] Bh. II.9.33.

[13] Bh. II.9.32.



Part 3

By Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur

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3

We get the essence of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings in His Sikshashtakam. His Lordship lays stress on the service of Shri Krishna Nama. At the very outset He has said, that it is necessary to chant Shri Krishna's Names in the right manner thoroughly.' He also taught that the Names and Their Possessor are identical. When an object is fully spoken about or described, it is shown completely analysed, God's Names, Appearances, Attributes, Associates and Sports - these five constitute Shri-Nama. These are present within God's Body which is Shri Nama. There may be naturally varied combinations among these for one who takes Shri Nama, viz., Names and Forms, Names and Attributes, etc., but these are not separate from one another.

If a man desires to see His Forms of Beauty, he should know that it is not visible to his material eye. The form or beauty which is acceptable to the sense of vision, is an object of enjoyment. It is God Krishna Who is the Enjoyer and not an object of enjoyment. An enjoyable object gratifies our senses. So, as the Shrimad Bhagavatam says, God is not visible to our eye, what the eye sees is not the Beauty of God.

Among the objects of the material world, there is a distinction between a name and its possessor i.e., the person or thing whose name it is. But this is not the case with the Names of Shri Krishna, which are Transcendental. For this reason Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said: "Shri Sankirtana should be our only means for getting the object of our pursuit, viz., Love of God Krishna." Mahaprabhu has said, '*vijayate Shri Krishna-sankirtanam*' i.e., the Sankirtana of Shri Krishna should be specially glorified. Sankirtana means Kirtana or chanting by many in coalition of Kirtana of Shri Krishna in detail i.e., of His Names, Forms, Attributes, Associates and Sports. Such Sankirtana is the object of special glorification.



We know that for practicers of Bhakti there are nine kinds of limbs of Bhakti. Of these five have been regarded as pre-eminently the foremost, recapitulated in the Shri Chaitanya Charitamrta [1] as the following (i) Association with holy saints, (ii) chanting of Names, (iii) audition of the Bhagavatam, (iv) residence in Mathura and (v) service of Shri Murti of God with firm faith. These five limbs of devotion are the most important ones among all the practices and the performance of those five, though not so much, generates Krishna-Prema.

It is felt after a careful consideration of these five best practices, that Shri Nama Bhajana (service of God's Names, with ardent chanting) is at the root of all these and is glorified above all. Sadhu-sanga has been proposed in order to create a taste or inclination for Shri Nama-Bhajana as the result of the association with holy saints who are attached to Shri Nama with a firm faith and who chant Names systematically. The Shrimad Bhagavatam has declared Shri Nama-Bhajana alone as the highest virtue [2] where it has been said "In this world, the superior Dharma of men is remembered as Bhakti-yoga (performance of devotion to God) with the taking (chanting, etc.) of His Names, etc." "The Kaliyuga, which is a sea of all evils, has only one merit in it and that is a great one, viz., that one attains God free from all worldly attachments by chanting God Krishna's Names and Glories. What was obtained in the Satya-yuga by meditation of Vishnu, in the Treta by worshipping Him with yajnas (sacrifices) and in the Dvapara by His ritual worship, is obtained in the Kali by Hari-kirtana". In the very beginning of the Shrimad Bhagavatam in its middle and at its end, the efficacy of Shri Nama-Sankirtana has been repeatedly advised. At the root of Madhura-vasa or Shri Dhama-vasa (residence in the places of God's adoration) is deeply set the principle of Nama-Bhajan for these holy places are frequently visited by Sadhus who are always engaged in Shri Nama-Sankirtana [sic]. Then, the service of Shri Murti is conducted with Mantras (incantations) framed with God's Names with the principle of chanting Them. Thus Shri Nama-Kirtana is glorified above all. And all success is available through it. We have it in the Shri Chaitanya Charitamrta [3] stated thus: "Among all Bhajans (performances of Bhakti or devotion), nine are the best which are very powerful to give love of Krishna, even Krishna Himself. The foremost among these again is Nama-Sankirtana. One who takes Names, being free from *aparaadhas* (spiritual offences) is sure to gain the wealth of Love."



In the Bhakti-Sandarbha [4] we have: “Even if there is some other form of devotion ordained as a duty in the Kali-yuga, it should be performed with the item of Bhakti known as Kirtana.” No kind of Bhakti like residence in Mathura, association with holy saints, service of Shri-Murti and audition of the Shrimad Bhagavatam is complete without Shri Krishna-kirtana; but ther, [sic] fruit is accessible to one who gives it importance above everything.

In the Shri Hari Bhakti Vilasa [5] has been cited a Shloka from an old Shastra which means: “Hari’s Names are always present on the lips of a person who worshipped Shri Vasudeva (Krishna) before in hundreds of his births. The best and foremost of all the spiritual practices for attaining God Krishna’s Grace is Sankirtana. If the other Sadhanas (practices) are favourable or helpful to it, it is then only that they are worth the name; otherwise they should be known as only obstructions to the proper Sadhana. Whether one is a child, or an old or young man, male or female, learned or illiterate, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, pious or sinful in whatever condition of life one may be, there is no other course of spiritual practice for one than Shri Krishna-Sankirtana.

Kirtana is called Sankirtana when it is performed by many persons together. But will it be worth the name of Sankirtana, if some worthless people, without any ardour for God’s service, shout together? It will be true Hari-Sankirtana when we join the Sankirtana of true devotees who serve God according to the principles laid down in the Vedas and allied Shastras. On the other hand it is not Hari-Sankirtana when we take part in the Kirtana conducted for the prevention of the epidemic of cholera or pox, or prosperity in trade, or for gain, respect and fame; such a Kirtana is *Maayaa-kirtana!*

So longs as we keep away from joining the Kirtana conducted by those who hold perfect Krishna-kirtana, maya will be deluding us in various ways. If we join the Kirtana of such people as are not anxious for their own true well-being, who hood-wink themselves then no well-being will be attained by us. There will be no Sankirtana, if we follow such people as have imitatively decorated their bodies and beads with marks of a Vaishnava without receiving instructions from true Vaishnavas, and shout out some names appearing like God’s Names only in external sound.



Engaged in Shri Krishna-Sankirtana, we entirely get rid of the tendency of securing worldly aggrandizement. Under the influence of the moonlight of Krishna-Kirtana, the lily of true welfare blooms. Scholarship is the greatest in a devotee absorbed in the chanting of Shri Nama. Through it is available the flow of the tasty Sweetness of *Chit* (sentience) in the heart, when one becomes totally free from the attempts to be busy with the current of thought of the external world i.e., the greed for acquiring transient pleasures and when all roughness of the heart is set at rest and it is understood that Mayavada (absolute monism) is not worth acceptance.

Everyone is competent for Shri Krishna Sankirtana. Like Krishna, His Names, too, have got all potencies. There are no such rules to be observed in Shri Nama-Sankirtana such as, to be fit for it one shall have to take three baths daily, that one should not be lowly born or should not perform Sankirtana practices in the company of low-born people. No such considerations of mental or physical properties of a man are to be made in respect of Krishna-kirtana which is the property of the soul. One may take Hari-nama even when the body is impure as when one is the water-closet or even though one is a sinner; only one should not be insincere, for true Hari-nama is not utterable by a man who has a desire for securing worldly advantages through Hari-nama, which is technically called ‘sinful intellect through the power of Nama.’

A silly fellow has no competence for the worship of God in His Shri Murtis. But in this era Kali prevails. A born Brahmana is often heard to tell his boy: “When you have not acquired learning, just live as a priest.” He forgets that this requires the greatest learning. People like him conceive that their bodies consisting of blood, flesh, skin etc., are sacred and, as such, they cannot realize the existence of God in His Shri Murtis, but they see in them idols, made of mud, stone, wood, brass, etc., made by certain artisans. This idolatry of theirs will be removed, if only they listen to the instructions as given by great saints. Again, if one thinks, “I am a learned man”, then one such becomes an idolater, not a worshipper of God. If a man’s education goes against his service of God, he does not at all require such education. Such an educated fellow becomes an idolater; he adores only pride. Just as an idiotic follower of the *Karma-kaanda* is unable to offer service to Hari, so also is a very learned follower of the *jnaana-kaanda* who becomes a victim of the *tamaguna* which causes vanity and delusion no true devotee. This has been pointed out in the



Shruti: “He who adores *avidyaa* enters the dark region of *tamah*; but another who has a great attachment for *vidyaa* enters further inside the region which is still darker.” [6]

People of this world speak of millions of ways of gaining spiritual ends. Some say: “It is foolishness to take Harinama, scholars should go without it and get credit.” It is to teach such people posing as learned, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu laments: “O Hari-nama, You have not given Me relish in You; I have got no attachment towards You.” The bounden souls are arrogant and say like this: “Let the Sudras and idiots chant Hari-nama; I am a Brahmana, I am learned I shall study the Vedas, I shall worship deities.” Assuming the pose of a World-Teacher Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said: “Also! I have got a taste for other things than chanting Hari-nama and thus a distaste for the direct worship of God.”

He has further said about Shri Nama: “O Jivas, do nothing but Kirtana, and do it all along. But Kirtana is not done well, unless the chanter is humbler than even a blade of grass, is free from the arrogance of the sense of his own respect and is the giver of respect to others. Do not remain maddened with the thoughts that you are a great expert and very intelligent.” I have adopted this instruction of Goura Sundara (Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu). If any one attacks me then I should put up with it and chant Hari-nama; I should know that God has thus given me a chance to be lower than blade of grass; knowing this, I should be all the more encouraged to take Hari-nama more vigorously. But when somebody speaks disrespectfully about a true Vaishnava, my Guru-deva, then my lowliness as that of a blade of grass should consist in at once giving him a proper teaching with as much vigour as ever. In the *Karma-kaanda* there is no true lowliness of a blade of grass, but there is only insincere cringing before others to secure their favour.

We should ever remain engaged in Hari-kirtana i.e., discourses through which our inclination for the service of God Hari will be increased; other topics are calculated only to incite our enjoying mood. It is only Hari-kirtana by which jivas attain their true well-being and that is Krishna-kirtana. Krishna-kirtana is not to be performed only through melodious musical tunes, chimes, etc. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has not asked us to be proficient in high class music and to become well-practiced in the airs of expert musicians; He has told us to perform hari-kirtana



constantly, Hari-kirtana does not consist in gratifying our own mundane senses, but in the gratification of Shri Krishna's Transcendental Senses.

Dealing with the process of the practice of Shri Nama, Shri Chaitanya, Mahaprabhu has laid stress on the chanter of Shri Nama to be free from all sorts of fraudulent craftiness or other motives than Bhakti. The *paraa-dharma* (the highest spiritual practice) or the Bhagavata-dharma is performed only through Shri Nama-kirtana, and that is the Dharma divested of all trickish artifices (including even the desire for emancipation) as explained in the annotation [7] of Shridhara Svamipada. We should not make attempts for wealth, man-power, learning, gain, adoration, honour, etc., which are fraudulent and which almost cent per cent people are hankering after. We should not utilize Nama-sankirtana for the purpose of *Dharma*, *artha*, *kaama* and *moksha*. No prayer should be made to God through His Names for our personal or collective peace and pleasure; we should not make Him play the servant for us. Both the *karmis* striving for the first three of the above four objectives and the *jnaanis* striving for the fourth one are engaged in reducing the Supreme Lord to our servitor. They can never perform Hari-bhajana and true Shri Krishna-sankirtana cannot come out of their mouths.

Shri Jeevapada has said: "At first, however, for the purification of the mind is necessary for the audition of Shri Nama. When thus the mind has been purified, competence is acquired for the awakening of Shri-Rupe (beauty) with the audition thereof. When Shri-Rupe has been fully awakened, the Gunas (attributes) are also fully awakened. When the awakening of the Gunas has been accomplished, God's specialty is accomplished, along with this, of His Parikara Pastime. When these, i.e., Nama-Rupa-Guna and Parkkara, have been fully wakened up, the awakening of the Lila (Sports) becomes well established. With this end in view, the systematic order is written. This order should be followed for Kirtana and Smarana. Thereafter the mind has been thoroughly sanctified with Kirtana, etc., then remembrance should be practiced without giving up Shri Nama-kirtana, as has been said by Shri Shuka: [8] "O King Parikshit, even for the *yogis*, who have acquired abstinence in order to remain aloof from all fear, has been prescribed the constant Kirtana of Hari's Names."



FOOTNOTES

- [1] Vide II.22.125-126.
 [2] Bh. VI.3-22, XII.3.51-52.
 [3] Vide III.4-10.
 [4] Vide 273.
 [5] Vide XI-137.
 [6] Isso. 9.
 [7] Vide 1.1.2.
 [8] Bh. 11.1.11.

Part4

By Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur

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4

One will not attain salvation, if one studies Vedanta for very many crores of years. No good will be forthcoming out of squeezing the nose (for yoga practice) even for eternity and acquiring thereby the power of rising into the sky to a height of ten or twenty cubits. True well-being will be available to all the people of the world if they listen to the discourse of the Shrimad Bhagavatam from one who is oneself a Bhagavata leading the practical life of a true devotee without maintaining slightest attachment for the life of a karmi or a monistic jnani. There will be no harm, even though all the books of the world are burnt away, if only there is left one treatise, viz., the Shrimad Bhagavatam. There will be no inconvenience felt even though thousands of learning-centres were abolished if only the reading and teaching of the Shrimad Bhagavatam continues. But what a



wonder! What an irony. This book of books has been converted to a commodity for trafficking! The course which the world is taking is just the opposite of the teaching which Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu gave.

There is no other book in the world like the Shrimad Bhagavatam. This is not mere tittle-tattle nor an exaggerated homage. If one reflects on it as a truly impartial judge, one will realise that there has not been any book like the Bhagavatam, nor will there be any. In this book has been presented a consideration of gradual evolution, from better to better of sceptic, atheistic, attributeless, neuter, masculine, couple, consort by marriage, lastly that of paramount love of Gopis - such different conceptions. Shri Krishna's Sports are described in the tenth canto; but what was the necessity of composing the preceding nine cantos? In them have been shown the deliberation of these conceptions to prepare the ground for introducing the main subject, viz., the description of Krishna's transcendental sportive dalliances with Gopis out of wed-lock, in the Gopi-Gita, etc., of the tenth canto. There had been many who had read the Shrimad Bhagavatam before Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came into this world, but only those have been able to comprehend the real import and the actual object of the Shrimad Bhagavatam, that have read it after reading the Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita written by Shri Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami, one of His chief followers in the line of Shri Rupa Goswami; they have read the Shrimad Bhagavatam inside the Charitamrita. The unrefined ease-loving people pretending to be Vaishnavas may read the Shrimad Bhagavatam, the mercenary discourses may explain it; but they only misconstrue and cover the true reading according to the Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita. Their elucidation may please the mind of their readers; but with that they may only make the way to hell easier of access for themselves and their admirers.

The Shrimad Bhagavatam, as defined in its third Shloka, is the succulent fruit of the Kalpataru or desire-yielding tree, viz., the Veda. The non-devotees crave for *dharma*, *artha*, *kaama* and *moksha*. The desire of mental determination of those whose desires for enjoyment or emancipation have been set at rest and who have passed beyond the realm of mental speculation is not after such insipid or unsavoury things. Enjoyment-hunters and ritualists for worldly well-being are after deteriorated unsavoury tastes, and monists of non-distinct conception aspire after insipid tasteless realisation. The Bhagavatam does not produce fruits of



such bad taste or tasteless ones. It can be fully traced in the Bhagavatam how the distinction between the inner thoughts of '*vishaya*' and '*aashraya*' i.e., the recipient and the giver of service has shown a gradual development through the various evolutionary stages of being contracted, slightly blossoming, blooming, thriven, matured and ripened. Only those are competent to taste this fruit of the *Nigama* (Veda) *Kalpataru* i.e., Bhagavata, who having fully surpassed the stage of worldly perceptions have reached the stage of transcendental excellence when their hearts have been brightened up with *vishuddha-sattwa* (supra-naturally good quality), fit to receive the sweet mellowness of love which is ultra-mundane. And they are permanently possessed of the purest ecstatic mood. This fruit too is succulent, having nothing solid in it like the skin, stone, fibres and other parts fit to be abandoned. There is much rejectable element in the books on enjoyment-hunting, *karma*, *jnaana*, *yoga* or devotion mixed with these. In the Shrimad Bhagavatam there are no such despicable elements. Its sweet succulent mellowness is to be tasted all along, even after emancipation. And the really emancipated souls are permanent relishers of the Shrimad Bhagavatam.

Those who, instead of listening to Bhagavata discourses of liberated Paramahansa Vaishnavas, make a fuss of listening Bhagavata to the professional or other discourses who are full of tendencies harmful to the culture of true well-being, do so for sensuous gratifications through poetic, literary, grammatical and such other kinds of false appreciations. They are debarred from tasting the pure juicy sweetness of the Bhagavatam, but are deluded to think the bad taste or indifferent taste as the true taste of the Bhagavatam. When persons sure of the transitoriness of human life like Parikshit listen to the Bhagavatam discourse from liberated Paramahansa Vaishnavas like Shri Shukadeva, they become eternal tasters of the Bhagavata-rasa, absolved from all worldly attachment.

Pure *jnaana* (sentience), pure *vairaagya* (abstinence) and devotion are convergent, meaning the same thing. Everything therein culminates in *nais-karma* (freedom from *karma*) instead of the gratifications of the senses. Weal and woe are two different things. If you roam about for your welfare or happiness, woe is your due. Likewise it is not proper to hope for tasty fruit (pleasure). The *karmas* as laid down in the scriptures are not to be performed by those who have been liberated. The fruit of karma



is sometimes pleasurable, at others it is bad and painful. The Shrimad Bhagavatam does not inculcate the teaching of karma. The Bhagavatam speaks about the Super-Soul (God), so that the jivas may achieve the highest good. In it are described *naish-karma* and the character of a Paramahansa (the absolutely self-less devotee of God). The Bhagavatam is to be listened to, to be read well and to be understood with deep deliberation [1]. We should compare and contrast what the Bhagavatam teaches with what is said in other treatises.

If you read other books than the Bhagavatam you come under the influence of the processes of *karma* and *jnaana*, pleasure and pain, birth and death. You may get *dharma* (punya), *artha* (wealth) and *kaama* (fulfilment of desire). One, desirous of emancipation (*moksha*), may renounce the worldly life, but one such does not serve God. It is only the devotees that do it. God is not served even by the practice of *astaanga-yoga* which gives you *siddhis* or *vidbhutis* like *animaa* (power to be infinitesimal), *laghima* (power to be as light as hydrogen), etc. not to speak of the salvationist who may want to get rid of the weal and woe of the worldly life and to be the recipient of enjoyment in the negative form.

The Bhagavatam speaks of him who has adopted the way of *karma*, *jnaana* or *yoga* as having adopted the wrong course. Liberation is easily accessible to one who adopts Bhakti. The true well-being may not be available, when you are the gainer of what is pleasing. But true well-being consists in giving pleasure to God. A devotee says, "I must do service to God; He may accept it or reject it"; this is true Bhakti.

Karmis want to be enjoyers in this life as well as in the next, whereas Bhakti is the eternal function of pure souls. If we regain our real position, then we have the chance of dissociating ourselves from the world. Bhakti is the function of the pure or uncovered soul. If we are able to regain our real health, then we shall be easily able to dissociate ourselves from the binding of this world.

No worldly matter should engage my thought. God is pure Truth in His essential characteristic. That eternal really pure Truth should be the only object of our concern. It is our neutral character (susceptible of this course or that, i.e., our service of God or our own enjoyment) which is responsible for our birth, stay and decay under the influence of maya.



God has no hands, feet, mouth, eyes, ears, nose like me. My senses and organs are different from one another. But there is no difference between God Himself and His Body. In this case the Proprietor and the properties are identical. His Name, Appearance, Activities are all One. The name of a thing in worldly nature is different from it; the appearances and attributes are different from the owners there; the word 'blanket' and the thing blanket are not the same. In the world one's appearance is changeable; but God is independent of any thing else. He does not require any other help. He may come down into the vision of anybody and everybody as He pleases. He is Absolute, Self-Willed and Self-Luminous. The Svetasvatara Upanishad has said: [2] "Without hands and feet, He walks fast and takes things; He sees, though without eyes and hears, though without ears. He knows everything that is knowable, whereas, on the other hand, no one knows Him. Those who have got true intuitive knowledge speak about Him as the Foremost and Greatest of all." His Eyes, Ears, etc., are not material, but all these are fully sentient (*chit*). A jiva deluded with the Election Theory cannot make any conception thereof. The Election Theory and Theism are not the same.

God Narayana revealed the pure truth at the heart of the original poet Brahma. Even the most learned commit mistakes in the conception of the Absolute Truth. Human deliberations are erroneous, but the Absolute Truth is errorless. The adage '*satyam param dhimahi*' (we contemplate on the Absolute Truth) occurs in the first Shloka of the Shrimad Bhagavatam. The Bhagavatam cannot be correctly known with empiricism or worldly experience, which is worthless, how-so-ever vast it may look; it is incumbently necessary to take shelter at the feet of the real Guru.

An article has been seen in a journal, the writer of which has said that without the culture of jnana, righteousness cannot find nutrition for it and cannot protect itself against the dirt of the prejudices, that when Santipura (place of Shri Advaita Acharya) was about to be inundated and Nadia (birth-place of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, viz., Shri Navadvipa-Mayapura) had already been over-flooded by the strong current of the over-flow of love, jnana was considered neither important, nor necessary in the field of religion, and that if the then promulgators of the love had occasion now to return and see what a miserable condition has been reached by that love of theirs for want of jnana, they would have



themselves confessed that it was a very vicious act committed by them in ignoring jnana.

The writer is evidently an admirer of the path of jnana and he seems not to feel any relish in anything but jnana. He does not feel satisfied unless he adulterates even pure love with the grit and gravel of jnana. One's vitiated taste is such a thing that makes one take pains to bring down love attainable by only the true highest jnana about God to the level of jnana as commonly understood.

The highest jnana is that about the relation between the Possessor of Potency and His Potency; some other jnana than this is known as common jnana. In other words, it is to know the God and the jivas in respect to their true characters that constitutes true jnana. There is no other function of jnana than to have this knowledge. Here is the ultimate goal of jnana. The professors of jnana have no competence to go further. A jiva becomes maddened after getting even an iota of the Love, as soon as he gets his eternal nature awakened. Having received only a jot of the potency of the Sentient Entity, the possessor of endless potencies, and going to handle only one of those unlimited potencies, viz., the exoteric one, the professors of jnana have climbed the highest peak of the hill of their pride. Such a jiva regards the jnana about *Brahman* as the dim glow of a fire-fly before the sun. Even under this circumstance a professor jnana who advocates taking the help of jnana, having considered himself as equal to Para-Brahman, must be known as a most unfortunate man. The professor of jnana is confined within the jnana of relativity. He is not inspired with the purpose of attaining the true object of one's pursuit.

The entrance examination of true religion is the deliverance from the strong binding chain of jnana. So long as a man remains fallen in the pit of karma his desires for enjoyment keeps strong. When he feels tired in the wheel of karma, cessation from karma seems good for him. Then according to his constituent ingredient (i.e., atomic sentience), his culture of jnana grows and goes on increasing. When redeemed out of the covering of karma, a man with jnana in his constitution is tied to the wheel of jnana, for without the culture of jnana, there is no way out of the redoubtable wheel of karma. The ultimate effect of jnana is the destruction of karma. Riddance from karma is a subsidiary object of attainment for jnana. Culture of jnana ultimately ceases after reaching the jnana of relativity. Jnana loses its power of moving further. Besides, Jnana



is not an object of attainment; with its help the object is attained. It cannot be said that the final good has been reached, because jnana has been attained; but only the way has been found for its attainment. The essential nature of jivas is sentience; so jnana is known as the main thing; but even if such, it is not the object attainable, which is Bhakti or Prema (Love). This Bhakti or Prema is both means for the attainment and also the attainable Object. When the attainable object is attained with the help of jnana which is the means, the jnani (possessor) of jnana) will no more culture jnana, for it is needless for him. When it is said I have *a lac* of rupees, it is not necessary to separately say that I have two cowries (shells) or four cowries; but the entire property of the professor of jnana consists only of one cowrie and he has not learnt to count more than that and, as such, being unable to estimate the property of the owner of a *lac* of rupees, he only utters meaningless words off and on like an infant in the cradle. When the culture of jnana matures, accomplished jnana is attained and this attainment by a jnani is the culture of Prema (Love).

Just as an infant considers its glass-made toy more valuable than a philosopher's stone so a professor of jnana does not hesitate to think of his jnana as better than Prema (Love). The experienced devotees have known that the appetite of a hungry man is appeased only by eating good food. But if a professor of jnana, not an adept in the matter of the cessation of hunger, comes forward to say that it is proper to deliberate what hunger is and that the purpose will be served only by such a deliberation without tasting food, what is it then but want of jnana going by the name of jnana? So long as the deliberation falls short of the function of eating, the professor of jnana takes a fancy for such topics like jnana of Brahman, of relativity, etc. If only the culture of jnana is his religion, and if his purpose is served only by it, then the objects of pursuit for the professors of jnana and the devotees are totally different. The aim of the architect is the construction of buildings whereas that of the rich employers is residence in them; the motive of the confectioner is the preparation of sweets, whereas that of the purchaser is to taste or eat them. If the objects of the professors of jnana and the devotees be thus mutually different, then we request the culturists of jnana to refrain from an attempt of equating themselves with the devotees.

The devotee is hungry i.e., anxious to enjoy the gratification of the senses of Shri Krishna; he has certainly, somehow or other, acquired an adequate



knowledge about his desirable food. While sitting for his meal, he does not accept it as a part of the function of the eating to discuss whether the ancestors of the confectioner who has supplied the sweets were not originally barbers and converted by the Grace of Shri Gauranga Deva to the caste of confectioners. Before the eating he has got the assurance that the well-established devotees before him got their desired satisfaction from such food as was supplied to him. They did not commit suicide by taking the poison of Mayavada (absolute monism). By them were not accepted the poisoned sweet-meat-balls, very pleasant to children, of the knowledge of absolute Brahman that of non-distinctiveness, that of nature in Kapila's Samkhya, etc. The knowledge of the soul, the perception of the soul, the potency-possessing Entity, of relativity, of potency, etc., contribute to the excellence of the tastable objects for the culturist of love. They have got sufficient experience to distinguish between nectared and poisonous foods. There are many among the Gaudiya Vaishnavas (followers of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu), who are able to give advice as to how the poisonous sweetmeat-balls are prepared and how one's self-destruction is caused by tasting them. But they do not boast of their greater knowledge than that of the professors of jnana, not being maddened with self-conceit, like them. It is good for the professors of jnana to study what Shrimad Rupa Gosvami, the top-most Acharya, has written in his treatise, the Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sindhu, for them, and to accept the teachings thereof with humility. What benefit is there in the religion in which the distressing pangs of appetite, viz., the attempts of the jnani for acquiring jnana, are ignored?

From the teachings of Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu we learn that the Bhakti performed with conduciveness towards Krishna, if divested of other desires than for Krishna's Love, uncovered by the Jnana or knowledge of absolute monism leading, as it is claimed, to oneness with Brahman, freed from *nitya-naimittika karma* (daily and casual ritualistic performances) offering worldly enjoyments as the fruit, and devoid of laxity or negligent dilatoriness, is called the pure motiveless best Bhakti. [3] This Bhakti is the only means, unaided by any other process, for the attainment of the highest achievable blessedness, viz., Love of Krishna, which is the supremest or fifth purushartha or object of pursuit for jivas, the other inferior four being *dharma*, *artha*, *kaama* and *maksha*, called *chaturvarga*. This Bhakti has three stages, viz., *Saadhanaa* (practice), *Bhaava* (ecstatic inspiration) and *Prema* (Love of Krishna). In the earlier



part of the stage of *Saadhanaa* the evils originating in apathy towards Krishna prevent jivas from acquiring steadiness in Bhakti. These evils have been classified as the veil of the other desires, the veil of karma productive in worldly fruits, the veil of the jnana based on the renunciation of those fruits, and the veil of laxity producing indifference towards the service of God Krishna. Under the influence of these evils, jivas like persons attacked with some frenzied disease, invent imaginary antidotes for the cure of their disease which, far from being cured, gradually increases. For the cure of these evils, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has prescribed the culture of Krishna in the company of Sadhus who are entirely free from worldly attachments, having given up all self-conceit. The attractive influence of the persons other than Sadhus cannot overcome the jivas who always keep in the company of Sadhus. The evils are removed by the influence of the company of Sadhus. Jivas are not able to remain silent and lonesome as long as the roots of these evils are hidden within, blocking up their way. Such misleading ways of keeping silent and lonesome artificially have not been recognised in the path of Bhakti. Silence and lonesomeness are chimerical, existing only in the imagination like flowers of fancy high up in the air or the fabled horns of a rabbit. When Krishna-bhakti is generated in some jivas, their association with worldly men and the influence of the worldly advisers or teachers are got rid of, and then being devotees free from the evil company of such people, they become versed in talks and discourses about Krishna in the association of Hari's devotees. True devotees know the lonesomeness or reticence as understood by people in general as antagonistic to devotion. These two worldly virtues, viz., lonesomeness and reticence, can never be favourable for devotion, because these are non-eternal. Association with saintly devotees is regarded as preferable to want of association. It is through association with Sadhus that the loathsomeness of evil company and the foolishness of its contention are avoided.

All the accomplishment will be under your thumb, if you can take Shri Harinama, being free from spiritual offences. The people sunk in worldly affairs will not, then, be able to do you any mischief. Vulgar talk will ever continue in the mouths of people. Keep inattentive towards them. If you have a stern determination to go along the path of your duty, no obstacles can retard your progress. Pay respect even to people who appear apathetic



towards devotion to God but do not learn to appreciate their habits and deportments; at heart always keep away from them.

If assemblies, committees, meetings, etc., have any effectiveness in the world, then they should be utilised only for the purpose of propagation and glorification of Hari-bhakti (devotion to God). If they are not held for the said purpose, then there is no need of having anything to do with them. There are some karmis of the old school desirous of fruit who think assemblies, etc., to be useless, as they were not prevalent in ancient times. We request the readers of the Shri Chaitanya Charitamrita to note that in the book there are mentions of *ista-gosthis* (meeting of devotees to talk about devotional topics), and also that the readers of the Shrimad Bhagavatam are expected to know about the assemblies in which large audiences listened to the discourses on the Bhagavatam. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the followers of the teachings of the Shrimad Bhagavatam have ever advised the people of the world that Shravana (audition or listening) and Kirtana (recapitulation or chanting) are the surest means for the attainment of the highest blessedness.

No truly wise man says that only the inert and mute persons can acquire Bhakti. Lonesomeness and silence are both worldly virtues, whereas Bhakti is a thing beyond the world, and celestial; it is transcendental. As such, both the abandonment and acceptance of worldly noise or sound are against Bhakti; both the association with worldly people and its avoidance are antagonistic to Bhakti. So Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu advises us: 'Chant Transcendental Krishna-Nama as loudly as ever, and become reticent in respect of worldly topics which are meant for your enjoyment in the conceit that you are a wise discriminator which is a suppressed *taamasic* pressure of garrulity.' He has commanded us [4] : 'Give instructions about Krishna and liberate this country with the performance of the function of a Guru in obedience to My order. In this matter, the vice of worldliness will not affect you.' In his 'Kramasandarbhā' commentary on Bh. VII.5.23-24, Shri Jiva Goswami-pada has written thus against silent deliberations and in favour of Kirtana (recapitulation of instructions as heard from true devotees): "The chanting of God's Names should be loud. Shri Narada has said about himself to Shri Vyasadeva 'I began to roam about in the worlds loudly uttering the Names of Hari avoiding all shyness, and remembering His Glorious activities [5] '. Also Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu for the



deliverance of the people of the Kali-yuga has given the famous instruction 'to constantly chant the Names, etc., of Hari, being humbler even than the blade of grass, with greater forbearance even than a tree, claiming no honour for self, but giving it to others.' Though the other items of Bhakti have got to be performed in the Kali-yuga, that should be done in accompaniment with Kirtana.

It is only in a place where Hari-Kirtana is a scarcity, and where there is no propagation of Hari-Katha, that the worldly talk about artificial meditation, etc., is prevalent. Where ever there is no association with truly holy men there are assemblies, meetings, etc. in which there is association with Jivas confined within the clutches of maya. There is no *yukta-vairaagya* (proper abnegation) of transcendental nature where there is no Shravana-Kirtana (listening or audition followed by chanting or recapitulation of Hari-katha), but where discourses on *phalgu-vairaagya* (false asceticism) have been held to mislead the deceived society. The latter asceticism is a worldly matter and, as such, it cannot bring the jivas any good. How will they understand, unless they are fortunate enough to come in contact with Sadhus, that one who under the influence of false asceticism, thinks of the culture about Shri Krishna as a worldly affair, commits a spiritual offence, and that one, who sees worldly affairs and Shri Krishna as equal, accepts the most venomous Mayavada? Will a culturist of devotion be saved from the aspiration after worldly honour and celebrity, if he thinks himself lonesome and reticent away from association with Sadhus, and conceiving, unholy ideas of fancied deliberations? Is it not the ultimate limit of the abominable nature of fame and celebrity to cherish the evil desire of uprooting the fame and celebrity of Bhakti through the propagation of maya or Mayavada? If a jiva, under the influence of conceits against the soul, thinks himself as an emancipationist or an elevationist or a cynic, and being anxious to establish his own worldly fame and celebrity commits the grand mistake of cherishing in his heart antagonistic ideas against the culture of Bhakti with transcendental audition and recapitulation [sic] and that of cherishing the wrong idea that the devotees, too, may have the ordure of hankering after worldly fame, -- then, knowing him to be a self-destroyer, the devotees will keep silently away from his company.

The Names and the Nami (their Possessor) are non-distinct or the same. This will be particularly realised when our unfortunately evil predicament



is over. As soon as Krishna-Nama is uttered, being rid of spiritual offences, you will yourself feel that it is from Nama alone that all accomplishment is available. When a person utters Nama, gradually the distinction between the gross and the subtle body in his egoism vanishes and his own accomplished nature reveals itself. When one's own accomplished nature appears, along with the utterance of Krishna's Name, His Form is visible in the transcendental manner. It is Shri Nama that uncovers the jiva's true nature and drags him to Krishna's Rupa (Form) Guna (Attributes) and Lila (Sportive activities).

'Men gradually reach the shore of the ocean of the world' - this adage should guide us. We can have our well-being by means of firm confidence in our success, impatient anxiety at its delay, service of Shri Krishna and His devotees, and the chanting of His Names. If we can have all our exertions directed towards the service of Shri Krishna, the different forms of enticement held out by maya cannot overpower us. Keep always engaged in the audition (listening) and vocalisation (reproducing) of His Glories, discourses about Hari with the devotees that may be available for association. Then with the gradual improvement of your Bhajan, you will feel your own humility and lowliness. You should know that 'the highest soul knows himself to be the lowest'.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Vide. XII.13.18.

[2] Vide III.19.

[3] B.R.S. 1.1.11.

[4] C.C. M.7-128-129.

[5] Bh. 1.15.27.

