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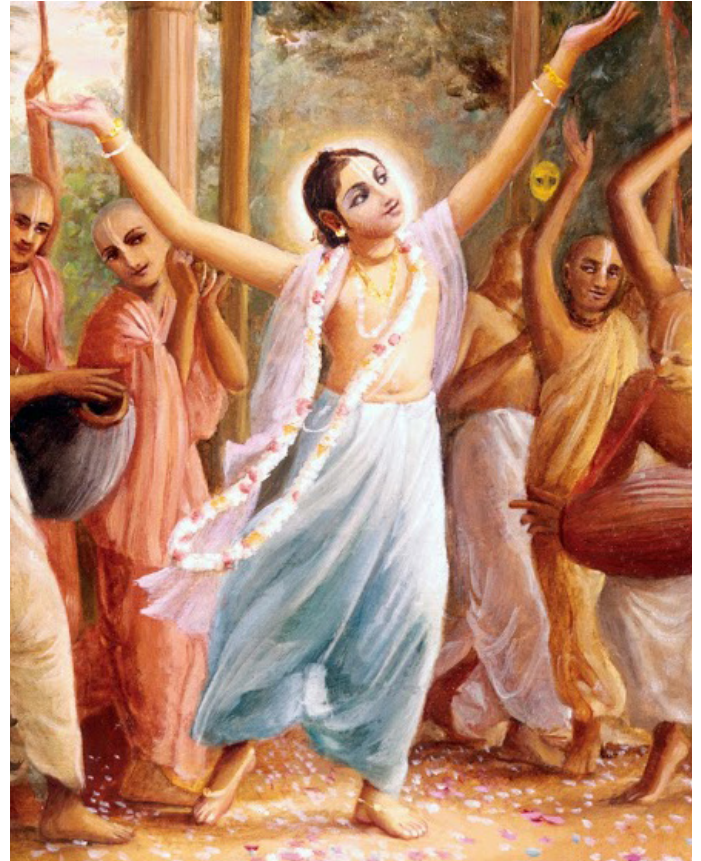
THEY GIVE IT TO THE HUMBLE

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu explains how to chant in the famous *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. So that we can have some idea about it, I would like to go through the first three opening verses. Mahāprabhu starts by saying that chanting cleans the mirror of the heart from all impurities. Then, in the second verse, he says that although chanting is equipped with so much power there is a problem with the chanter. Because of *aparādhas* we don't have a firm attraction to the holy name. This experience has been a heart-breaking problem in my life. How is it with you? Do you not also sometimes feel insufficiently attracted to the holy name? This is a problem. In the third verse Caitanya Mahāprabhu gives us a solution as to how to overcome our lack of taste for the holy name. He says you must chant in a specific way: you must become humble. You should become humble in the face of seeing how much you are still not able to take up the process you were given. The process is so simple, but we are so over-complicated. Everything is given freely and we still have no attraction, although we strive for it. Thinking like this, being a little self-reflective and honest makes you humble. Humility rests on being honest with oneself and coming to a real assessment of oneself. And someone who tries to be humble gets the focus and taste. In spiritual life there is an interesting rule: the way up – that is to higher levels of *bhakti* – is always the way down. You must first become truly humble. Everything will be given to you, if you are realistic about yourself. Nityānanda Prabhu gives his mercy to you when you learn to bow down low. In the fifth chapter of the *Ādi-līlā*, verse 208 (Cc.) it is said:

*preme matta nityānanda kṛpā-avatāra
uttama, adhama, kichu nā kare vicāra*

Because Lord Nityānanda is intoxicated by ecstatic love and is a kṛpā-avatāra (an incarnation of mercy), he doesn't distinguish between good and bad.

It's a very famous verse. But please take note carefully – here comes the one qualification in the next verse: *"He delivers all those who fall down before him."* (Cc. *Ādi*, 5.209)



To sum up the process by which Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda spread their ecstatic love: They give it to the humble. Nityānanda doesn't distinguish who is good and who is bad, he delivers *prema* to those who have this qualification, *paḍaye tāre*, who fall down before him. If you are proud you will not fall down before him.

I remember a famous answer to a challenge by Śrīla Prabhupāda. At the end of a lecture in Seattle (Sept. 30, 1968) a student said, *"I feel that as human beings we are more or less equal, so I don't feel I have to bow down to anyone."* Maybe he saw that the devotees were bowing down to Śrīla Prabhupāda and was therefore a little disturbed. Now this was Prabhupāda's answer – you'll see, it's absolutely brilliant: *"You have diagnosed your own disease. That is the disease of materialism. Everyone is thinking that 'I want to be master. I don't wish to bow down myself.'" Prabhupāda continued, "Now we have to find out 'Where I shall be happy even by bowing down?' That is Kṛṣṇa. Your bowing down will not be stopped, because you are meant for that. But if you bow down to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's representative, you become happy. Test this. You have to bow down. If you don't bow down to Kṛṣṇa and his representative, then you will be forced to bow down to something else, māyā. That is your position."*



This question is very important: where shall I be happy even when bowing down? Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “That is Kṛṣṇa.” It makes you so happy. Bow down to Kṛṣṇa – you have to find that place. Find that place in your life where you become happy by bowing down. Some aspect of Kṛṣṇa, some form, some deity, some *līlā* – where you understand: my Lord’s qualities are so good, this is the Lord of my heart.

Anyone who falls down before Nityānanda Prabhu, even if he or she is a sinful and fallen person, will be delivered. Even if you have no qualification, you are neither learned for instance, nor mind-controlled, neither pious nor *dharmic* – all these things. If you have this one-quarter of submission, that is to be humble, fall or bow down and really ask for mercy, then you stand a very, very, very good chance. Everything is overlooked and your path is clear. This is a religion of falling down. It’s not about this or that qualification. It is about humility.

This is a new development in spiritual traditions. The proof given that it really works are Jagāi and Mādhāi. They were really bad. I mean, the Rolling Stones were pious singers in a choir compared to Jagāi and Mādhāi. Jagāi and Mādhāi were not just some historical figures who died long ago, they represent the most fallen people in Kali-yuga and that’s why their example is quoted again and again. Their example shows the mercy of Gaura-Nitāi. And both of them bowed down to Nityānanda, rather they fell down.

We might wonder: how is it that the highest type of devotional service is offered to the most fallen people in Kali-yuga? Does it work? Do we absolutely need no qualifications? It will work, if you fall down. How? Why? *Kṛpā-avatāra* – the incarnation of mercy. I believe this is our chance: to connect where the mercy is given without hesitation. What can we do? How qualified are we for spiritual life? We don’t even have a clear understanding of who we are – the basis is not clear. Theoretically we know that we are not the body, but practically? Does it show in our life? How high is our tolerance level? How free are we from anxiety? Let’s be honest: we are what we are. We are in need of mercy. We need shelter. It’s not a luxury. It’s a need – a desperate need. We want to practice spiritual life – but where will we get it? At a place where no one will ask for our qualifications. Only this one qualification must be there: bow down mister, bow down sister. Everything will be given to you when you come to that place. This is the specialty of the Kali-yuga-avatāras. Don’t practice spiritual life mechanically. Humility is not something you can do mechanically. It must come from inside. It must be real. You have to enter the world of the small people, the humble. The way down is the way up.

from a lecture by Śācinandana Swami in Zagreb, Croatia, February 12th, 2014.

THE WAY DOWN IS THE WAY UP

Fall on the ground
and he will lift you
higher than the heavens.

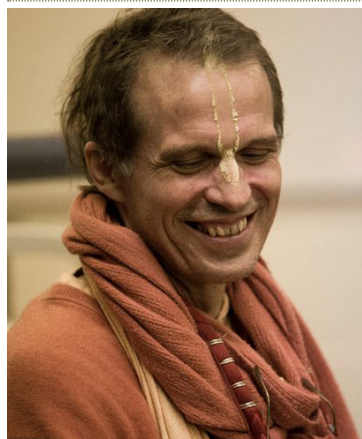
Surrender all
and he will give you
more than you could imagine.

Call his name meekly
and he will open the door
wider than the oceans.

Poem by Śācinandana Swami, June 29th, 2013.



Photo by Mickey Shah



MEET ŚĀCĪNANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

Mar. 15-16 Ādivas ceremony & Gaura-pūrṇimā, Berlin, Germany

May 10-11 24 hour Kīrtana, Birmingham, UK

May 23-26 Sādhu Saṅga Retreat, North Carolina, USA

May 31-Jun. 7 Psychology3000 Festival, Ukraine

Read more: www.sacinandanaswami.com