

# Śaranagatī

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## AN IMPORTANT DECISION

A sincere servant of the Lord has made up his or her mind that life is meant for service. I feel that is a very important decision. Most of us have made up our minds that “*My life is for my pleasure and my happiness.*” But more and more, as the years pass by, we begin to understand that a life dedicated only to one’s own happiness, one’s own pleasure, is an insignificant life.

Just think about it: do you ever think about the attempts of other conditioned souls to become happy? Is this even an important subject? Is it interesting? Truly, all efforts in this regards are so insignificant if we think about it. People tend to think the whole universe is about them! They’re in the center and they do everything only to fulfill their own interests. But isn’t that so small, so absolutely insignificant? Isn’t that so absolutely boring?

Now let us go from this thought to ourselves: if we think like this – “*How can I be happy?*” – we join the club of the boring people, who have a boring, insignificant life based on the illusion that this world is meant to make them happy and to fulfill their expectations. But it’s not like that. We are not in the center of the universe. Our happiness and distress is something which only our false egos take seriously. It is nothing of any consequence. It’s something that just rolls over us by the laws of karma. Why involve ourselves in it?

What actually gives our life meaning is if we can do some *sevā*, some service. If we are able to do that, our life becomes touched. Touched by Kṛṣṇa, touched by the spiritual master, touched by the devotees of Kṛṣṇa – our life becomes transformed. Only a



life in which we move ourselves out of the center and put the service to a divine personality there, becomes a useful and a transformed life. Get out of the center! It’s wrong. Put the Lord there instead!

from a lecture by Śacīnandana Swami in Vṛndāvana, India, fall 2011.

## THIS LIFE IS FOR YOU, KṚṢṆA



Once, while I was walking through the villages of Vraja together with a friend and other devotees, we saw a group of young village girls transporting water pots on their heads. We wondered how they balanced up to three pots in this way, walking and joking at the same time. So I asked them through an interpreter and one girl replied, “*You just have to remember that the pot is there. You can’t suddenly lie down, but otherwise you can do everything as long as you know it is there.*” What a nice answer!

In the same way, as long as we know that Kṛṣṇa is there – which is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness – we can go through life comfortably. But alas, as soon as we forget that Kṛṣṇa is there, our life “*pours over us and we get wet*”. Have we not all had this experience?

So a devotee should go through life always remembering that Kṛṣṇa is there. Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, “My dear Arjuna, you should fight, and you should always think of me.” It is something we all have to train ourselves to do. The best way to train this “Kṛṣṇa-is-there” consciousness is to remind ourselves “I will do this for Kṛṣṇa.” before starting any activity.

This famous verse expresses this idea:

*kāyena vācā manasendriyair vā  
buddhyātmanā vānusr̥ta-svabhāvāt  
karoti yad yat sakalaṁ parasmai  
nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayet tat*

“In accordance with one’s particular nature, whatever one does with body, words, mind, senses, intelligence or purified consciousness one should offer to the Supreme, thinking, ‘This is for the pleasure of Lord Nārāyaṇa.’” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 11.2.36)

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, commenting on this verse, says that our activities become pure if we offer them to Kṛṣṇa. And this does not only refer to worship. He writes, “Just as the materialistic person, starting in the morning, performs such actions as urinating, passing stool, washing his mouth, brushing his teeth, bathing, seeing, hearing and speaking for the purpose of material happiness and performs rituals for worship of devatās and ancestors, so the devotee does all these activities as service to the Lord.” In other words, we should involve Kṛṣṇa into all aspects of our daily life. Then our activities, even the ordinary ones, will be purified.

A beautiful example in this connection is the holy river Gaṅgā. Although sewage water and other dirty things are thrown into the river, the Gaṅgā is considered to always be pure. This is because impure things become pure by contact with the pure Gaṅgā. In the same way even ordinary activities – that can be compared to the impure sewage water flowing into the Gaṅgā – become pure, when they are performed with the understanding “I’m offering this life to you, Kṛṣṇa.” They become pure by contact with the pure. This point is often not emphasized enough, but for the practitioner of *bhakti* it is important to understand. Of course we offer worship to Kṛṣṇa, of course we offer our chanting of the holy name and our dancing to Kṛṣṇa. But we should also be Kṛṣṇa conscious throughout the day by offering all of our activities to Kṛṣṇa with the understanding that everything is for our Lord.

from a lecture by Śacinandana Swami in Fruska Gora, Serbia, July 8th, 2013.

## WE CAN EXPECT MERCY

We have been given the holy names by the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and are therefore also in the supremely fortunate position where we can expect mercy. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has this to say:

“Ajāmila chanted without faith – because he was dying.

What will happen to someone who chants with faith?

Ajāmila chanted while dying.

What will happen to someone who chants while living?

Ajāmila chanted to indicate his son.

What will happen to someone who chants to indicate the Lord?

Ajāmila was most sinful.

What will happen if a sinless person chants?”

(Sārārtha-darśinī, 6.2.49, commentary)

from a letter of Śacinandana Swami, 2013.

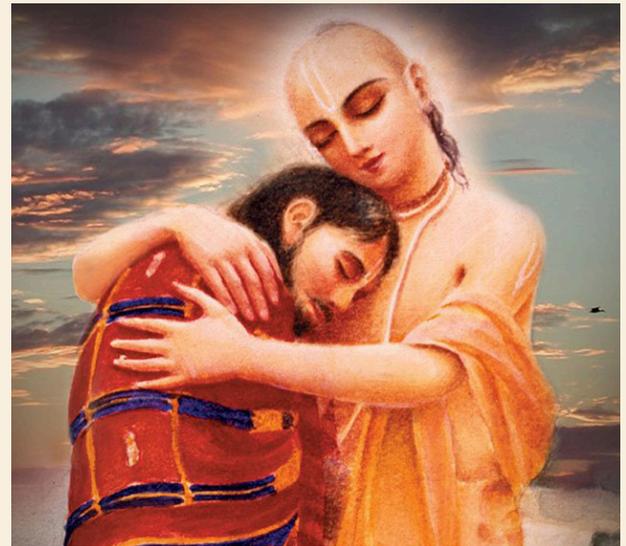


Photo by Mickey Shah

## MEET ŚACINANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

Dec. 28 - Jan. 1 Saṅga Melā, Goloka Dhāma, Germany

Jan. 17-19 Yoga Expo, Munich, Germany

Feb. 8-10 Seminar, Zagreb, Croatia

Feb. 11-13 Vyāsa-pūjā celebration, Zagreb, Croatia

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