

Nectar of Instruction (*Upadeśāmṛta*) Verse 4

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Text 4

*dadāti pratigrhṇāti
guhyam ākhyāti pṛcchati
bhunkte bhojayate caiva
ṣaḍ-vidham pṛiti-lakṣaṇam*

Offering gifts in charity, accepting charitable gifts, revealing one's mind in confidence, inquiring confidentially, accepting prasāda and offering prasāda are the six symptoms of love shared by one devotee and another.

I. *Dadāti Pratgāhṇāti*

In the first stanza of His Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu says:

*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*

"All glories to the Śrī Kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtana, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. This saṅkīrtana movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious."

Not only is the chanter of the mahā-mantra purified, but the heart of anyone who happens to hear the transcendental vibration of *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare* is also cleansed. Even the souls embodied in lower animals, insects, trees and other species of life also become purified and prepared to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious simply by hearing the transcendental vibration. This was explained by Ṭhākura Haridāsa when Caitanya Mahāprabhu inquired from him how living entities lower than human beings can be delivered from material bondage. Haridāsa Ṭhākura said that the chanting of the holy names is so powerful that even if one chants in the remotest parts of the jungle, the trees and animals will advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness simply by hearing the vibration. This was actually proved by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself when He passed through the forest of Jhārikhaṇḍa. At that time the tigers, snakes, deer and all other animals abandoned their natural animosity and began chanting and dancing in *saṅkīrtana*. Of course, we cannot imitate the activities of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, but we should follow in His footsteps. We are not powerful enough to enchant the lower animals such as tigers, snakes, cats and dogs or entice them to dance,

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but by chanting the holy names of the Lord we can actually convert many people throughout the world to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Contributing or distributing the holy name of the Lord is a sublime example of contributing or giving charity (the *dadāti* principle). By the same token, one must also follow the *pratigrhṇāti* principle and be willing and ready to receive the transcendental gift. One should inquire about the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and open his mind in order to understand the situation of this material world. Thus the *guhyaṁ ākhyāti pṛcchati* principles can be served...

In this regard, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura warns all devotees engaged in broadcasting the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement not to speak to the impersonalist Māyāvādīs who are always determined to oppose such theistic movements. The world is full of Māyāvādīs and atheists, and the political parties of the world take advantage of Māyāvāda and other atheistic philosophies to promote materialism. Sometimes they even back a strong party to oppose the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The Māyāvādīs and other atheists do not want the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to develop because it educates people in God consciousness. Such is the policy of the atheists. There is no benefit in feeding a snake milk and bananas because the snake will never be satisfied. On the contrary, by taking milk and bananas the snake simply becomes more poisonous (*kevalaṁ viṣa-varadhanam*). If a snake is given milk to drink, its poison simply increases. For a similar reason, we should not disclose our minds to the serpent Māyāvādīs and karmīs. Such disclosures will never help. It is best to avoid association with them completely and never ask them about anything confidential because they cannot give good advice. Nor should we extend invitations to Māyāvādīs and atheists nor accept their invitations, for by such intimate intermingling we may become affected by their atheistic mentality (*saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmah*). It is the negative injunction of this verse that we should refrain from giving anything to or accepting anything from the Māyāvādīs and atheists...

According to the *dadāti* principle, an advanced devotee is supposed to spend at least fifty percent of his income on the service of the Lord and His devotees. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has set such an example in his life. When he decided to retire, he distributed fifty percent of his life's earnings to Kṛṣṇa's service and twenty-five percent to his relatives and kept twenty-five percent for personal emergencies. This example should be followed by all devotees. Whatever one's income, fifty percent should be spent on behalf of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, and this will fulfill the demands of *dadāti*.

A. Preaching is *dadāti*

ॐ One must be willing to accept this gift however

B. Advanced devotees give 50%

ॐ According to the *dadāti* principle, an advanced devotee is supposed to spend at least fifty percent of his income on the service of the Lord and His devotees. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has set such an example in his life. When he decided to retire, he

distributed fifty percent of his life's earnings to Kṛṣṇa's service and twenty-five percent to his relatives and kept twenty-five percent for personal emergencies. This example should be followed by all devotees. Whatever one's income, fifty percent should be spent on behalf of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, and this will fulfill the demands of *dadāti*.(NOI 4)

C. If only take and not give, then it is exploitation

ॐ “So you must admit that God is supplying us so many things. And why not offer something? Is it love? Therefore offering is required. Love means you take and you give also. Suppose if you love somebody... You simply take from him, but you don't give. Oh, do you think it is very good? No. It is not good. That is not love. That is exploitation. If I go on simply taking from you, and if I don't offer you anything, that is simply exploitation. So love means you must take, you must give. *Dadāti pratigrhṇāti bhunkte, bhunkte bhojayate*. You must eat, and you must give to eat. Simply don't go on eating *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*, but give something to Kṛṣṇa for eating. So that...” (Lecture 11/23/66 Bg. 9.2-5 New York)

ॐ To love Kṛṣṇa, you don't require any material acquisition. No material acquisition will help. So if somebody says, “Oh, I have to bring fruit and flower at least, and incense to the temple, otherwise...” Yes. That is the sign of love. The sign of love is six, six. They are six in number. What is that? You give something to your lover, and you accept something from your lover. If you simply go on giving your lover, and if you don't..., your lover does not give you something, then there is no love. *Dadāti pratigrhṇāti*. Everything is defined in the Vedic literature. Love means one should give and should accept also. *Dadāti pratigrhṇāti bhunkte bhojayate*. One should give the lover eatables and accept eatables from him or her. *Dadāti pratigrhṇāti bhunkte bhojayate guhyam ākhyāti prcchati ca...* You should not keep anything secret within your mind, and the lover should not keep anything secret within the mind. If these six kinds of exchanges are there, then there is love. And that love should be without any reason and without being stopped by any material cause. (Lecture SB 1.2.6 London, 8/26/71)

D. Book distribution

ॐ So it is very difficult. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given one line of Vaiṣṇava behavior: *asat-saṅga tyāga ei vaiṣṇava ācāra*. Simply to give up these rascals' association. The rascal means the Māyāvādī, *karmī, jñānī, yogi*, all they are rascals. It is our open declaration. So we have to give up the company of these rascals. If we actually serious about advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we should not mix with them. We should not even invite them. Neither we shall take their foodstuff, accept their foodstuff. *Dadāti pratigrhṇāti bhunkte bhojayate ca... Guhyam ākhyāti prcchati ca. Bhunkte bhojayate caiva ṣaḍ-vidhaṁ prīti-lakṣaṇam. Prīti*. If you want to make one friends, then these six kinds of dealings must be there. *Dadāti. Dadāti* means there must be... One must give something to the other, a friend. Just like I am friend. You are friend. I give you something. In return you give me something. *Dadāti*

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pratigṛhṇāti. Guhyam ākhyāti pṛcchati ca. I open my mind to you, you also inquire confidential things from me. Or I inquire. *Guhyam ākhyāti pṛcchati ca.* And then *bhūṅkte bhojayate.* Whatever you give me, I eat. And I give you, you eat. By these six kinds of dealing, *prīti*, love increases.

So in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we practice this. As far as possible, we are giving and taking. We are... We have made this program, life membership. We are giving our books, knowledge. Whatever we have got, little knowledge, we have written in our books, we are giving them: “Take it.” And they are also giving: “Take this eleven hundred rupees.” So this is *dadāti pratigṛhṇāti*. And they also come here to inquire: “Swamiji, your movement is very nice. What is the meaning of this? What is the meaning of that?” *Guhyam ākhyāti*, expresses their mind. *Pṛcchati*. They explain, “This is my position. I cannot do it. How can I do it?” And the Vaiṣṇavas reply them. Then we invite them in our love feast. In all our centers, we have got this arrangement. We invite everyone: “Come on, take *prasādam*.” And if somebody gives us something to eat, we also eat, provided he’s not a Māyāvādī, *karmī*, *jñānī*. Otherwise, we should not take. We can..., we cannot accept anything from these classes of men, atheist class. Then we’ll be... *Saṅgāt. Saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmahaḥ*. If we associate with these Māyāvādī, atheist class, *karmī*, *jñānī*, yogi, then we’ll infect their quality. So if we infect the Māyāvādī quality, *karmī* quality, *jñānī* quality, yogi quality... I see some of the students, still they practice some yoga *āsana*. That quality is not yet... He’s not yet free. But this is nonsense. This is nonsense. We should, by promise, we should not associate with any of their qualities. That is... (Lecture SB 1.10.13, Māyāpura, 6/26/73)

II. *Guhyam Ākhyāti Pācchati*

An experienced devotee explains, and an inexperienced devotee learns from him. This is *guhyam ākhyāti pṛcchati*...

For a similar reason, we should not disclose our minds to the serpent *Māyāvādīs* and *karmīs*. Such disclosures will never help. It is best to avoid association with them completely and never ask them about anything confidential because they cannot give good advice. Nor should we extend invitations to *Māyāvādīs* and atheists nor accept their invitations, for by such intimate intermingling we may become affected by their atheistic mentality (*saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmahaḥ*). It is the negative injunction of this verse that we should refrain from giving anything to or accepting anything from the *Māyāvādīs* and atheists.

A. Experienced devotee explains/junior devotee listens

B. One should not disclose his mind to *Māyāvādīs* and atheists

For a similar reason, we should not disclose our minds to the serpent *Māyāvādīs* and *karmīs*. Such disclosures will never help. It is best to avoid association with them completely and

never ask them about anything confidential because they cannot give good advice. Nor should we extend invitations to Māyāvādīs and atheists nor accept their invitations, for by such intimate intermingling we may become affected by their atheistic mentality (*saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmah*). It is the negative injunction of this verse that we should refrain from giving anything to or accepting anything from the Māyāvādīs and atheists.

III. *Bhūi kte Bhojayate*

When a devotee distributes *prasāda*, remnants of food offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in order to maintain our spirit of devotional service we must accept this *prasāda* as the Lord's grace received through the pure devotees. We should also invite pure devotees to our home, offer them *prasāda* and be prepared to please them in all respects. This is called *bhunkte bhojayate caiva...*

The members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness invite the Society's members and supporters to dine with them when they hold love feasts in all their branches every Sunday. Many interested people come to honor *prasāda*, and whenever possible they invite members of the Society to their homes and feed them sumptuously with *prasāda*. In this way both the members of the Society and the general public are benefited...

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has also warned, *viṣayīra anna khāile duṣṭa haya mana*: [Cc. Antya 6.278] "By eating food prepared by worldly people, one's mind becomes wicked. Unless one is very advanced, he is unable to utilize everyone's contribution to further the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement; therefore on principle one should not accept charity from the Māyāvādīs or atheists. Indeed, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has forbidden devotees to associate even with ordinary men who are too addicted to material sense gratification.

- A. We must accept *prasāda* when offered in order to maintain our spirit of devotion
- B. We should invite pure devotees into our homes and offer respects
- C. One should not accept *prasāda* from Māyāvādīs
 - 1. One's heart will become wicked
 - 2. Unless one is very advanced he will be unable to utilize.

IV. *Ñaò-vidham prēti lakñāëam*

In this verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains how to perform devotional activities in the association of other devotees. There are six kinds of activities: (1) giving charity to the devotees, (2) accepting from the devotees whatever they may offer in return, (3) opening one's mind to the devotees, (4) inquiring from them about the confidential service of the

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Lord, (5) honoring *prasāda*, or spiritual food, given by the devotees, and (6) feeding the devotees with *prasāda*...

Even in ordinary social activities, these six types of dealings between two loving friends are absolutely necessary. For instance, when one businessman wishes to contact another businessman he arranges a feast in a hotel, and over the feast openly expresses what he wishes to do. He then inquires from his business friend how he should act, and sometimes presents are exchanged. Thus whenever there is a dealing of *prīti*, or love in intimate dealings, these six activities are executed. In the previous verse, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī advised that one should renounce worldly association and keep company with the devotees (*saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ*). The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has been established to facilitate these six kinds of loving exchanges between devotees. This Society was started single-handedly, but because people are coming forward and dealing with the give—and—take policy, the Society is now expanding all over the world. We are glad that people are donating very liberally to the development of the Society's activities, and people are also eagerly accepting whatever humble contribution we are giving them in the shape of books and magazines dealing strictly with the subject matter of Kṛṣṇa consciousness...

We sometimes hold Hare Kṛṣṇa festivals and invite life members and friends to participate in the feasting by accepting *prasāda*. Although most of our members come from the higher rungs of society, they nonetheless come and take whatever little *prasāda* we are able to offer them. Sometimes the members and supporters inquire very confidentially about the methods of performing devotional service, and we try to explain this. In this way our Society is successfully spreading all over the world, and the intelligentsia of all countries is gradually appreciating our Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. The life of the Kṛṣṇa conscious society is nourished by these six types of loving exchange among the members; therefore people must be given the chance to associate with the devotees of ISKCON because simply by reciprocating in the six ways mentioned above an ordinary man can fully revive his dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.62) it is stated, *saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ*: one's desires and ambitions develop according to the company one keeps. It is often said that a man is known by his company, and if an ordinary man associates with devotees, he will certainly develop his dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is innate in every living entity, and it is already developed to some extent when the living entity takes a human body. It is said in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 22.107):

*nitya-siddha kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhya' kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya*

"Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is eternally established in the hearts of living entities. It is not something to be gained from another source. When the heart is purified by hearing and chanting, the living entity naturally awakens." Since Kṛṣṇa consciousness is inherent in

every living entity, everyone should be given a chance to hear about Kṛṣṇa. Simply by hearing and chanting—*śravaṇam kīrtanam* [SB 7.5.23]—one's heart is directly purified, and one's original Kṛṣṇa consciousness is immediately awakened. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not artificially imposed upon the heart, it is already there. When one chants the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the heart is cleansed of all mundane contamination...

People should give up the company of so-called yogīs, jñānīs, karmīs and philanthropists because their association can benefit no one. If one really wants to attain the goal of human life, he should associate with devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement because it is the only movement that teaches one how to love of God. Religion is the special function of human society, and it constitutes the distinction between human society and animal society. Animal society has no church, mosque or religious system. In all parts of the world, however downtrodden human society may be, there is some system of religion. Even tribal aborigines in the jungles also have a system of religion. When a religious system develops and turns into love of God, it is successful. As stated in the First Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.6):

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā
yayātmā suprasīdati*

"The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted in order to completely satisfy the self."

If the members of human society actually want peace of mind, tranquility and friendly relations between men and nations, they must follow the Kṛṣṇa conscious system of religion, by which they can develop their dormant love for Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As soon as people do so, their minds will immediately be filled with peace and tranquility.

- A. In ordinary business these dealing are present
- B. In order to have *asat-saṅga-tyāga* we must practice these six exchanges. (*sato vṛttheḥ* is here defined as keeping with the company of devotees.)
- C. *saṅgāt sañjayate kāmāḥ*: One's desires and ambitions develop according to the association one keeps.
 1. Association means to develop love for that person

ॐ Here Arjuna is *mahājana*, he's Kṛṣṇa's friend, he's always with Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa recognizes him. Not that because one is always with Kṛṣṇa, therefore he knows

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Kṛṣṇa. No. That is not possible. Just like I have given this example many times, that I am sitting here, and the bug is also sitting here. That does not mean we are very confidential. No. Bug is different visions (business?), and my business different. And bug's business is biting. That kind of association will not help. Association means to develop love for the person. That is association. (Lecture SB 1.7.23, Vṛndāvan 9/20/76)

ॐ So how to deal with devotee? *Maitrī*: to make friendship with him. *Īṣvare prema*. And to the devotees, friendship; not with others, friendship. Caitanya Mahāprabhu advised. When He was asked by a *grhastha* devotee how to behave like a Vaiṣṇava, what is the behavior of a Vaiṣṇava, He immediately answered that the standard Vaisnavism is *asat-saṅga-tyāga*,—*ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra*: “He must give up the company of *asat*, nondevotees.” *Asato mā sad gamah*. Don't associate with nondevotee. If you want to make progress, don't associate. Associate does not mean to talk with a nondevotee is association. No. That we have to do. As gentlemen, as devotee, we can. But not intimately. Associate means *dadāti pratigrhṇāti bhunkte bhojayate caiva, guhyam ākhyāti pṛcchati ca*. These are intimate relationship, dealing: giving something to your friend, accepting something from your friend, feeding your friend, accept food from him, and disclose your mind to your friend, and understand his mind. *Ṣaḍ-vidham pṛīti-lakṣaṇam*. So with devotee we should deal in six ways, *ṣaḍ-vidham pṛīti. Īṣvare prema tad-adhīneṣu maitrī*. This is friendly behavior. And *kṛpa bālīṣeṣu*. Those who are innocent, does not know what is God or what is our relationship with Him, but they are not atheist—they do not know—to such persons, *kṛpa, daya. Īṣvare tad-adhīneṣu bālīṣeṣu*. And there is a class, *dviṣat, sura-dviṣat*, simply atheist. As soon as they hear the name of God, Kṛṣṇa, they become angry. Just like Hiranyakaśipu. Innocent child, five years old, Prahlāda Mahārāja, because he learned from Nārada Muni even from the womb of his mother how to become a devotee and from the birth he was a devotee and his father did not like, Hiranyakaśipu. Not only he did not like, he was prepared to kill his child in so many ways. That is atheism. Atheists are so much averse, *sura-dviṣat*. They are envious. So to such person the *madhyama-adhikārī* cannot preach because it is useless waste of time. If one is innocent but not envious we can preach there. That will be, I mean to say, fruitful. If we go to atheist and you go on speaking, he will never accept it. So don't waste your time in that way. That is *nāma-aparādha*. But because we have not so much power that we can convert an atheist to become theist or devotee of God That requires special power. (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.5.28, Vṛndāvana, November 15, 1976)

D. We need to practice these six types of association because then we can fully revive our dormant God consciousness.

E. Regarding māyāvādīs and atheists

ॐ In this regard, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura warns all devotees engaged in broadcasting the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement not to speak to the impersonalist *Māyāvādīs* who are always determined to oppose such theistic movements. The world

is full of *Māyāvādīs* and atheists, and the political parties of the world take advantage of *Māyāvāda* and other atheistic philosophies to promote materialism. Sometimes they even back a strong party to oppose the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. The *Māyāvādīs* and other atheists do not want the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to develop because it educates people in God consciousness. Such is the policy of the atheists. There is no benefit in feeding a snake milk and bananas because the snake will never be satisfied. On the contrary, by taking milk and bananas the snake simply becomes more poisonous (*kevalam viṣa-vardhanam*). If a snake is given milk to drink, its poison simply increases. For a similar reason, we should not disclose our minds to the serpent *Māyāvādīs* and karmīs. Such disclosures will never help. It is best to avoid association with them completely and never ask them about anything confidential because they cannot give good advice. Nor should we extend invitations to *Māyāvādīs* and atheists nor accept their invitations, for by such intimate intermingling we may become affected by their atheistic mentality (*saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmah*). It is the negative injunction of this verse that we should refrain from giving anything to or accepting anything from the *Māyāvādīs* and atheists. (NOI 4)

- F. Vaiṣṇava seva is a rare opportunity. This service attitude needs to be cultivated
- G. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave instructions on how to build society.
- H. Śrīla Prabhupāda defines love using these six principles.

“Now, you have to make friendship with Kṛṣṇa. Just like if you want to go to see somebody very great, then somehow or other, you have to make some connection with him, something. You have to introduce yourself in a way, in a friendly way, in a loving manner. Then it is possible to make connection with great personalities. So if we want to transfer ourself to that supreme planet, Kṛṣṇaloka, then we have to prepare ourself how to love Kṛṣṇa. Love of God. If you are intimately in touch with God by love... We cannot conquer with all... We cannot claim any favor from the Supreme unless we are in love.

“So love means... There are six principles of loving. What is that? *Dadāti pratigrhṇāti bhunkte bhojayate, guhyam ākhyāti prcchati ca śaḍ-vidham prīti-lakṣaṇam*. How one can understand I love you, or you can understand that I love you? There is... There are six kinds of reciprocation, six kinds of exchange, reciprocation. What is that? *Dadāti*. One whom you love, you must give something. And you must take something from him. *Dadāti pratigrhṇāti. Bhunkte bhojayate*: You must give him something to eat, and you must accept also what he gives to eat. And *dadāti pratigrhṇāti bhunkte bhojayate, guhyam ākhyāti prcchati ca*: You must disclose your mind, and you must hear him. If your lover is also in some difficulty, he discloses his mind. So these six things, *dadāti*, giving, and *pratigrhṇāti*, accepting, and

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bhūṅkte, to offer foodstuff and accept foodstuff, and disclose your mind and hear him also, these things...

“So we have to deal with God in that way. Therefore, if you want to offer something... The beginning is offering, offering. We must offer something. So what is that offering? If you... If somebody says that “I am very poor man. I cannot offer anything...” Because in India, of course, offering to the demigods, offering to some deity... That is very expensive job. There are list of goods. Now, suppose a poor man, he wants to offer something to God. Then what he has to offer? He... Here is a prescription given by the Lord Himself which can be offered even by the poorest man. What is that? *Patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam*. A, a little bit of *tulasī* leaves or any leaf, *puṣpaṁ*, a little bit of flower, *patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalam*, a small fruit, and *toyam*, a little water.” (Lecture 12/12/66 NY Bg. 9.24-26)

V. *The importance of association*

*śuśrūṣoḥ śraddadhānasya
vāsudeva-kathā-ruciḥ
syān mahat-sevayā viprāḥ
puṇya-tīrtha-niṣevanāt*

O twice-born sages, by serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice, great service is done. By such service, one gains affinity for hearing the messages of Vāsudeva. (SB 1.2.16)

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

The value of a moment’s association with the devotee of the Lord cannot even be compared to the attainment of heavenly planets or liberation from matter, and what to speak of worldly benedictions in the form of material prosperity, which are for those who are meant for death. (SB 1.18.13)

*kirāta-hūṅāndhra-pulinda-pulkaśā
ābhīra-śumbhā yavanāḥ khasādayaḥ
ye ’nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*

Kirāta, Hūṅa, Āndhra, Pulinda, Pulkaśa, Ābhīra, Śumbha, Yavana, members of the Khasa races and even others addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord, due to His being the supreme power. I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto Him. (SB 2.4.18)

*te vai vidanty atitaranti ca deva-māyām
strī-śūdra-hūṇa-śabarā api pāpa-jīvāḥ
yady adbhuta-krama-parāyaṇa-śīla-śikṣās
tiryag-janā api kim u śruta-dhāraṇā ye*

Surrendered souls, even from groups leading sinful lives, such as women, the laborer class, the mountaineers and the Siberians, or even the birds and beasts, can also know about the science of Godhead and become liberated from the clutches of the illusory energy by surrendering unto the pure devotees of the Lord and by following in their footsteps in devotional service. (SB 2.7.46)

*prasaṅgam ajaram pāśam
ātmanaḥ kavayo viduḥ
sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto
mokṣa-dvāram apāvṛtam*

Every learned man knows very well that attachment for the material is the greatest entanglement of the spirit soul. But that same attachment, when applied to the self-realized devotees, opens the door of liberation.

PURPORT: Here it is clearly stated that attachment for one thing is the cause of bondage in conditioned life, and the same attachment, when applied to something else, opens the door of liberation. Attachment cannot be killed; it has simply to be transferred. Attachment for material things is called material consciousness, and attachment for Kṛṣṇa or His devotee is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, is the platform of attachment. It is clearly stated here that when we simply purify the consciousness from material consciousness to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we attain liberation. Despite the statement that one should give up attachment, desirelessness is not possible for a living entity. A living entity, by constitution, has the propensity to be attached to something. We see that if someone has no object of attachment, if he has no children, then he transfers his attachment to cats and dogs. This indicates that the propensity for attachment cannot be stopped; it must be utilized for the best purpose. Our attachment for material things perpetuates our conditional state, but the same attachment, when transferred to the Supreme Personality of Godhead or His devotee, is the source of liberation.

Here it is recommended that attachment should be transferred to the self-realized devotees, the *sādhus*. And who is a *sādhu*? A *sādhu* is not just an ordinary man with a saffron robe or long beard. A *sādhu* is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* as one who unflinchingly engages in devotional service. Even though one is found not to be following the strict rules and regulations of devotional service, if one simply has unflinching faith in Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person, he is understood to be a *sādhu*. *Sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ*. A *sādhu* is a strict follower of devotional service. It is recommended here that if one at all wants to realize Brahman, or spiritual perfection, his attachment should be transferred to the *sādhu*, or devotee. Lord Caitanya also confirmed this. *Lava-mātra sādhu-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya*: simply by a moment's association with a *sādhu*, one can attain perfection.

Mahātmā is a synonym of *sādhu*. It is said that service to a *mahātmā*, or elevated devotee of the Lord, is *dvāram āhur vimukteḥ*, the royal road of liberation. *Mahat-sevām dvāram āhur*

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vimuktes tamo-dvāraṁ yoṣitāṁ saṅgi-saṅgam (Bhāg. 5.5.2). Rendering service to the materialists has the opposite effect. If anyone offers service to a gross materialist, or a person engaged only in sense enjoyment, then by association with such a person the door to hell is opened. The same principle is confirmed here. Attachment to a devotee is attachment to the service of the Lord because if one associates with a *sādhū*, the result will be that the *sādhū* will teach him how to become a devotee, a worshiper and a sincere servitor of the Lord. These are the gifts of a *sādhū*. If we want to associate with a *sādhū*, we cannot expect him to give us instructions on how to improve our material condition, but he will give us instructions on how to cut the knot of the contamination of material attraction and how to elevate ourselves in devotional service. That is the result of associating with a *sādhū*. Kapila Muni first of all instructs that the path of liberation begins with such association.

*titikṣavaḥ kāruṇikāḥ
suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ
sādhavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ*

The symptoms of a *sādhū* are that he is tolerant, merciful and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.

*mayy ananyena bhāvena
bhaktim kurvanti ye dṛḍhām
mat-kṛte tyakta-karmāṇas
tyakta-svajana-bāndhavāḥ*

Such a *sādhū* engages in staunch devotional service to the Lord without deviation. For the sake of the Lord he renounces all other connections, such as family relationships and friendly acquaintances within the world.

*mad-āśrayāḥ kathā mṛṣṭāḥ
śṛṇvanti kathayanti ca
tapanti vividhās tāpā
naitān mad-gata-cetasāḥ*

Engaged constantly in chanting and hearing about Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the *sādhū*s do not suffer from material miseries because they are always filled with thoughts of My pastimes and activities.

*ta ete sādharmaḥ sādhu
sarva-saṅga-vivarjitāḥ
saṅgas teṣv atha te prārthyāḥ
saṅga-doṣa-harā hi te*

O My mother, O virtuous lady, these are the qualities of great devotees who are free from all attachment. You must seek attachment to such holy men, for this counteracts the pernicious effects of material attachment.

*satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.

PURPORT: The process of advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and devotional service is described here. The first point is that one must seek the association of persons who are Kṛṣṇa conscious and who engage in devotional service. Without such association one cannot make advancement. Simply by theoretical knowledge or study one cannot make any appreciable advancement. One must give up the association of materialistic persons and seek the association of devotees because without the association of devotees one cannot understand the activities of the Lord. Generally, people are convinced of the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth. Because they do not associate with devotees, they cannot understand that the Absolute Truth can be a person and have personal activities. This is a very difficult subject matter, and unless one has personal understanding of the Absolute Truth, there is no meaning to devotion. Service or devotion cannot be offered to anything impersonal. Service must be offered to a person. Nondevotees cannot appreciate Kṛṣṇa consciousness by reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or any other Vedic literature wherein the activities of the Lord are described; they think that these activities are fictional, manufactured stories because spiritual life is not explained to them in the proper mood. To understand the personal activities of the Lord, one has to seek the association of devotees, and by such association, when one contemplates and tries to understand the transcendental activities of the Lord, the path to liberation is open, and he is freed. One who has firm faith in the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes fixed, and his attraction for association with the Lord and the devotees increases. Association with devotees means association with the Lord. The devotee who makes this association develops the consciousness for rendering service to the Lord, and then, being situated in the transcendental position of devotional service, he gradually becomes perfect.

*bhaktyā pumān jāta-virāga aindriyād
dṛṣṭa-śrutān mad-racanānucintayā
cittasya yatto grahaṇe yoga-yukto
yatiṣyate rjubhir yoga-mārgaiḥ*

Nectar of Instruction (*Upadeśāmṛta*) Verse 4

Thus consciously engaged in devotional service in the association of devotees, a person gains distaste for sense gratification, both in this world and in the next, by constantly thinking about the activities of the Lord. This process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the easiest process of mystic power; when one is actually situated on that path of devotional service, he is able to control the mind.

PURPORT: In all scriptures people are encouraged to act in a pious way so that they can enjoy sense gratification not only in this life but also in the next. For example, one is promised promotion to the heavenly kingdom of higher planets by pious fruitive activities. But a devotee in the association of devotees prefers to contemplate the activities of the Lord—how He has created this universe, how He is maintaining it, how the creation dissolves, and how in the spiritual kingdom the Lord’s pastimes are going on. There are full literatures describing these activities of the Lord, especially *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Brahma-saṁhitā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The sincere devotee who associates with devotees gets the opportunity to hear and contemplate this subject of the pastimes of the Lord, and the result is that he feels distaste for so-called happiness in this or that world, in heaven or on other planets. The devotees are simply interested in being transferred to the personal association of the Lord; they have no more attraction for temporary so-called happiness. That is the position of one who is *yoga-yukta*. One who is fixed in mystic power is not disturbed by the allurements of this world or that world; he is interested in the matters of spiritual understanding or the spiritual situation. This sublime situation is very easily attained by the easiest process, *bhakti-yoga*. *Rjubhir yoga-mārgaiḥ*. A very suitable word used here is *rjubhiḥ*, or “very easy.” There are different processes of *yoga-mārga*, attaining *yoga* perfection, but this process, devotional service to the Lord, is the easiest. Not only is it the easiest process, but the result is sublime. Everyone, therefore, should try to take this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and reach the highest perfection of life. (SB 3.25.20-26)

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca
kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. They are just like desire trees who can fulfill the desires of everyone, and they are full of compassion for the fallen conditioned souls.” Those who are under the influence of the illusory energy are attracted to fruitive activities, but a Vaiṣṇava preacher attracts their hearts to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. (SB 4.6.49, purport)

*mahat-sevām dvāram āhur vimuktes
tamo-dvāram yoṣitām saṅgi-saṅgam
mahāntas te sama-cittāḥ praśāntā
vimanyavaḥ suhṛdaḥ sādhaso ye*

One can attain the path of liberation from material bondage only by rendering service to highly advanced spiritual personalities. These personalities are impersonalists and devotees. Whether one wants to merge into the Lord’s existence or wants to associate with

the Personality of Godhead, one should render service to the mahātmās. For those who are not interested in such activities, who associate with people fond of women and sex, the path to hell is wide open. The mahātmās are equipoised. They do not see any difference between one living entity and another. They are very peaceful and are fully engaged in devotional service. They are devoid of anger, and they work for the benefit of everyone. They do not behave in any abominable way. Such people are known as mahātmās.

*ye vā mayīṣe kṛta-sauhṛdārthā
janeṣu dehambhara-vārtikeṣu
grheṣu jāyātmaja-rātimatsu
na prīti-yuktā yāvad-arthāś ca loke*

Those who are interested in reviving Kṛṣṇa consciousness and increasing their love of Godhead do not like to do anything that is not related to Kṛṣṇa. They are not interested in mingling with people who are busy maintaining their bodies, eating, sleeping, mating and defending. They are not attached to their homes, although they may be householders. Nor are they attached to wives, children, friends or wealth. At the same time, they are not indifferent to the execution of their duties. Such people are interested in collecting only enough money to keep the body and soul together. (SB 5.5.2-3)

*rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti
na cejyayā nirvapaṇād grhād vā
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam*

My dear King Rahūgaṇa, unless one has the opportunity to smear his entire body with the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees, one cannot realize the Absolute Truth. One cannot realize the Absolute Truth simply by observing celibacy [brahmacarya], strictly following the rules and regulations of householder life, leaving home as a vānaprastha, accepting sannyāsa, or undergoing severe penances in winter by keeping oneself submerged in water or surrounding oneself in summer by fire and the scorching heat of the sun. There are many other processes to understand the Absolute Truth, but the Absolute Truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee. (SB 5.12.12)

yo 'sau bhagavati sarva-bhūtātmany anātmnye 'nirukte 'nilayane paramātmmani vāsudeve 'nanya-nimitta-bhakti-yoga-lakṣaṇo nānā-gati-nimittāvidyā-granthi-randhana-dvāreṇa yadā hi mahā-puruṣa-puruṣa-prasaṅgaḥ.

After many, many births, when the results of one's pious activities mature, one gets an opportunity to associate with pure devotees. Then one is able to cut the knot of bondage to ignorance, which bound him because of varied fruitive activities. As a result of associating with devotees, one gradually renders service to Lord Vāsudeva, who is transcendental, free from attachment to the material world, beyond the mind and words, and independent of everything else. That bhakti-yoga, devotional service to Lord Vāsudeva, is the real path of liberation. (SB 5.19.20)

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*naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghrim
spr̥śaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthah
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ
niṣkiñcanānām na vṛñita yāvat*

Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava completely freed from material contamination, persons very much inclined toward materialistic life cannot be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord, who is glorified for His uncommon activities. Only by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and taking shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord in this way can one be freed from material contamination.

PURPORT: *Uttamaśloka-guṇānuvādāt*. The word *uttamaśloka* means “one who is famous as the best of those who are good.” The Lord is good in all circumstances. That is His natural reputation. His goodness is unlimited, and He uses it unlimitedly. A devotee is also sometimes described as *uttamaśloka*, meaning that he is eager to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead or the Lord’s devotees. Glorifying the Lord and glorifying the Lord’s devotees are the same. Or, rather, glorifying the devotee is more important than glorifying the Lord directly. Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura explains this fact: *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā, nistāra pāyeche kebā*. One cannot be liberated from material contamination without sincerely serving a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

In this verse the words *tomāra prabhāve* (“Your influence”) are very important. Unless one is spiritually advanced he cannot influence an audience. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has sung, *śuddha-bhakata-caraṇa-reṇu, bhajana-anukūla*. “Unless one associates with a pure devotee he cannot be influenced to understand devotional service.” These Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* were fortunate enough to meet the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the form of a devotee, and certainly they were greatly influenced by the Lord. They knew that since a perfectly advanced spiritualist never says anything false, all his words are reasonable and agree with the Vedic version. A highly realized person never says anything that has no meaning. Māyāvādī philosophers claim to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this has no meaning, but Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu never uttered such nonsense. The Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* were convinced about His personality, and therefore they wanted to hear from Him the purport of Vedānta philosophy.

If one is seriously interested in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, he must be ready to follow the rules and regulations laid down by the *ācāryas*, and he must understand their conclusions. The *śāstra* says: *dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyām mahā-jano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ* (*Mahābhārata, Vana-parva* 313.117). It is very difficult to understand the secret of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but one who advances by the instruction of the previous *ācāryas* and follows in the footsteps of his predecessors in the line of disciplic succession will have success. Others will not. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says in this connection, *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā*: “Unless one serves the spiritual master and *ācāryas*, one cannot be liberated.” (SB 7.5.32)

*ye me bhakta-janāḥ pārtha
na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ
mad-bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās
te me bhakta-tamā matāḥ*

“Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, ‘Those who are My direct devotees are actually not My devotees, but those who are the devotees of My servant are factually My devotees.’ (Madhya 11.28)

*ārādhānānām sarveṣām
viṣṇor ārādhanaṁ param
tasmāt parataram devi
tadīyānām samarcanam*

“Lord Śiva told the goddess Durgā, ‘My dear Devī, although the Vedas recommend worship of demigods, the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is topmost. However, above the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is the rendering of service to Vaiṣṇavas, who are related to Lord Viṣṇu.’ (Madhya 11.31)

*kona bhāgye kāro saṁsāra kṣayonmukha haya
sādhu-saṅge tabe kṛṣṇe rati upajaya*

“By good fortune, one becomes eligible to cross the ocean of nescience, and when one’s term of material existence decreases, one may get an opportunity to associate with pure devotees. By such association, one’s attraction to Kṛṣṇa is awakened. (Madhya 22.45)

*sādhu-saṅge kṛṣṇa-bhaktye śraddhā yadi haya
bhakti-phala ‘prema’ haya, saṁsāra yāya kṣaya*

“By associating with a devotee, one awakens his faith in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Because of devotional service, one’s dormant love for Kṛṣṇa awakens, and thus one’s material, conditional existence comes to an end. (Madhya 22.49)

*‘sādhu-saṅga’, ‘sādhu-saṅga’—sarva-śāstre kaya
lava-mātra sādhu-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya*

“The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment’s association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success.

PURPORT: According to astronomical calculations, *lava* is one eleventh of one second. (Madhya 22.54)

*mahat-sevām dvāram āhur vimuktes
tamo-dvāram yoṣitām saṅgi-saṅgam
mahāntas te sama-cittāḥ praśāntā
vimanyavaḥ suhṛdaḥ sādhave ye*

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“ ‘It is the verdict of all śāstras and great personalities that by serving a pure devotee, one attains the path of liberation. However, by associating with materialistic people who are attached to material enjoyment and women, one attains the path of darkness. Those who are actually devotees are broadminded, equal to everyone and very peaceful. They never become angry, and they are friendly to all living entities.’

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-janma-mūla haya ‘sādhu-saṅga’
kṛṣṇa-prema janme, teṅho punaḥ mukhya aṅga*

“The root cause of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is association with advanced devotees. Even when one’s dormant love for Kṛṣṇa awakens, association with devotees is still most essential.

*bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavaj
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamah
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate ratiḥ*

“ ‘O my Lord! O infallible Supreme Person! When a person wandering throughout the universes becomes eligible for liberation from material existence, he gets an opportunity to associate with devotees. When he associates with devotees, his attraction for You is awakened. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the highest goal of the supreme devotees and the Lord of the universe.’

*ata ātyantikam kṣemaṁ
pṛcchāmo bhavato ‘naghāḥ
saṁsāre ‘smin kṣaṇārdho ‘pi
sat-saṅgaḥ sevadhīr nṛṇām*

“ ‘O devotees! O you who are free from all sins! Let me inquire from you about that which is supremely auspicious for all living entities. Association with a pure devotee for even half a moment in this material world is the greatest treasure for human society.’

*satām prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

“ ‘The spiritually powerful message of Godhead can be properly discussed only in a society of devotees, and it is greatly pleasing to hear in that association. If one hears from devotees, the way of transcendental experience quickly opens, and gradually one attains firm faith that in due course develops into attraction and devotion.’

*asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
‘strī-saṅgī’—eka asādhu, ‘kṛṣṇābhakta’ āra*

“A Vaiṣṇava should always avoid the association of ordinary people. Common people are very much materially attached, especially to women. Vaiṣṇavas should also avoid the company of those who are not devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

*satyaṁ śaucaṁ dayā maunaṁ
buddhir hrīḥ śrīr yaśaḥ kṣamā
śamo damo bhagaś ceti
yat-saṅgād yāti saṅkṣayam*

*teṣv aśānteṣu mūḍheṣu
khaṇḍitātmasv asādhuṣu
saṅgaṁ na kuryāc chocyeṣu
yoṣit-kṛīḍā-mṛgeṣu ca*

*na tathāsya bhaven moho
bandhaś cānya-prasaṅgataḥ
yoṣit-saṅgād yathā puṁso
yathā tat-saṅgi-saṅgataḥ*

“By association with worldly people, one becomes devoid of truthfulness, cleanliness, mercy, gravity, spiritual intelligence, shyness, austerity, fame, forgiveness, control of the mind, control of the senses, fortune and all opportunities. One should not at any time associate with a coarse fool who is bereft of the knowledge of self-realization and who is no more than a toy animal in the hands of a woman. The illusion and bondage that accrue to a man from attachment to any other object are not as complete as that resulting from association with a woman or with men too attached to women.’

PURPORT: These verses, quoted from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.31.33-35), were spoken by Kapiladeva, an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, to His mother. Herein Kapiladeva discusses pious and impious activities and the symptoms of those who are devoid of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Generally people do not know about the miserable conditions within the womb of a mother in any species of life. Due to bad association, one gradually falls into lower species. Association with women is greatly stressed in this regard. When one becomes attached to women or to those who are attached to women, one falls down into the lower species.

*puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi
bhūṅkte prakṛti-jān guṇān
kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo 'sya
sad-asad-yoni-janmasu*

“The living entity in material nature thus follows the ways of life, enjoying the three modes of nature. This is due to his association with that material nature. Thus he meets with good and evil among various species.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 13.22)

According to Vedic civilization, one’s association with women should be very much restricted. In spiritual life there are four *āśramas*—*brahmacarya*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha* and

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sannyāsa. The *brahmacārī*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsī* are completely forbidden to associate with women. Only *gṛhasthas* are allowed to associate with women under certain very restricted conditions—that is, one associates with women to propagate nice children. Other reasons for association are condemned.

*varaṁ huta-vaha-jvālā-
pañjarāntar-vyavasthitiḥ
na śauri-cintā-vimukha-
jana-saṁvāsa-vaiśasam*

“It is better to accept the miseries of being encaged within bars and surrounded by burning flames than to associate with those bereft of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such association is a very great hardship.’

*mā drākṣiḥ kṣīṇa-puṇyān kvacid api
bhagavad-bhakti-hīnān manuṣyān*

One should not even see those who are bereft of devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and who are therefore devoid of pious activities.

*eta saba chāḍi’ āra varṇāśrama-dharma
akiñcana hañā laya kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa*

“Without hesitation, one should take the exclusive shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa with full confidence, giving up bad association and even neglecting the regulative principles of the four varṇas and four āśramas. That is to say, one should abandon all material attachment. (Madhya 22.82-93)

*sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana*

“One should associate with devotees, chant the holy name of the Lord, hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, reside at Mathurā and worship the Deity with faith and veneration. (Madhya 22.128)

*sādhu-saṅga haite haya ’śravaṇa-kīrtana’
sādhana-bhaktye haya ’sarvānārtha-nivartana’*

“When one is encouraged in devotional service by the association of devotees, one becomes free from all unwanted contamination by following the regulative principles and chanting and hearing. (Madhya 23.10)

*sādhu-saṅga-kṛpā kimvā kṛṣṇera kṛpāya
kāmādi ’duḥsaṅga’ chāḍi’ śuddha-bhakti pāya*

“One is elevated to the platform of devotional life by the mercy of a Vaiṣṇava, the bona fide spiritual master, and by the special mercy of Kṛṣṇa. On that platform, one gives up all material desires and the association of unwanted people. Thus one is elevated to the platform of pure devotional service. (Madhya 24.97)

*sādhū-saṅga, kṛṣṇa-kṛpā, bhaktira svabhāva
e tine saba chādāya, kare kṛṣṇe 'bhāva'*

“Association with a devotee, the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, and the nature of devotional service help one to give up all undesirable association and gradually attain elevation to the platform of love of Godhead. (Madhya 24.104)

VI. The conclusion

The conclusion is that we should always keep company with devotees, observe the regulative devotional principles, follow in the footsteps of the ācāryas and in full obedience carry out the orders of the spiritual master. In this way we shall be able to develop our devotional service and dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The devotee who is neither a neophyte nor a mahā-bhāgavata (a greatly advanced devotee) but is within the middle status of devotional service is expected to love the Supreme Personality of Godhead, make friends with the devotees, show favor to the ignorant and reject the jealous and demoniac. In this verse there is brief mention of the process of making loving transactions with the Supreme Personality of Godhead and making friends with the devotees... In the next verse, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī informs us what kind of Vaiṣṇava should be selected as a friend and how Vaiṣṇavas should be served.