

Śaraṇagati

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THE EFFECT OF SĀDHU-SAṄGA

In a speech on November 25 in 1974, in Bombay, Śrīla Prabhupāda speaks about the effect of *sādhū-saṅga*: “The discussion on *kṛṣṇa-kathā* is *vīryavān*. Just like when there is sex life, if the man is *vīryavān*, there will be pregnancy. Similarly, if we hear from devotee, then immediate action will be there, some inclination that „Why not become Kṛṣṇa conscious?“ That is *vīryavān*. „Why not become Kṛṣṇa conscious?“ That is called *śraddhā*. *Śraddhā bhaktir anukramisyati. Taj-joṣaṇād āśu apavarga-vartmani śraddhā*. This is called *śraddhā*. If, by hearing from the devotees or in the association of devotees, one is inclined, „Now, why not become Kṛṣṇa conscious?“ that is very nice, *sukṛtinaḥ*, immediately the effect of pious activities. *Ādau śraddhā*. That is the beginning of spiritual life. And if you want to develop your spiritual life more and more, then *satām prasāṅgāt*, then you have to associate with devotees.”

There is a need to learn *how* to associate with devotees. If we are together with devotees, but only speak about material concerns then it is not yet *sādhū-saṅga*, it is material association. It becomes *sādhū-saṅga* if we speak about spiritual things. Śrīla Prabhupāda gives an appropriate example in this regard. During procreation, a seed comes into the womb of a woman, develops and eventually an influential person may be born. In the same way, if we have strong *sādhū-saṅga* by exchanging with and especially hearing from good devotees, a seed is planted in our hearts. This seed, which is called *sambandha*, is a state of being aware of our relationship with Kṛṣṇa and a desire to voluntarily serve Kṛṣṇa. In other words, if we hear from a sincere devotee of the Lord, we will become inclined towards Kṛṣṇa and we will become eager to take up the process for attaining him.

In order to experience this effect we must open our hearts in the association of such devotees. We must be ready to understand their advice – just like a woman who wishes to have a child; she is naturally open to receive her child. By this open-heartedness the seed of devotion will come into our hearts and grow nicely. It will not happen if we run away from the devotees.

It is also very good to listen to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s lectures from time to time. He has the potency to generate *bhakti* in our hearts, from where all weakness and negativity will then flee just like small animals flee when a powerful lion suddenly jumps into their midst.

from a lecture by Śacīnandana Swami on Iz, Croatia, June 18, 2012



THE POWER OF PRAYER - THE STORY OF JAI SINGH

Once there was a king named Jai Singh, who was a great devotee of the Lord. During the reign of Jai Singh the Mongols were conquering India. One by one, they attacked the small kingdoms of the country. At the same time, even between those battles there were many other conflicts. It was a time of war and instability. Jai Singh’s kingdom was very beautiful and opulent. Being desirous of that opulence the king of the neighboring kingdom tried to conquer Jai Singh’s kingdom again and again. But whenever he met Jai Singh’s army he found it to be undefeatable. Also the Mongols tried to defeat

Jai Singh many times, but they too were unsuccessful. In this way Jai Singh, who always personally led his army in battle, stayed true to his name, “*victory to the lion*.”

One day the neighboring king thought to himself, “*If I cannot conquer him by fair means, I have to employ unfair means*.” Thus he sent his spies to find out about Jai Singh’s habits. The spies soon returned with this message: Every morning Jai Singh personally worships his deity, Śrī Rādhā Raman. He starts punctually at 8 a.m. and finishes the worship by 9 a.m.

No one was to disturb him during that time. So the neighboring king decided to attack at this time. In this way, one morning, exactly one minute past eight he started his surprise attack.

Jai Singh was before Rādhā Raman. He prayed, “My Lord, I have given a vow to worship you. I cannot go and defend my people now.” There was a loud knock at the door. The prime minister’s voice shouted from outside, “King, you have to lead your army! I brought a qualified priest with me, he can do the worship!” Jai Singh answered, “Yes, but you know that I have given this vow to Rādhā Raman that I will always worship him personally.” “We are all lost”, said the distraught minister, who then went to the king’s mother for help. She came to Jai Singh and said to him “My son, what do you think the Lord appreciates more? – If you protect his devotees or if you dress him in a dhoti! As your mother I order you – lead your army!!” Jai Singh said, “No mother, I’ve given a promise to Rādhā Raman.” “Is this all you have to say to your mother? Our soldiers will be slaughtered. Some of the women will be violated and all the citizens will be made slaves.” “I cannot break my promise”, was Jai Singh’s final word. The mother said, “So be it, then we women of this palace will all burn our bodies to ashes so that the enemy will not lay his hands on us!” The king prayed, “My Lord, please protect me. Please protect my people. My Lord, I have said no to my mother because I want to be true to my promise to you. Now you must save us.”

At this moment something wonderful happened. Jai Singh had a war horse which was extremely powerful and almost as big as an elephant. Jai Singh was the only person who could ride it. Suddenly the servants at the barn of the king’s horses saw a warrior running up to the barn with great speed and force. He wore the armor of the king, his face covered and he yelled, “Make the horse ready!!!” A few moments later the horse ran out of the palace. The enemy’s army was frightened, “Oh no, the king is coming!” The warrior had a sword in both of his hands and immediately began cutting himself through the army of the enemy. However, everyone who encountered the warrior became supremely blissful, even when they fell to ground by his sword. Jai Singh’s army enthusiastically shouted again and again, “Jai Singh ki jaya!”



Meanwhile Jai Singh sat before Rādhā Raman, continuing his prayer for protection while he dressed the deity. When he wanted to give earrings to the Lord he saw that there was only one although he was sure that he had brought two. At that time the enemy’s army was slain. Soon the prime minister found Jai Singh in the temple and started to praise him for fighting the battle single-handedly. “I was not fighting at all”, said the surprised Jai Singh. “I was doing my puja here.” When the minister finally took him to his war horse to show him that it was exhausted from the battle, Jai Singh understood: Rādhā Raman had fought the battle. Later, Jai Singh found the missing earring of Rādhā Raman on the battle grounds and built a temple at that place. The earring is still being worshipped there today.

This is the power of prayer. The king prayed with sincerity for the Lord’s protection and the Lord took care of everything.

from a lecture by Śacīnandana Swami in Russia, September 27, 2012

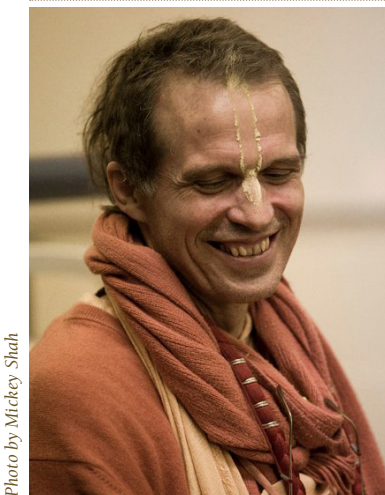


Photo by Mickey Shah

MEET ŚACĪNANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

Oct. 29- Nov. 28	Kartik Vrata, Vrindavan, India
Dec. 1- 6	Japa Retreat, Varṣāṇā, India
Dec. 9- 15	Govardhana Retreat, Govardhana, India
Dec. 28- Jan. 1	Saṅga Mela 2012, Goloka-dhāma, Germany
Feb. 21- 25	Vyāsa-pūjā, Zagreb, Croatia

You can find a more detailed schedule at www.sacinandanaswami.com