

Saraṇāgati

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THE HIDDEN SECRETS OF BHAKTI PART 1 OF 3

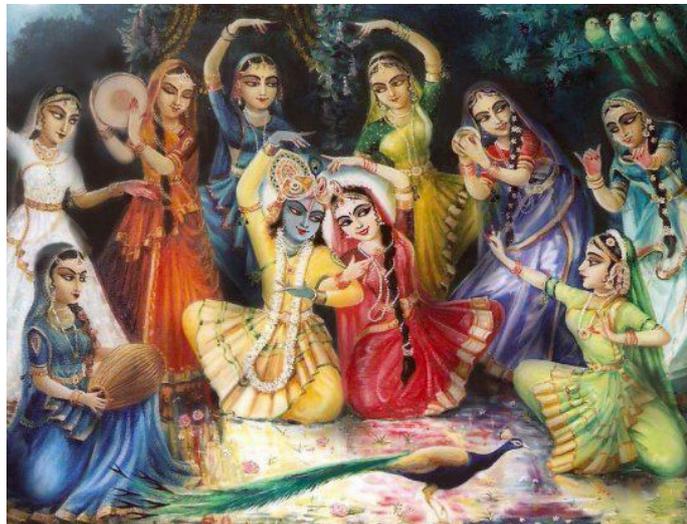
When observing the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we face one dilemma: on the one hand we often hear that devotees find the process very difficult to perform; on the other hand we have heard and read Śrīla Prabhupāda saying that it is very easy and that those who practice it experience steadiness, ecstasy and love of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa himself similarly says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*: *su-sukhaṁ kartum*, “It is joyfully performed”.

If we do not experience the above-mentioned results then something must be wrong – either with the statements of our *ācāryas* or with our application of the process they have given us. A common answer to this question – why we are not experiencing the ecstasy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness – is that our hearts are not pure and that we are committing *aparādhas* along the path. Another reason might be that devotees do not properly understand the secrets of *bhakti*, what *bhakti* actually is.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the most competent speaker on this subject, gave us the definition of *bhakti* in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11),

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

“When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action. The devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favorably, as Kṛṣṇa desires.”



In simple words, *uttamā bhakti* or pure devotional service is an activity which is performed with the intention to please Kṛṣṇa, without any ulterior motive. Examined closer, the verse reveals the secret of *bhakti*, a formula of three things that one should do and two understandings one should have. The latter are the secondary ingredients of *bhakti* and will be discussed in the next newsletter. The first three, which are the primary characteristics of *bhakti*, are:

- (1) doing something for Kṛṣṇa,
- (2) using body, mind and words
- (3) with the intention to please Kṛṣṇa.

And this third part – the *intention* to please Kṛṣṇa – is most essential. Without it, we cannot speak of *bhakti*.

To illustrate this point Jīva Gosvāmī gives us the example of Kaiśa: Kṛṣṇa likes fighting, but cannot really experience this in the spiritual world, where everyone serves him lovingly. Thus, one of the many purposes of Kṛṣṇa for coming to this material world was to experience a good fight. So in fighting Kṛṣṇa, Kaiśa performed an activity directed towards Kṛṣṇa that Kṛṣṇa likes (in other words it was even something favorable) and he engaged his body, mind and words. Only one thing was missing: the intention to serve Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, a cooking pot that is used to cook nice sweets for

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on the altar is not performing *bhakti* since it is dead matter and therefore cannot have any intention to please Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura informs us that just as a medical capsule cannot be effective if it is empty/without medicine, similarly the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is an empty sound vibration if it is not chanted with the intention to please Kṛṣṇa. This holds true for any of the processes of *bhakti*.

Kṛṣṇa loves his devotees and he is controlled by the love of his devotees. In other words, he is a person. When you do something for a person he wants to see that you do this to please him. It cannot be an empty, mindless, automated activity. There is no *rasa* or taste in such an exchange. Kṛṣṇa wants his devotees to offer something with love. He is not interested in material ingredients.

Viśvanāth Cakravārti Ṭhākura in his commentary to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.81.4) reveals to us how interested Kṛṣṇa is in the love of his devotees. He explains that when a devotee offers Kṛṣṇa water, a fruit and a flower with love, Kṛṣṇa, being so anxious to accept the loving offering of his devotee not only eats the fruit and drinks the water, but he also eats the flower!

We have a loving Lord. If he sees you are trying, he feels obliged. He is not judgmental. He has no place in his heart for the fault of the devotee. He only wants you to be on the right road. And if we are, if we practice the process of *bhakti* properly, then there will be immediate results.

(to be continued)

☪ From a lecture by Śacinandana Swami in Zagreb, Croatia, February 10, 2014.

VRNDĀVANA ATMOSPHERE

In Vṛndāvana, when Kṛṣṇa is resting, his friends are all engaged in some service. Somebody is fanning him, someone else is massaging him. But there is equality; none of them thinks that Kṛṣṇa is greater than them. No. They think, “Kṛṣṇa is our friend, our very nice friend, very beautiful friend, and very powerful friend.” Every day they go to the forest, and they see a demon being killed by Kṛṣṇa. By this they become very much devoted. Their love for Kṛṣṇa increases by seeing Kṛṣṇa’s activities, beauty and opulence. Similarly, the *gopīs* do not think of Kṛṣṇa as God. They do not know. Even Mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja – all the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana – do not know, neither do they care to know whether Kṛṣṇa is God or not. They simply love Kṛṣṇa, without any identification.

We are worshipping God, Kṛṣṇa, because we are impressed with so many things. For example that Kṛṣṇa is the supreme Lord, that he is the absolute truth. And therefore we are only a little inclined, “All right, let us serve Kṛṣṇa if he is God.” You see? There is some condition: “If Kṛṣṇa is God, so if I do not love him, if I do not worship him, something wrong may happen to me.” That is business. But amongst the *gopīs* and the cowherd boys and the other inhabitants of Vṛndāvana, there is no such business. “We love Kṛṣṇa unconditionally. That’s all. We do not know anything except Kṛṣṇa.” This is the Vṛndāvana atmosphere.

☪ Excerpt from a lecture by Śrīla Prabhupāda given in Los Angeles, Sep. 17, 1972.

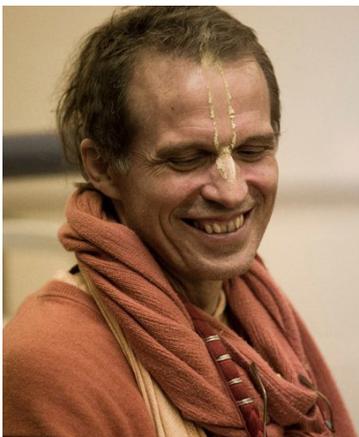
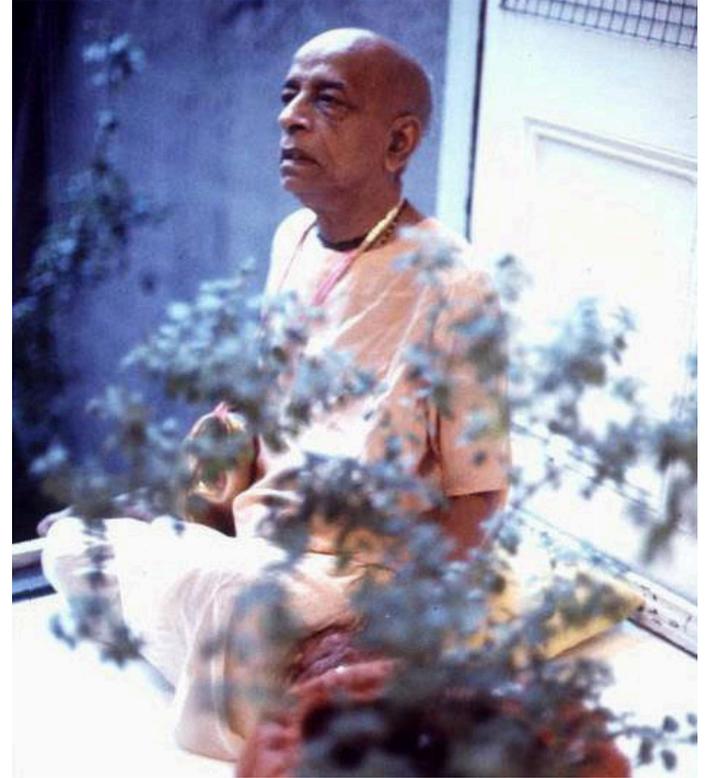


Photo by Mickey Shah

MEET ŚACĪNANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

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

Jun. 30- Jul. 6 Kīrtana Course, Rādhadeśa, Belgium

Jul. 4-13 Fruska Goranga Camp, Fruska Gora, Serbia

Jul. 28-Aug. 2 Bhakti Retreat, Switzerland

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