

Śaraṇagati

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PERFORM PURE BHAKTI RIGHT NOW

Often, as we grow older, we ask ourselves what the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is. The answer is: pure or unalloyed *bhakti*. When we hear that, we might feel discouraged, noticing that we are not pure. However, when our *ācāryas* speak of unalloyed *bhakti* they refer to the purity of *bhakti*, not to the purity of the performer of *bhakti*. This is a huge difference. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that an activity done for Kṛṣṇa in the favorable mood of wanting to please him, and which is free from mixtures of selfish desires, qualifies as pure *bhakti*. In other words: whenever we do something for Kṛṣṇa to please him, and we have no other intention, then in that moment, we acted with unalloyed *bhakti*.

This means that even when a non-devotee neighbor comes to the temple and brings something to the altar of Gaura-Nitāi with the desire to please the Lord (or his devotees), then he has performed an act of unalloyed *bhakti*, although he himself as the performer is not pure.

This means is that no matter where we stand in our devotional life, we can always focus on this understanding: “I am doing this for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. I am giving this to them, it is theirs. This is for their sake. Everything is for their enjoyment. It is not meant for me.” If we have this consciousness during our service, we are acting with pure *bhakti* – for as long as we can stay on that platform.

Obviously not all of us are able to stay on this platform. We return to other levels where we again think of our own interests, desires and plans. For instance, we may offer an action to Kṛṣṇa partially because our desire to serve him is mixed with us simply liking to do that particular activity. Then it is not pure *bhakti*. But when we do something just for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure – for a moment, a second or a millisecond – that is pure *bhakti*. And it is eternal. Even when we die, the eternal benefit stays with us. That act of the neighbor who comes to the temple not knowing much about *sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana tattva*, and offers a fruit thinking, “This is for God, I offer this to him on the altar.”...that is pure *bhakti*. Kṛṣṇa will never forget it.

Everything else goes, but the moments of pure *bhakti* stay. And as they accumulate, our ‘*bhakti*-account’ grows.

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa is so pleased by a moment of *bhakti* that he is willing to forget all our mistakes and just consider that one act of *bhakti*. In such cases, he offers his devotee a transcendental result beyond the devotee’s wildest imagination. *Bhakti* is such a nice thing because it is accessible to everyone. Let us therefore immediately start to engage in unalloyed devotional service.

☪ from a lecture by Śacīnandana Swami in Zagreb, Croatia, February 22, 2013



BECOMING HUMBLE

This famous verse from the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* (3) describes how one should chant to awaken one’s love for Kṛṣṇa: “One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor yet is always prepared to give all respect to others can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord.” (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi 17.31)

There is a secret in the practice of humility: you can become humble if you practice tolerance. The example of tolerance Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gives is that of a tree. When someone hurts a tree it doesn’t stop giving its shade and fruits. And when the tree has an unfulfilled need, like no water, it doesn’t protest, it simply tolerates.

If you tolerate the mistakes of others and the difficulties coming from the environment, you will start feeling humble. Humility is the one quality Kṛṣṇa wants to see before showering the *nāma-kṛpā* (mercy).

You can apply the following three steps in order to practice tolerance:

- 1) When something happens that upsets you – don't give in to your automatic reaction, stop!
- 2) Then take on a spiritual perspective: whatever happens is arranged by the divine couple, there is a reason behind everything. Ask yourself what you need to learn in this situation.
- 3) Choose a proper reaction based in the spiritual perspective.

☪ from a seminar by Śacīnandana Swami in Varṣāṇā, India, December 2, 2012



RELIEF FROM KALI-YUGA BY KṚṢṆA KATHĀ

“But even a person perpetually condemned to the miseries of material existence can get relief from bondage if he simply agrees to hear only Kṛṣṇa-kathā. In this age of Kali, the process of hearing Kṛṣṇa-kathā is the most effective means to gain release from unwanted family affection and thus find permanent freedom in life. The age of Kali is full of sinful reactions, and people are more and more addicted to the qualities of this age, but simply by hearing and chanting of Kṛṣṇa-kathā one is sure to go back to Godhead. Therefore, people should be trained to hear only Kṛṣṇa-kathā -- by all means -- in order to get relief from all miseries.”
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.44, purport)

Even on the spiritual path we cannot avoid that our karma ripens and affects us in some way. We may, for example, become attracted by the trends of modern society. That is natural.

However, Śrīla Prabhupāda says that “... simply by hearing and chanting of Kṛṣṇa-kathā one is sure to go back to Godhead. Therefore, people should be trained to hear only Kṛṣṇa-kathā by all means in order to get relief from all miseries.” What type of training is Prabhupāda referring to?

In the *Bhāgavatam* (1.3.44, purport) he explains that we have

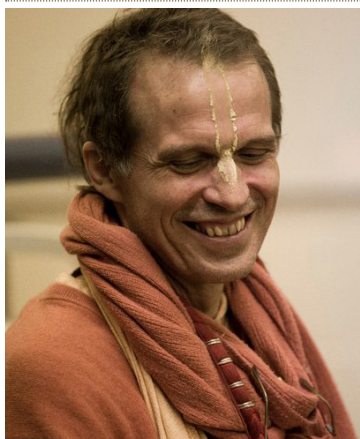
to learn to hear with rapt attention. According to the dictionary ‘rapt’ means ‘lifted up and carried away’. When we hear with rapt attention our mind is carried away by the *kathā* just like flower pollen attaches itself to the wind and is then lifted up into the sky. What we have to learn – according to Dhyān Candra Gosvāmī – is “to somehow make our mind one with Kṛṣṇa-kathā and make Kṛṣṇa-kathā one with our mind.” In other words, there is mutual pervasion: to focus our mind on the Kṛṣṇa-kathā and to have the experience of being lifted up and carried away.

Other definitions of rapt attention are ‘to become totally absorbed’ and ‘to be transported with emotion.’ The latter is for those of us who are already longer in the process of *bhakti* and whose hearts are very receptive to Kṛṣṇa. They will be transported with emotion.

In summary, during Kṛṣṇa-kathā we have to perform this one service: to bring our mind to the *kathā* and let the *kathā* enter our mind. We have to try this and then the *kathā* will lift us up and carry us away.

☪ from a seminar by Śacīnandana Swami in Goloka Dhama, Germany, December 30, 2012

Photo by Mickey Shah



☪ MEET ŚACĪNANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

Mar. 10-15	Kīrtana Melā, Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, India
Apr. 11-14	Yoga Expo, Stuttgart, Germany
Apr. 20-21	Zukunft Erde Festival, Berlin, Germany
May 3-5	Sacred Space Retreat, Switzerland

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