

*hañse gurau mayi bhaktiānurvṛtyā
 vitṛṣṇayā dvandva-tiikṣayā ca
 sarvatra jantor vyasanāvagatyā
 jīñāsayā tapasehā-nivṛtyā*
*mat-karmabhir mat-kathayā ca nityam
 mad-deva-saṅgād guṇa-kīrtanān me
 nīrvaira-sāmyopāśamena putrā
 jīhāsayā deha-gehātma-buddheḥ*
*adhyātma-yogena vivikta-sevayā
 prāṇendriyāmābhijayena sadhryak
 sac-śraddhayā brahmacaryeṇa śāśvad
 asampranādena yamena vācām*
*sarvatra mad-bhāva-vicakṣaṇena
 jñānena vijñāna-virājitena
 yogena dhṛty-udyama-satva-yukto
 līṅgaḥ vyapohet kuśalo 'ham-ākhyam*

hañse – who is a *paramahansa*, or the most exalted, spiritually advanced person; *gurau* – to the spiritual master; *mayi* – unto Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *bhaktiā* – by devotional service; *anurvṛtyā* – by following; *vitṛṣṇayā* – by detachment from sense gratification; *dvandva* – of the dualities of the material world; *tiikṣayā* – by tolerance; *ca* – also; *sarvatra* – everywhere; *jantor* – of the living entity; *vyasana* – the miserable condition of life; *avagatyā* – by realizing; *jīñāsayā* – by inquiring about the truth; *tapasā* – by practicing austerities and penances; *ihā-nivṛtyā* – by giving up the endeavor for sense enjoyment; *mat-karmabhir* – by working for Me; *mat-kathayā* – by hearing topics about Me; *ca* – also; *nityam* – always; *mat-deva-saṅgāt* – by association with My devotees; *guṇa-kīrtanāt me* – by chanting and glorifying My transcendental qualities; *nīrvaira* – being without enmity; *sāmya* – seeing everyone equally by spiritual understanding; *opāśamena* – by subduing anger, lamentation and so on; *putrāḥ* – O sons; *jīhāsayā* – by desiring to give up; *deha* – with the body; *geha* – with the home; *ātma-buddheḥ* – identification of the self; *adhyātma-yogena* – by study of the revealed scriptures; *vivikta-sevayā* – by living in a solitary place; *prāṇa* – the life air; *indriya* – the senses; *ātma* – the mind; *abhijayena* – by controlling; *sadhryak* – completely; *śraddhayā* – by developing faith in the scriptures; *brahmacaryeṇa* – by observing celibacy; *śāśvat* – always; *asampranādena* – by not being bewildered; *yamena* – by restraint; *vācām* – of words; *sarvatra* – everywhere; *mad-bhāva* – thinking of Me; *vicakṣaṇena* – by observing; *jñānena* – by development of knowledge; *vijñāna* – by practical application of knowledge; *virājitena* – illumined; *yogena* – by practice of *bhakti-yoga*; *dhṛti* – patience; *udyama* – enthusiasm; *satva* – discretion; *yuktaḥ* – endowed with; *līṅgam* – the cause of material bondage; *vyapohet* – one can give up; *kuśalah* – in full auspiciousness; *aham-ākhyam* – false ego, false identification with the material world.

O My sons, you should accept a highly elevated *paramahansa*, a spiritually advanced spiritual master. In this way, you should place your faith and love in Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You should detest sense gratification and tolerate the duality of pleasure and pain, which are like the seasonal changes of summer and winter. Try to realize the miserable condition of living entities, who are miserable even in the higher planetary systems. Philosophically inquire about the truth. Then undergo all kinds of austerities and penances for the sake of devotional service. Give up the endeavor for sense enjoyment and engage in the service of the Lord. Listen to discussions about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and always associate with devotees. Chant about and glorify the Supreme Lord, and look upon everyone equally on the spiritual platform. Give up enmity and subdue anger and lamentation. Abandon identifying the self with the body and the home, and practice reading the revealed scriptures. Live in a secluded place and practice the process by which you can completely control your life air, mind and senses. Have full faith in the revealed scriptures, the Vedic literatures, and always observe celibacy. Perform your prescribed duties and avoid unnecessary talks. Always thinking of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, acquire knowledge from the right source. Thus practicing *bhakti-yoga*, you will patiently and enthusiastically be elevated in knowledge and will be able to give up the false ego.

Purport: In these four verses, Rṣabhadeva tells His sons how they can be freed from the false identification arising from false ego and material conditional life. One gradually becomes liberated by practicing as mentioned above. All these prescribed methods enable one to give up the material body (*līṅgaḥ vyapohet*) and be situated in his original spiritual body. First of all one has to accept a bona fide spiritual master. This is advocated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu: śrī-guru-pādaśrayaḥ*. To be freed from the entanglement of the material world, one has to approach a spiritual master. *Tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacchet*. By questioning the spiritual master and by serving him, one can advance in spiritual life. When one engages in devotional service, naturally the attraction for personal comfort – for eating, sleeping and dressing – is reduced. By associating with the devotee, a spiritual standard is maintained. The word *mad-deva-saṅgāt* is very important. There are many so-called religions devoted to the worship of various demigods, but here good association means association with one who simply accepts Kṛṣṇa as his worshipable Deity.

Another important item is *dvandva-tiikṣā*. As long as one is situated in the material world, there must be pleasure and pain arising from the material body. As Kṛṣṇa advises in *Bhagavad-gītā, tāms tiikṣasva bhārata*. One has to learn how to tolerate the temporary pains and pleasures of this material world. One must also be detached from his family and practice celibacy. Sex with one's wife according to the scriptural injunctions is also accepted as *brahmacarya* (celibacy), but illicit sex is opposed to religious principles, and it hampers advancement in spiritual consciousness. Another important word is *vijñāna-virājita*. Everything should be done very scientifically and consciously. One should be a realized soul. In this way, one can give up the entanglement of material bondage.

As Śrī Madhvācārya points out, the sum and substance of these four *ślokas* is that one should refrain from acting out of a desire for sense gratification and should instead always engage in the Lord's loving service. In other words, *bhakti-yoga* is the acknowledged path of liberation. Śrīla Madhvācārya quotes from the *Adhyātma*:

*ātmano 'vihitam karma
 varjayitvānya-karmaṇaḥ
 kāmaśya ca paritṛyāgo
 nirtheṭy ahur utamāḥ*

One should perform activities only for the benefit of the soul; any other activity should be given up. When a person is situated in this way, he is said to be desireless. Actually a living entity cannot be totally desireless, but when he desires the benefit of the soul and nothing else, he is said to be desireless.

Spiritual knowledge is *jñāna-vijñāna-samanvitam*. When one is fully equipped with *jñāna* and *vijñāna*, he is perfect. *Jñāna* means that one understands the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu, to be the Supreme Being. *Vijñāna* refers to the activities that liberate one from the ignorance of material existence. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.9.31): *jñānath parama-guhyam me yad vijñāna-samanvitam*. Knowledge of

the Supreme Lord is very confidential, and the supreme knowledge by which one understands Him furthers the liberation of all living entities. This knowledge is *vijñāna*. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9):

*janma karma ca me divyam
evam yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma
naiti mām eti so 'rjuna*

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna."

Lecture given by Śrīla Suhotra Swami: So these verses and this purport are like a tremendous mine of so many valuable jewels. So it is not possible in the short period of one class to cover all the points that are presented. But one thing that is deeply impressing in these instructions of Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva is how serious Kṛṣṇa consciousness is. Actually we can see in this verse a complete program is given by which we may achieve perfection. The aim is going back home, back to Godhead after this one life in this body. And how that is to be done is very, very clearly laid out by Śrī Rṣabhadeva. Such a great and transcendental authority is Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva. He is the incarnation of God and He is speaking with the deepest compassion not only for His own sons, but for all living entities. Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva is not intending to make spiritual life difficult. But we can see, the standard He sets is the highest standard of purity. And His message, this is a consistent theme throughout Lord Rṣabhadeva's teachings that this is what you MUST do. You have this chance in this human form of life. So He is speaking with such a compassion, and yet such urgency, "Now, use this life in the way I am describing. Don't speculate, don't follow your own concocted path. Don't try to 'cut corners.' In other words, don't try to find an easy way around these instructions, I am giving, because then you will fail." And so Lord Rṣabhadeva is speaking with such intense desire that His sons and all of us – even now, right now – that we may achieve perfection in this life, we may go back home, back to Godhead, our human birth may not be wasted.

So of all these different points there is just one that I would like to focus on. In the purport Śrīla Prabhupāda writes this sentence, "By associating with the devotee, a spiritual standard is maintained." This is very, very important, we are hearing here of this very sublime and pure standard which Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva says is absolutely necessary. So how will we keep such a standard for our birth is so low. Our training, our background for most of us – except for the little one's who are born to devotees – but for most of us, the big one's in this room, our training is no training at all. And because of that very bad background, therefore we are very susceptible to *asat-saṅga*, to impure association, beginning – as I was saying the other day – with the thoughts of our mind. And this present culture, this present age is so full of sinful engagements, just waiting out there to swallow us up. There is tremendous demoniac intelligence at work out there. So clever to invent newer, and newer ways of going to hell very quickly. As quick as possible go to hell! Our qualification for performing spiritual life is zero and the atmosphere is not at all conducive for spiritual life either. So then what is our hope? But the hope is here that, "By associating with the devotee, a spiritual standard is maintained."

And this is why Śrīla Prabhupāda has established this great International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. This ISKCON is intended by Prabhupāda to do one thing in the midst of this hellish Kali-yuga – and that is to serve as a firm shelter and association. Actually in this ISKCON movement Śrīla Prabhupāda is giving us his association even now through his *vāṇī*, through his instructions. He has established this very same standard that was given millions of years ago by Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva, that is very, very clearly explained here. And it is possible even now, in this Age, even for those like us who are so fallen to maintain this standard if we keep association with Śrīla Prabhupāda and his movement. Now, there are so many who are quick to say, "This is so troublesome. There are problems in this ISKCON movement." And they can bring out a big, huge book *ISKCON-problems* and open it up, putting the *Bhāgavatam* one side. Who cares about this? Now we will have a class about ISKCON-problems. But whatever the problems are there in ISKCON, they are nothing compared to the problems out there in the material world. ISKCON actually is the solution – it is not a society of problems, it is a society of solutions. It is the purest standard of solving all problems, as we can hear so clearly from Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva. So yes, it is not always so easy, but whose fault is that? Is it ISKCON's fault? What is ISKCON? It is just what the word say, International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. It is an association formed by Prabhupāda, so that we can serve Kṛṣṇa. There are no problems in that ISKCON. There is no problem on this transcendental standard of spiritual life given by Śrī Rṣabhadeva, and reproduced in ISKCON. Where is the problem? Point to yourself, we can all just point to ourselves. The only problem in ISKCON is us who are trying to come to this exalted standard from very, very fallen background. So then what must we do about our problematic nature? Does Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva say, "Yes, you must hold big meetings and debate about whether, or not the rule that's mentioned in this very purport about sex within marriage should be maintained in this modern time?" Should we have honesty-scussions? "Punya Pālaka, I am gonna be honest, I don't like you." [to the translator] We don't read anything about that here. These are concoctions and they will not help us. That is a fact. What will help us is presented right here.

And again, it is such a tremendous mine of jewel-like wisdom. We have to enter this mine and examine these jewels with great care and attention. Just to study this one verse and purport and understand it in full could take the rest of one's life. And to put this into practice, it takes a long time. We have in ourselves, in our minds, in our bodies, still, the modes of nature are turning. Prabhupāda compared it to the propeller of a fan. When we first come into this association, then the plug is pulled out. But still, the fan is turning by what is called momentum. It takes a long time for it to stop. So in our minds these three modes are turning all the time, in our bodies, our senses, always turning. It takes years, before this three-bladed propeller finally stops. So Śrīla Prabhupāda said we should not put the plug back in, because then that will give more power and it will go faster, and faster, and when you try to take it out again – even if you do take it out again – it will be that much longer before it stops. And that is why we are hearing in this verse instructions to be tolerant, *titikṣayā*, *dhṛti*, you must have patience, *jihāsayā*, one should desire to give up this sense gratification – the identifying with *deha*, the body, *geha*, the home. *Jihāsayā*, one should always be desiring that the turning of these modes of nature will stop at last. So we can tolerate, we can be patient and we can develop this strong desire in the association of devotees. Again, "By associating with the devotee, a spiritual standard is maintained."

Rising early, chanting sixteen rounds, attending the morning program, spending one's day in Kṛṣṇa's service, this is what is important. We should do this every day, and one CAN do this in strong association which Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us. But if we think, "No, there are problems." But again, where are those problems? Up here. [pointing to head] These are problems of the modes of nature, turning in our minds and our bodies. But then by false ego the nonsense person, he projects his own problems on the external world, "No, I am all right, but it's your fault, Punya Pālaka." [to the translator] This would be a very good class, if it wasn't for him. [Mahārāja is beating the translator with cushion over the head and devotees are laughing] No, actually he is okay. This is just some drama to illustrate this nonsense function of the false ego. We try to find fault in someone else. If Punya Pālaka didn't exist, everything would be okay. This is very, very wrong. This is actually demoniac thinking. So we see this around the fringe of ISKCON, or in the shadow of ISKCON. There are those who are saying, "This institution is not good. It caused me so much problems, but now I am free from it. I have left ISKCON and you should also leave ISKCON. They are always trying to find their way, coming to festival, or Sunday Feast to whisper, "You should leave ISKCON. Otherwise, you will safer, they will cheat you. But look at me, I am free now." But look at these people, look at them closely. This is the point here that, "By associating with the devotee, a spiritual standard is maintained." Whatever the problems may be, but if we can simply remain in this association, then we will be able to maintain this standard of liberation, *jīvan-mukta*, liberation even while within the body. In *Gītā*, in his translation Śrīla Prabhupāda refers to the regulative principles as regulative principles of liberation. So if one leaves this association – goes, lives on his own in the name of freedom, in the name of independent thought, or whatever excuse is given – then this is simply plugging the fan back into the electric plug. The modes begin to turn with greater and greater force, and whatever standard that person might have had when he was in association with ISKCON – we see, it's practical fact – it goes down. And especially, if one's only taste that's left to have anything to do with Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to criticize devotees. Otherwise, he is not making any *harināma*, he is not distributing any books, he is not doing any Kṛṣṇa-*sevā*, but his MISSION is to criticize ISKCON, to persuade devotees to leave ISKCON and become like me, loose and unregulated, depressed, mind always thinking, meditating on problems. This type of taste, it is not at all auspicious. Do we read anything about that here? Is this what Mahārāja Rṣabhadeva is recommending? "You should meditate on the faults of others and you should discuss these faults with great enthusiasm and you should break the association that is shared between devotees. Bring people out of that association, so that they may also meditate nicely on problems." How ever one can develop such a taste, I do not know. I honestly admit the failure of my knowledge in this regard, I cannot understand. Except I can just know theoretically that is must be the result of offenses. Because how else can that which is so sweet for those who are sincere be tasted as bitter. What is so sweet? The association with devotees. You agree? How many find association with devotees sweet? [everybody agreeing] So how someone can take that to be bitter? I can only say, it must be the result of offenses. And then on the opposite side, to associate with one's own mind and senses, and our particular conditioning under the modes of nature in the name of being independent and to say this is sweet. This I don't understand either. My experience is... that's very bitter. How many find to associate with their own mind and senses is a bitter experience? Show your hands. [everybody agreeing]

So it should be clear. This is a complete reversal of one's understanding. This is what Prahlāda Mahārāja calls *atad-dīya*. *Dīya* means intelligence and *tad*, *tattva*, truth. So the truth is meant to be understood by the intelligence, but *atad* means untruth. Some people have this kind of intelligence, *atad-dīya*, which is always rushing after illusion. Whatever there is a choice. "Truth, illusion?" "Oh, illusion." The intelligence just goes like that, "Of course, illusion." This means actually one is being punished, because intelligence is supplied by Paramātmā. So why would Paramātmā supply this *atad-dīya*? Well, He actually says this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.11), where He explains, *avajānanti mām mūdhā mānuṣīm tanum āśritam*: "The *mūdhas*, the asses, the very ignorant and offensive persons, they blaspheme Me, they deride Me when I descend into this material world." So actually this International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is also the appearance of Kṛṣṇa in this material world. So those who deride belong to the category of *mūdha*. Then in the next verse the Lord goes on to say,

*moghāśā mogha-karmāṇo
mogha-jñānā vicetasah
rākṣasīm āsurīm caiva
prakṛtīm mohinīm śritāh*

"Such persons who are engaged in this blasphemy, then everything in their life is spoiled. Their activities are spoiled, their knowledge is spoiled, and they become attracted," the Lord says, "to the viewpoint of the *rākṣasas* and the *āsuras*." They think, "That is very nice." So this is *atadīya*, they are being punished by the Lord in the heart. The Lord in the heart is thinking, "Now, I have appeared externally and this foolish person is blaspheming me. So what he will do with good intelligence? He doesn't want it. I will give him what he wants. He wants to be a demon. Here it is, all the intelligence you need to be a very stalwart demon." Then fooled by this intelligence such rascals engage in *mogha-karma*, or *ugra-karma*, horrible activities. And these horrible activities, they drag that person down into the pit. Kṛṣṇa says, He declares in the Sixteenth Chapter that those who are so envious they can never rise up again. Kṛṣṇa says this very clearly.

Of course, when we preach to people, they might ask, "Well, I heard, I read in the Bible," or something, "that hell is eternal." And to encourage them we say, "No, no, one goes to hell and is punished there, but eventually one is released." But yet, you can see in the end of Sixteenth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* where Lord Kṛṣṇa is talking about some who are never released. And these are the very envious, and very mischievous, very devious, and sinful demons – their only happiness is just to make trouble. So Kṛṣṇa, He has made the hell for them, "You like to make troubles? Oh, there is a dark place for you, you can stay there and all of you – all of you trouble-makers, all of you demons – can stay in the darkness of the lowest pit of hell and there you can make trouble for each other. You can see such a world even now – in the bottom of the ocean it's always dark and swimming and crawling around out there are the most horrible looking kinds of creatures. So there is one kind of creature which has a huge mouth – has actually a very small body, it's mostly a big mouth – with big, big teeth, razor-sharp needle teeth. And it has, coming from the nose a little stock with a kind of lantern on it, it's a phosphorescent light. So because it's so dark there, any light that glows is immediately attractive, so many fishes come, "What is that light? What is that light?" So they swim to look at the light and this big mouth closes on. Yes, this is a very good example. And who takes such a body? That very envious person who has a little light of knowledge. It's also said why these *nāgas* are so dangerous, because they have a glowing jewel on their head. So foolish people come, "Oh, oh, what is this? He is giving some class, he is talking about problems, very interesting," but then the

big mouth closes. The bottom of the ocean is crawling with such kind of creatures, all very horrible, sly monsters. And all they are doing is gabbling one another up. There is also one fish that looks like a snake and for a mouth it just has a big sucker, and a ring with teeth all around like a saw. And it just floats around waiting for some other fish to come by and then it sticks to the side and the teeth start turning, cut a hole in the side of the fish, and then just sucks the inside of the fish out, and then let's go and just floats through the water. So this hell that Lord Kṛṣṇa is speaking of, it's not a fantasy, one can already see it at the bottom of the ocean. But that's just the nearby hell, it goes much, much deeper than that and gets much, much worse.

So in this Age of Kali which is hellish age, if we separate ourselves from the association of devotees, then we cannot maintain this exalted spiritual standard, and then we are immediately in great danger, falling deeper, and deeper into darkness. So let us stay together at Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet, tolerate whatever problems there might be which are really just our own problems, and keep to this standard of spiritual life by which one – even in this body, in this Kali-yuga – can become perfect, liberated soul, go back home, back to Godhead. Are there any questions?

Question: In which way *asat-saṅga* leads to disrespectful behavior towards devotees?

Suhotra Swami: Well, of course, there are different varieties of ignorant association. Mostly, Prabhupāda said, even now the population of the world is innocent, they are ignorant, but they are innocent. But, Prabhupāda said, about ten percent are real demons. So *asat-saṅga*... some who come to this movement are just weak, weak in intelligence, weak in determination. So for them this *asat-saṅga* means in their weakness they go back to that association from which they came, which is ignorant, but also innocent. You can just say foolish. So they still may respect devotees. I know many people like that. They tried to become advanced, but failed and now have gone back to material life, but still have respect for ISKCON, for the practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

So Jīva Gosvāmī actually, he speaks of those who are weak, also those who are ignorant. There are two classifications. And they have difficulty to become well established in devotional service. But then he speaks about third class *aciktasya* which means incurable. That means that when they come into the association of devotees, they have some intelligence to get knowledge, but they have a particular kind of disease that as they are taking benefit from the association, they are also getting very puffed up. This one think they can't learn somehow, or other – to be humble. So if you cannot be humble, how can you stay among the devotees? So they are something like this fish I just described – it attaches itself to the side of ISKCON, sucks something out, and then just drops off, and is very proud now, "I know what Kṛṣṇa consciousness is. You can't tell me anything. You are trying to cheat everyone. I know what Kṛṣṇa consciousness is, you don't." So *aciktasya*, this is someone who is incurable, he really can't be helped by anyone. So this is the dangerous kind of *asat-saṅga*, to associate with such a mentality, or such kind of persons. So we need to separate – just to be weak, or ignorant that doesn't necessarily mean one who will become an offender. But to get a little bit of knowledge due to some association with devotees, and then become very puffed up and think, "I am the most advanced, no one can tell me anything." This is very dangerous position. And so specifically this kind of person, the incurable, we should never associate with. Otherwise, we will get the same disease.

Question: It is said that the association with every devotee is valuable. Is it offense if we try to seek the association with particular type of devotees who are on a certain level of Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

Suhotra Swami: No, it's not offensive at all. As long as the intention is to make the best out of the association which is available in this ISKCON movement. If one is in ISKCON, then one is associating with all devotees. But the different devotees, they have different good qualities to offer us. Even a very simple devotee, we can learn from him the good qualities – self-humility, and faithfulness, and loyalty. So we have to learn to appreciate all devotees, see their good qualities. And not all devotees are great lecturers, great learned *bhaktivedantists*. But all devotees have wonderful qualities that we should appreciate. So for inspiration, let us say in knowledge, we should be eager to hear from that devotee who has knowledge. But that doesn't mean that then we should think, "Oh, the other devotees are ignorant, therefore I won't associate with them." Because even though they may not have that high standard of knowledge, they do have very wonderful qualities. And ultimately all these qualities, they are absolute. If they are spiritual, then Kṛṣṇa, He does not distinguish between them. We know very well about that well-known story of Nārada Muni, and the shoemaker, and the *brāhmaṇa*. I think you all know that story, I don't have to say it again. But the Lord appreciated the faithfulness, and simplicity of the humble shoemaker much, much more than he appreciated the learning, and the ritual purity of the *brāhmaṇa*. So again, we need to see the good qualities in every devotee. Not that we should see all devotees in some artificial way as having exactly the same qualities. That's also not truth. That's another kind of impersonalism. We are all individuals, so we all have different qualities, but we should learn to appreciate these qualities and associate with all devotees, so as to take benefit from their individual qualities.

There is a nice story of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura on the occasion of the death ceremony of one of his disciples. So one of his *brahmacārī* disciples in the Gauḍīya Math institution left the body and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī then organized for this departed disciple a very nice ceremony, and then feast. So during the feast the other *brahmacārīs*, of course, they were taking *prasādam* and talking. Now, it turned out that this particular *brahmacārī* who left his body, he had been a sort of troublesome person. He was a cook and he was a kind of passionate. So to serve in the kitchen with him in charge was very intense experience. He was always shouting, and waving his spoon in the face of the others, and driving them very hard. So during the feast the *brahmacārīs* were speaking about this departed devotee and saying, "Oh, do you remember how passionate he was? He used to shout, and shout, and wave his hands like this. And he was threaten to hit us on the head with the big cooking spoon. So in this way, they were telling these kind of stories about him. So the *prasādam* room was separated from another room by twin doors. And these twin doors were very thin, so one could hear what was being said on the other side. So suddenly in middle of this conversation these twin doors opened and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was standing there. And all *brahmacārīs* became instantly silent, offered their obeisances, "Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!" And then Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī came in and he began to speak to them all about the good qualities of this departed disciple. He was very patiently explaining, "If you hadn't noticed that he was very clean, he used to keep his clothes always spotless and nicely folded, and his place where he lived was always spick-and-span, very nice, and as far as cooking, he was a very good cook." So in this way he went on glorifying that disciple and all those *brahmacārīs* felt very ashamed of themselves.

So this is the Vaiṣṇava. The Vaiṣṇava, he looks for the good qualities in others. And if those good qualities are not so strong the real Vaiṣṇava, he knows the art, he has this special quality himself, to magnify those weak qualities in others. Just like, it just comes in mind this example, some broken bits of glass. Some broken bits of glass, lying somewhere on the ground, but if you shine a very intense light on them, then they glow very brightly, they look beautiful like diamonds, these broken bits of glass. So this is the Vaiṣṇava, he is so full of good qualities that if others who are just very ordinary persons but if they come into his association, then they will also reflect, they will glow very brightly with nice qualities. Mother Satī, she glorified Lord Śiva in this way. She was addressing her father, Dakṣa, that, "My husband, Lord Śiva, he is a pure devotee of the Lord, so he does not see faults in others. Rather, he sees their good qualities and he knows how to bring these good qualities out more, and more. But, my dear father, you are so full of bad qualities that you cannot even see the good qualities in such a great soul as Lord Śiva. Therefore I do not want to keep this body which was given by you." So by the fire of mystic *yoga* she consumed her own body to ashes, rather than be associated with such an envious person.

This is a very, very clear example. And Lord Śiva, greatest Vaiṣṇava, why is he so great? Because he is so compassionate that he even lets ghosts, and hobgoblins, all kinds of very strange living entities come into his association and he maintains them. And his purpose is to try to bring out in them their good qualities. It's not always possible. But this is the Vaiṣṇava, still, he tries. Otherwise, why did Śrīla Prabhupāda come to the West? It's very interesting, I remember reading a conversation with one of Prabhupāda's godbrothers. And this his particular godbrother, after Prabhupāda left, many of Prabhupāda's disciples – not many, but some – they left ISKCON to take shelter of this godbrother. So these former members of ISKCON, they were inviting this godbrother, "Please, you should come to the West and preach." So his reply was, I read it, he said, "I can't associate with those people." So he was considering that, "Western people, their association is too impure. I cannot go there." So when I read this, I was appreciating Śrīla Prabhupāda so much, much more. Because Prabhupāda came to the West and by his influence, by his association, he brought out the quality of devotion, *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, that was hidden in the hearts of so many fallen Western people. And one can say, "Yes, but also there were so many problems. If Prabhupāda hadn't come, then so many problems would not have happened." But I just don't understand this kind of logic. It's like... anyway, I think you get the point. No point I make, any ridiculous examples. It's pretty clear. But they talk like this. So of course there would be problems, because this society is so low, and fallen, and sinful. And trying to bring out from the hearts of such persons the pure *Kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, it is not so easy. But the Vaiṣṇava as we have heard, he is tolerant. Actually Śrīla Prabhupāda used to compare himself to a cow, and a cow is actually symbol of *dharma*. So cow just gives milk, whoever comes and milks the cow, "Take it!" A cow doesn't think, "Oh, here is one unworthy person, so I won't give milk, or I will give poison," a cow never thinks like that. Cow's business is just to give the milk and she is also very peaceful and tolerant – cow is a classical symbol of religion, religiosity, *dharma*. And Vaiṣṇava is like that also, tolerant, peaceful, simple, and always giving benefit. Okay, Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī-jaya!*

(Śrīla Suhotra Swami, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 5.5.10-13, September 28, 1998, Prague)

Question: What is the reason that devotees sometimes are attached to saving, or preaching to the people who are obviously not interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness? Like on *saṅkīrtana* to the Christians, or in the temple for example to people who left, or who are attacking devotees, or something like this.

Suhotra Swami: Well, sounds like they are attached to making that offense against the holy name, preaching to the faithless. I can't think of any other reason. This is one of the offenses against the holy name. So if we do this, then we lose our own attachment and attraction to the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. So this doesn't sound like it has much future this program. You can't expand Kṛṣṇa consciousness by giving up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They may say, "Well, I am just trying to preach to everybody, reach more, and more people." But if you yourself are giving up Kṛṣṇa consciousness by making offenses, then how you want to expand to anybody else. And this deviation manifests in many different ways. There is the tendency to think we have to water the message down, make the practice easier, make compromises, show the *karmīs* that we are like them. The more we can become like *karmīs*, then the more they will accept us. This is the idea. But you cannot spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness by giving up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It makes no sense. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that, "We must save ourselves first." Save yourself first, then save others. So you have to save yourself from committing offenses, that one should not preach to the faithless. Then maybe we will be able to save the faithless. Śrīla Prabhupāda in the purport in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, he speaks of how the pure devotees show mercy to faithless persons by ignoring them. Just ignore them. There is that Bengali saying, I don't remember the Bengali right now, but the translation is, "Oil your own machine." We should just oil our own machine, go on with our business – or as Prabhupāda says, "It's like an elephant caravan." The *saṅkīrtana* movement is like a line of elephants which is marching through a village. So when elephants come through a village in India, then of course the dogs come out, "Bow-wow, bow-wow, bow-wow." But the elephants pay no attention to these dogs, they ignore them, "What are these dogs gonna do?" If one of them comes too close, [makes squelching sound]. So the elephants don't care for them. Why should they waste time? Stupid dogs! The elephants are so great, so majestic. So Prabhupāda said, *saṅkīrtana* movement is like that, "Let the dogs bark, we don't care for them." And maybe some of these dogs will start to understand, "Oh, actually they are so nicely situated. Nothing we say means anything to them. We are the one's with disturbed minds. Their minds are peaceful." So some may start to think, "Yes, what am I doing? Why am I wasting my time like this?" But if we break off our march through the village and... can you imagine that, an elephant stopping and looking at the dogs, trying to preach to them. What's the use? So if elephant does that, the dogs get more strength, "BOW-WOW, BOW-WOW, BOW-WOW." They start jumping, "BOW-WOW." Because that's what they want. They want these big elephants to notice them. That's all they want. They are shouting, "What you are doing in our village? If you don't get out now, we will beat you up!" And the elephants don't care. And if one would pay attention, then they, "See, you want a fight now? We will fight you, we will beat you! Let's go! Beat rascal, get up!" So we ignore them, we don't give them any strength. And they may come to their senses as a result.

(Śrīla Suhotra Swami's answer after the lecture from *Bhagavad-gītā* 9.29, September 29, 1998, Prague)