

Śaranagati

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THE PATH OF MERCY



How can we overcome the doubt that we will not reach our spiritual goal?

It's a fact that we will not make it on our own. This doubt „Will I make it? I'm too weak.“ is something which is very natural. But by Kṛṣṇa's mercy it is possible. The whole *bhakti* process rests on this understanding: by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, by the mercy of my spiritual master it is possible. There is a verse:

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ
paṅguṁ laṅghāyate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande
śrī-guruṁ dīna tāriṇam*

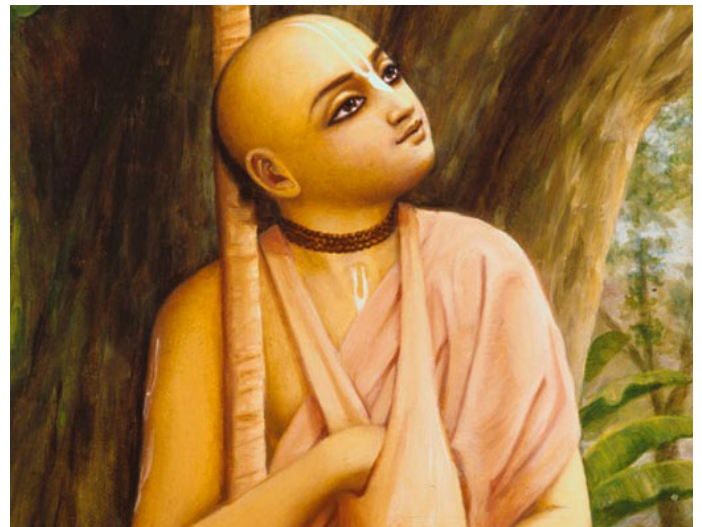
“By the mercy of the spiritual master, even a fool can become an eloquent speaker, and even a lame man can cross mountains.”

Bhakti rests on understanding our own helplessness and turning for help in a humble frame of mind. *Bhakti* is never a matter of qualification. It's interesting, there are even verses that go like this: “Because I'm most unqualified I'm most qualified.” “Most qualified” in the sense that when you sincerely turn to Kṛṣṇa he will not let you down or disappoint you.

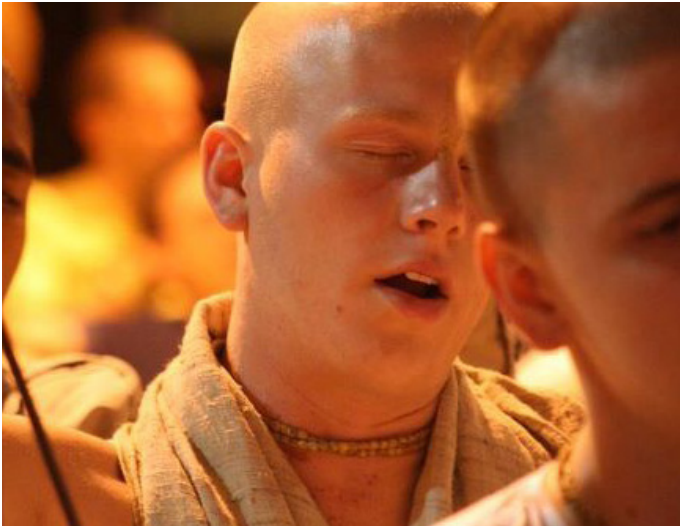
But it is this turning to Kṛṣṇa which needs to be there – and that's not possible for a proud person. And it's also not possible for a person who is so attached that he or she just turns to material help.

There are numerous illustrations in our scriptures of people from low backgrounds, fallen, like Jagāi and Mādhāi, who sincerely turned to the Lord and were helped. Haven't we seen long descriptions in *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* about Jagāi and Mādhāi? There is also a long, long description in *Caitanya-Bhāgavata*. Why in both scriptures? Pastimes are usually not repeated, because Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, who wrote *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* after *Caitanya-Bhāgavata* was completed by Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, said, “I will only write about those things which are not written by Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura.” Why are these examples there? They are there to take this doubt away from us: “I'm too unqualified, I can't make it on my own.”

I have become a believer in mercy. And that's why I feel happy in my life. I just turn to Kṛṣṇa like a little child. That's all I do and all I can do. I turn to him in his most merciful form: the holy name. I think I should serve the holy name and chant very nicely. And when I do that I think “Everything is alright.”



THE PATH OF MERCY (CONTINUED)



There was a time when I understood: “I will chant anyway. I have to chant two hours a day, I have given this promise, so let me do it as well as I can.” Nowadays I think: “I must chant with *sambandha*, with the feeling of a relationship to Kṛṣṇa.” And I chant prayers before my rounds. In the *Yogasūtras* it is said that first you chant the mantra and later when you understand that the mantra is non-different from the Lord – at that time the Lord will come out of the mantra. You know “Here’s the mantra” and you chant: “Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa please engage me in your service.” And – amazingly – they come out.

No-one likes to talk about spiritual experiences, but many devotees have experienced this. If you chant to Kṛṣṇa, using His names, then the name can save you.

☪ from a lecture by Śācinandana Swami, Berlin, May 13th, 2010

NOURISHING OUR HOPES

“A pure devotee is never attracted to any exalted position within this material world. He simply wants to associate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead like the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana; Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the gopīs, Kṛṣṇa’s father and mother (Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā), Kṛṣṇa’s friends and Kṛṣṇa’s servants. He wants to associate with Kṛṣṇa’s atmosphere of Vṛndāvana’s beauty. These are the highest ambitions of a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Devotees of Lord Viṣṇu may aspire for a position in Vaikuṅṭhaloka, but a devotee of Kṛṣṇa never aspires even for the facilities of Vaikuṅṭha; he wants to return to Goloka Vṛndāvana and associate with Lord Kṛṣṇa in His eternal pastimes. Any material happiness is like water in a ditch, whereas the spiritual happiness eternally enjoyed in the spiritual world is like an ocean of nectar in which a devotee wants to swim.”

☪ A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (1987). Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 6.12.22, purport, p. 555-556, BBT.



Photo by Mickey Shah

☪ MEET ŚĀCĪNANDANA SWAMI

Important events over the next two months:

Sept. 9th-Sep. 11th	Bhakti Fest, California, USA
Sept. 16th-Sep. 18th	Sacred Space Seminar, New Vrindaban, West Virg., USA
Sept. 21th-Sep. 23th	Temple of the Heart Seminar, Alachua, USA
Sept. 24th	24 h Kīrtana, Alachua
Sept. 25th	Sunday Feast lecture, Alachua
Nov. 13th-29th	Japa- and Kīrtana-Retreat, Varṣāṇā/Govardhana, India

You can find a more detailed schedule at www.saranagati.net