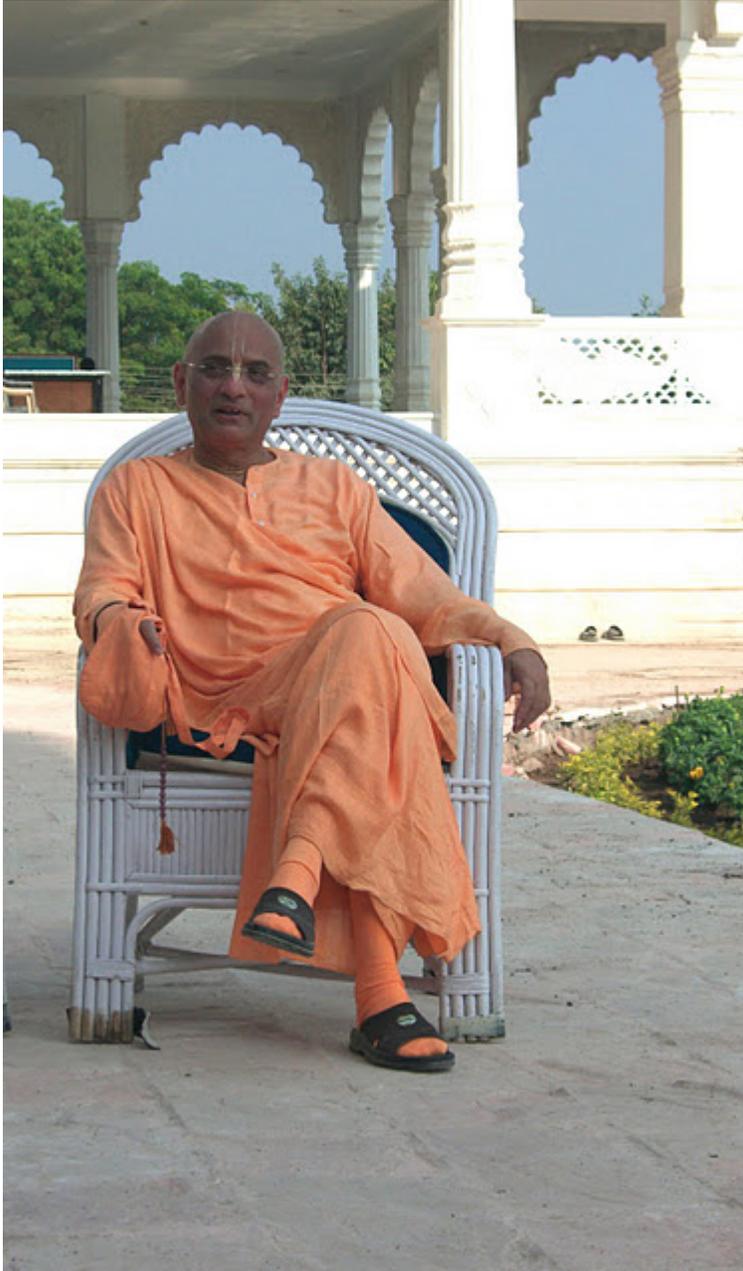


## Sign of a Devotee



So, what is the symptom of a devotee? How do you recognize a devotee? Do we recognize a devotee by his birth? By his material condition? By his material situation? No, the sign of a devotee is through his surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It doesn't matter from whatever category, whatever background one comes. Like *candalo'pi dvija-shrestho hari- bhakti-parayanah*. One maybe a candala but hari bhakti parayanah, when he becomes a devotee of Hari, Krishna, then he is dvija shrestha, he is superior, he is greater than a brahmana.

Here also we are seeing that so many devotees, as I just mentioned like they are born in a

demoniac family. By birth they are demons, Prahlada Maharaja, Bali Maharaja, but why they have been recognized as great devotees, exemplary devotees? Because of their devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, it has been pointed out that vaishnavera nahi jati kuladi vicara. There is no consideration for jati, kula. Jati means caste and creed of a Vaishnava. Vaishnava can appear in any family.

What to speak of human beings, even an animal can become a devotee of Krishna. A wonderful example is Hanumana. In the community of monkeys there is Hanumana and there are so many other monkeys who are great devotees. The bird can be a devotee. Example is Garuda, example is Jatayu, example is Sampati. They are birds, but they are great devotees of the Lord.

So the Vedic Karma Kanda section may have consideration for caste and creed but when it comes to devotional service there is no such consideration. Because the devotional service is the activity of the soul, soul's activity. Now, the soul can, any soul at any place can become a devotee. But what is the criteria for becoming a devotee? When can one become a devotee, or when does one get the opportunity to become a devotee? That is the most important consideration. One can become a devotee only by coming in contact with a devotee. Without the contact of a devotee it is not possible to become a devotee. That is why the devotional consideration is not of birth or any other criteria.

Yes, to be a brahmana generally one has to be born in a brahmanas family, generally. But that also is not sufficient. One may be born in a brahmana family but he has to practice as a brahmana. He has to become qualified. In our scriptures we find there are many...brahmanas, they actually were demons. Like Ravana, he is born of an exalted brahmana father, Vishrava. Hiranyakasipu, Hiranyaksa [born of] Kashyapa, son of Brahma. So, by birth they may be very exalted, but their activity is making them into demons. Whereas the devotion can be practiced by...but to receive, how can one become a devotee? The answer is only by coming in contact with a devotee. That is why it is important that the devotees go out and preach. Preach means provide the opportunity to others to become a devotee.

(H.H Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaj)

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*A Vaishnava is Adosa darsi. A  
Vaishnava never sees others faults.*

