

# Śaranagati

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## THE CIRCLE OF BHAKTI

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (9.4.64) Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, “Without saintly persons for whom I am the only destination, I do not desire to enjoy My transcendental bliss and My supreme opulences.”

One may ask: but isn't Kṛṣṇa self-sufficient? Why does he have to say, “I don't want to be without my devotees and without our exchange of love?” And how is it that Kṛṣṇa feels so much pleasure when his devotees love him?

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains it as follows: The Lord experiences a pleasure called *svarūp ānanda*, that is a pleasure (*ānanda*) which lies in his own form or personality (*svarūp*). The moment this pleasure flows out of his heart it is called *svarūp-śakty-ānanda*. It has now become a *śakti*, an energy, also called the *hlādinī śakti*.

Kṛṣṇa invests this energy into the heart of his devotee and then the devotee feels *bhagavat- prīti*, love for the supreme Lord. Witnessing the ecstatic love the devotee feels for him, the Lord becomes extremely pleased and overwhelmed. Thus, the love flows in a circle. You can only experience *bhakti*, when you are connected to this circle. *Bhakti* is something divine, something that does not originate from the human level.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī gives us an example: A musician carries music inside of himself and this gives him some pleasure. As soon as he starts playing his instrument, the music comes out of him and he can hear it and relish it even more. Kṛṣṇa is this musician. He gives what is inside of him to his devotees. Then his own sound or love comes back to him and he enjoys it very much.

In the words of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛita* (*Antya* 18.18): “Ecstatic love makes Kṛṣṇa dance, ecstatic love makes the devotee dance, ecstatic love dances itself. All three dance together in one place.” That is *bhakti*.

Bhaktidevī, who comes into our hearts, is an expansion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa's most confidential devotee. In other words, *bhakti* is very precious and Kṛṣṇa will carefully decide to whom he can give it. Therefore we need to beg for *bhakti*. We need to kneel on the ground for *bhakti*, be pre-



pared to not sleep for *bhakti*. *Bhakti* cannot be found within this world, but it comes to us when we live in an active relationship with Kṛṣṇa. *Bhakti* will heal our heart and make it whole.

Here is a practical example of how you could apply this knowledge: When you sing and dance before the deities during kirtan, first connect with the deities. Look at them and realize: “O Rādhā Madan-Mohan [or the name of your deities], you are so beautiful.” Then this feeling of appreciation for Kṛṣṇa and his love for you will make you dance in a way that gives him pleasure. Then, Kṛṣṇa becomes unthinkably happy with you and starts dancing on the altar.

In short: First connect with the love in Kṛṣṇa's heart and then dance for his pleasure. That will be your joyous dance for eternity.

## ❁❁❁ PRACTICING SILENCE ❁❁❁ TO PERFECT ONE'S JAPA

“Mauna [silence] necessitates refraining from nonsensical talking, and engaging the talking facility in the pastimes of the Lord. In that way one can chant and hear about the Lord in order to perfect his life.” (S.B. 3.24.42, purport)

We sometimes say we cannot concentrate while chanting. One reason for this is that there is too much material vibration in our minds.

This is caused by our worldly talk – engaging in arguments, praising ourselves, speaking critically about others or directly hurting someone with our words. This agitates us and creates a vibration in our minds that hinders us from concentrating on our chanting. Therefore we have to stop putting distracting vibrations into our minds.

Many of us are not aware of the following fact: We cannot divorce ourselves from our lives – the moment we sit down to chant our *japa*, our life comes along and sits down next to us; our talk sits down next to us; all our thoughts sit down next to us. Consequently, if we want to perfect our chanting we must refrain from agitating, nonsensical talk.

When we sit down to chant, our mind tends to replay what happened in the past or it estimates what might happen in the future. If we heard *Kṛṣṇa-kathā* in the past, and are looking forward to hearing *Kṛṣṇa-kathā* in the future, our mind will be with *Kṛṣṇa* and we can chant very easily.

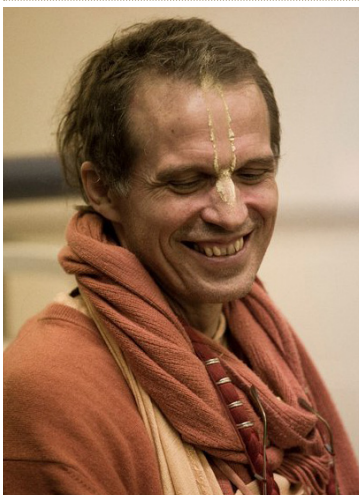
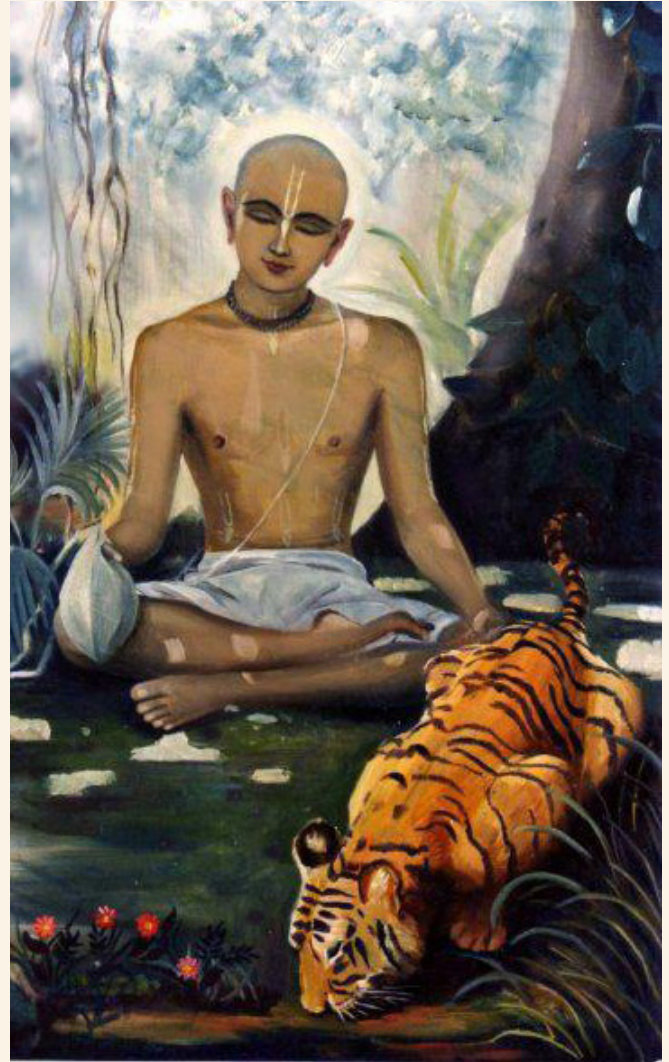


Photo by Mickey Shah

## ❁ MEET ŚĀCĪNANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

June 16th-23rd	Japa & Kīrtana Retreat, Croatia
June 23rd-30th	Summer Camp, Croatia
July 6th-15th	„Fruska Gora“ Summer Camp, Serbia
July 30th-Aug 2nd	Balarāma-Jayantī Festival, New Māyāpur, France
Aug. 9th-12th	Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, Goloka Dhāma, Germany

You can find a more detailed schedule at [www.sacinandanaswami.com](http://www.sacinandanaswami.com)