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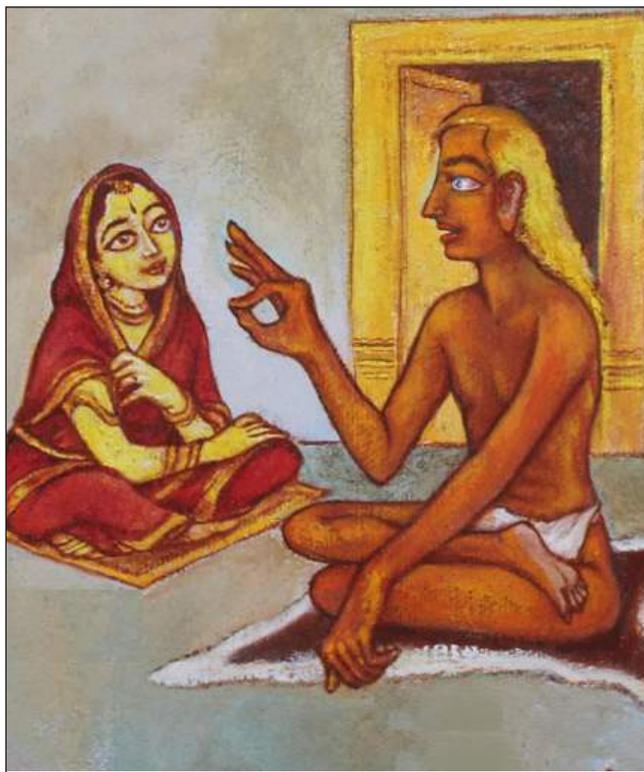
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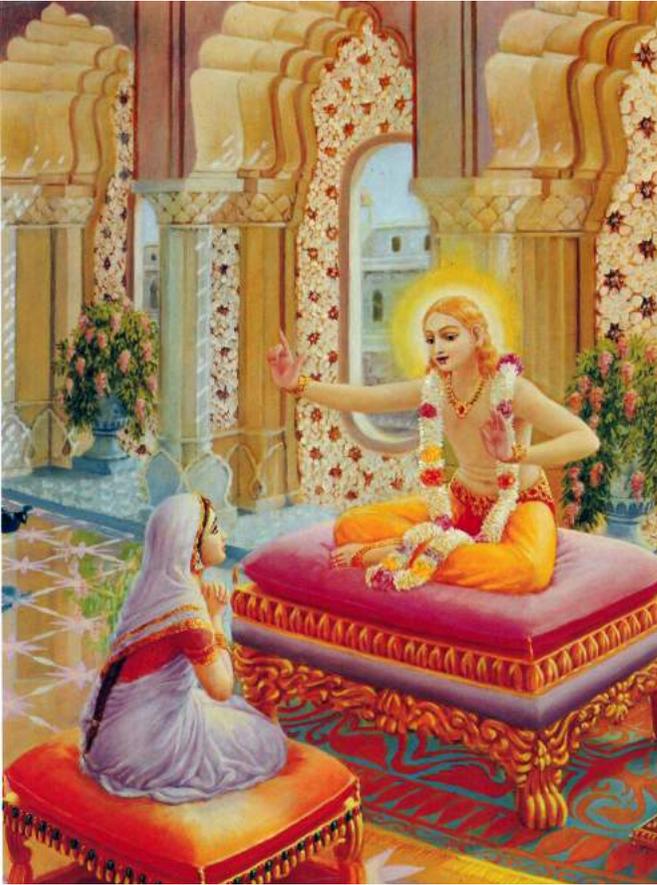
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### HOW TO ATTAIN DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

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### LORD KAPILA INTRUCTS DEVAHUTI

SRI MAITREYA RSI

When Kardama left for the forest, Lord Kapila stayed on the strand of the Bindu-sarovara to please His mother, Devahuti. Then Kapila, who could show her the ultimate goal of the Absolute Truth, was sitting leisurely before her, Devahuti remembered the words Brahma had spoken to her, and she therefore began to question Kapila as follows:

**Devahuti said:** I am very sick of the disturbance caused by my material senses, for because of this sense disturbance, my Lord, I have fallen into the abyss of ignorance. Your Lordship is my only means of getting out of this darkest region of ignorance because You are my transcendental eye, which, by Your mercy only, I have attained after many, many births. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the origin and Supreme Lord of all living entities. You have arisen to disseminate the rays of the sun in order to dissipate the darkness of the ignorance of the universe. Now be pleased, my Lord, to dispel my great delusion. Due to my feeling of false ego, I have been engaged by Your *māyā* and have identified myself with the body and consequent bodily relations. I have taken shelter of Your lotus feet because You are the only person of whom to take shelter. You are the axe which can

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

cut the tree of material existence. I therefore offer my obeisances unto You, who are the greatest of all transcendentalists, and I inquire from You as to the relationship between man and woman and between spirit and matter.

**Maitreya said:** After hearing of His mother's uncontaminated desire for transcendental realization, the Lord thanked her within Himself for her questions, and thus, His face smiling, He explained the path of the transcendentalists, who are interested in self-realization.

**The Personality of Godhead answered:** The yoga system which relates to the Lord and the individual soul, which is meant for the ultimate benefit of the living entity, and which causes detachment from all happiness and distress in the material world, is the highest yoga system. O most pious mother, I shall now explain unto you the ancient yoga system, which I explained formerly to the great sages. It is serviceable and practical in every way. The stage in which the consciousness of the living entity is attracted by the three modes of material nature is called conditional life. But when that same consciousness is attached to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one is situated in the consciousness of liberation.

When one is completely cleansed of the impurities of lust and greed produced from the false identification of the body as "I" and bodily possessions as "mine," one's mind becomes purified. In that pure state he transcends the stage of so-called material happiness and distress. Then the soul can see himself to be transcendental to material existence and always self-effulgent, never fragmented, although very minute in size. Thus situated in the position of self-realization, by practice of knowledge and renunciation in devotional service, one sees everything in the right perspective; he becomes indifferent to material existence, and the material influence acts less powerfully upon him.

Perfection in self-realization cannot be attained by any kind of *yogī* unless he engages in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for that is the only auspicious path.

*prasaṅgam ajaraṁ pāśam  
ātmanaḥ kavayo viduḥ  
sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto  
mokṣa-dvāram apāvṛtam*

Every learned man knows very well that attachment for the material is the greatest entanglement of the spirit soul. But that same attachment, when applied to the self-realized devotees, opens the door of liberation.

The symptoms of a *sādhu* are that he is tolerant, merciful and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime. Such a *sādhu* engages in staunch devotional service to the Lord without deviation. For the sake of the Lord he renounces all other connections, such as family relationships and friendly acquaintances within the world. Engaged constantly in chanting and hearing about Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the *sādhus* do not suffer from material miseries because they are always filled with thoughts of My pastimes and activities.

O My mother, O virtuous lady, these are the qualities of great devotees who are free from all attachment. You must seek attachment to such holy men, for this counteracts the pernicious effects of material attachment. In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin.

Consciously engaged in devotional service in the association of devotees, a person gains distaste for sense gratification, both in this world and in the next, by constantly thinking about the activities of the Lord. This process of Krishna consciousness is the easiest process of mystic power; when one is actually situated on that path of devotional service, he is able to control the mind. By not engaging in the service of the modes of material nature but by developing Krishna consciousness, knowledge in renunciation, and by practicing yoga, in which the mind is always fixed in devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one achieves My association in this very life, for I am the Supreme Personality, the Absolute Truth.

**On hearing this statement of the Lord, Devahuti inquired:** What kind of devotional service is worth developing and practicing to help me easily and immediately attain the service of Your lotus feet? The mystic yoga system, as You have explained, aims at the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is meant for completely ending material existence. Please let me know the nature of that yoga system. How many ways are there by which one can understand in truth that sublime yoga? My dear son, Kapila, after all, I am a woman. It is very difficult for me to understand the Absolute Truth because my intelligence is not very great. But if You will kindly explain it to me, even though I am not very intelligent, I can understand it and thereby feel transcendental happiness.

**Sri Maitreya said:** After hearing the statement of His

mother, Kapila could understand her purpose, and He became compassionate towards her because of being born of her body. He described the *sāṅkhya* system of philosophy, which is a combination of devotional service and mystic realization, as received by disciplic succession.

**Lord Kapila said:** The senses are symbolic representations of the demigods, and their natural inclination is to work under the direction of the Vedic injunctions. As the senses are representatives of the demigods, so the mind is the representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The mind's natural duty is to serve. When that service spirit is engaged in devotional service to the Personality of Godhead, without any motive, that is far better even than salvation. Bhakti, devotional service, dissolves the subtle body of the living entity without separate effort, just as fire in the stomach digests all that we eat.

*naikātmatām me spṛhayanti kecin  
mat-pāda-sevābhiratā mad-īhāḥ  
ye 'nyonyato bhāgavatāḥ prasajya  
sabhājayante mama pauruṣāṇi*

A pure devotee, who is attached to the activities of devotional service and who always engages in the service of My lotus feet, never desires to become one with Me. Such a devotee, who is unflinchingly engaged, always glorifies My pastimes and activities.

O My mother, My devotees always see the smiling face of My form, with eyes like the rising morning sun. They like to see My various transcendental forms, which are all benevolent, and they also talk favorably with Me. Upon seeing the charming forms of the Lord, smiling and attractive, and hearing His very pleasing words, the pure devotee almost loses all other consciousness. His senses are freed from all other engagements, and he becomes absorbed in devotional service. Thus in spite of his unwillingness, he attains liberation without separate endeavour.

Thus because he is completely absorbed in thought of Me, the devotee does not desire even the highest benediction obtainable in the upper planetary systems, including Satyaloka. He does not desire the eight material perfections obtained from mystic yoga, nor does he desire to be elevated to the kingdom of God. Yet even without desiring them, the devotee enjoys, even in this life, all the offered benedictions. My dear mother, devotees who receive such transcendental opulences are never bereft of them; neither weapons nor the change of time can destroy such opulences. Because the devotees accept Me as their friend, their

relative, their son, preceptor, benefactor and Supreme Deity, they cannot be deprived of their possessions at any time.

Thus the devotee who worships Me, the all-pervading Lord of the universe, in unflinching devotional service, gives up all aspirations to be promoted to heavenly planets or to become happy in this world with wealth, children, cattle, home or anything in relationship with the body. I take him to the other side of birth and death. The terrible fear of birth and death can never be forsaken by anyone who resorts to any shelter other than Myself, for I am the almighty Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the original source of all creation, and also the Supreme Soul of all souls.

*mad-bhayād vāti vāto 'yam  
sūryas tapati mad-bhayāt  
varṣatīndro dahaty agnir  
mṛtyuś carati mad-bhayāt*

It is because of My supremacy that the wind blows out of fear of Me; the sun shines out of fear of Me, and the lord of the clouds, Indra, sends forth showers out of fear of Me. Fire burns out of fear of Me, and death goes about taking its toll out of fear of Me.

The *yogīs* equipped with transcendental knowledge and renunciation and engaged in devotional service for their eternal benefit, take shelter of My lotus feet, and since I am the Lord, they are thus eligible to enter into the kingdom of Godhead without fear. Therefore persons whose minds are fixed on the Lord engage in the intensive practice of devotional service. That is the only means for attainment of the final perfection of life.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 3: The Status Quo  
» Chapter 25: The Glories of Devotional Service » Verses: 5–44 » Translation  
by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada*

### **BHAKTI-PRATIKŪLA-BHĀVA VARJANĀṄGĪKĀRA**

*A promise to give up attachments which are  
unfavourable to Devotional Service*

*Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur*

(1)

*keśava! tuvā jagata vicitra  
karama-vipāke, bhava-vana bhrama-i,  
pekhaluṅ raṅga bahu citra*

O Lord Kesava! Your universe is amazing. Wandering and wandering in this forest of material existence due to the ripening of the fruits of my past activities, I have seen many varieties of plays.

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

*tuwā pada-vismṛti, ā-mara jantranā,  
kleśa-dahane dohi' jāi  
kapila, patañjali, gautama, kanabhojī,  
jaimini, bauddha āowe dhāi'*

Forgetfulness of Your lotus feet makes me walk towards the agony of death, burning with anguish in so many troubles, even though I am taking help from the teachings of Kapila, Patanjali, Gautama, Kanabhoji, Jaimini, and Bauddha.

*tab koi nija-mate, bhukti, mukti yācato,  
pāta-i nāmā-vidha phāṅd  
so-sabu-vañcaka, tuwā bhakti bahir-mukha,  
ghaṭāowe viṣama paramād*

They are all averse to Your devotional service! They are all cheaters. By presenting their own conclusions, they are offering *bhukti* (enjoyment) and *mukti* (liberation), but they are simply laying all kinds of traps and causing a dangerous confusion.

*vaimukha-vañcane, bhāṭa so-sabu,  
niramilo vividha pasār  
daṇḍavat dūrato, bhaktivinoda bhelo,*

They create different sorts of practices, but by so doing, they all serve the purpose of cheating the living entities by diverting their attention away from You. Accepting Your devotees' lotus feet as the essence, Bhaktivinod offers these counterfeits his obeisance from a distance.

(2)

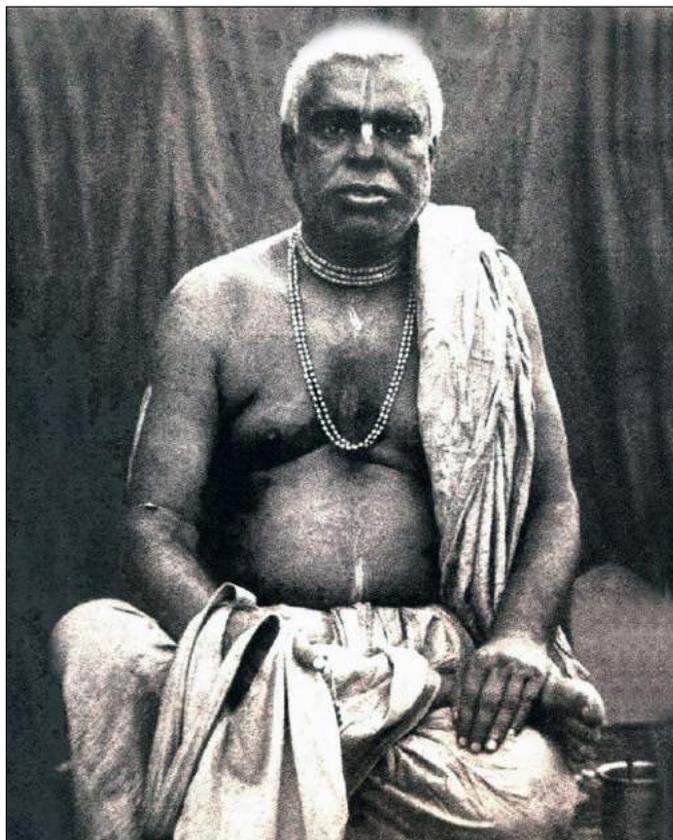
*tuwā-bhakti-pratikūla dharmā jā'te roy  
parama jatane tāhā tyajibo niṣcoy*

Whatever is opposed to your devotional service, I shall certainly very carefully abandon it.

*tuwā-bhakti-bahir-mukha saṅga nā koribo  
gaurāṅga-virodhi-jana-mukha nā heribo*

I will not associate with anyone whose consciousness is not centered on Your devotional service and whose thoughts dwell in the material realm. I will not look at the face of one who is antagonistic to Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.

*bhakti-pratikūla sthāne nā kori vasati  
bhaktira apriya kārye nāhi kori rati*



I do not live in a place which is unfavourable to devotional service. I am not attached to doing any work that is disagreeable to devotional service.

*bhaktira virodhī grantha pāṭha nā koribo  
bhaktira virodhī vyākhyā kabhu nā śunibo*

I will not read any scripture that is disagreeing with devotional service. I will never listen to explanations opposing devotional service.

*gaurāṅga-varjita sthāna tīrtha nāhi māni  
bhaktira bādhaka jñāna-karma tuccha jāni*

I do not consider any locality a place of pilgrimage unless it is connected to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. I understand the processes of *jñāna* (endeavouring for accumulating knowledge, leading towards liberation) and *karma* (endeavouring to accumulate pious activities, leading towards material enjoyment) to be insignificant and insubstantial.

*bhaktira bādhaka kāle nā kori ādar  
bhakti bahir-mukha nija-jane jāni par*

I do not give respect to time that is an obstacle to Your devotional service. I will consider even my own family members as not related to me if they are not Krishna

conscious.

*bhaktira bādhikā spṛhā koribo varjan  
abhakta-pradatta anna nā kori grahan*

I will give up all desires that cause obstacles in devotional service. I do not accept any food offered to me by a non-devotee.

*jāhā kichu bhakti-pratikūla boli' jāni  
tyajibo jatane tāhā, e niścoya vāni*

My firm maxim is to carefully give up any act of sacrifice that I know to be unfavourable to devotional service.

*bhaktivinoda poḍi' prabhura caraṇe  
māgaye śakati pratikūlyera varjane*

Falling at His Lord's (or spiritual master's) lotus feet Bhaktivinod begs for the strength to give up everything unfavourable to devotional service.

—From the book *Śaraṇāgati* by Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur • Translated by Vrajsevika devi dasi ❀

## UNAUTHORIZED SAMPRADAYAS

*Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur*

### What is the conception of mundane transcendentalists?

We meet many so-called *paṇḍitas* who think that they have understood *bhakti* by their knowledge and intelligence. Some conclude that devotional service mixed with *jñāna* is pure *bhakti*, and others conclude that devotional service mixed with karma is pure *bhakti*. They are so proud that if they hear the teachings of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, they say, “Everyone can make their own conclusion. What is the need to take the conclusion of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*?” These people never come in touch with *sad-dharma* because they have no desire to know it. The result of performing their own concocted process of devotional service is that they can never relish pure devotion. (*Tāt-tat-karma-pravārtana, Sajjana-toṣaṇī 11/6*)

### Do the Mayavadis hear, chant, and offer prayers that are pleasing to Krishna?

Mayavadis consider the glories of devotional service, the object of worship, and the Lord's servants as temporary. Their hearing, chanting, serving, and offering prayers, therefore, are felt by Krishna as blows of thunderbolts. (A song from *Śaraṇāgati*)

**Who are hypocrites?**

Hypocrites are those who do not accept that devotional service is eternal, but they always display external signs of devotional service. Their goal is to accomplish some remote purpose. (*Caitanya-śikṣāmrta* 3/3)

**What is the most harmful association in the world?**

There is no worse association in the whole world than that of a *dharma-dhvajī*. One should rather associate with sense enjoyers. Being deceitful, the *dharma-dhvajīs* take on the appearance of devotees with a desire to cheat everyone, and to fulfill their crooked desires, they cheat the foolish by helping them in their rascaldom. Some of the *dharma-dhvajīs* become *gurus* and others become disciples, and by trickery, they accumulate wealth, women, false prestige, and material assets. If one gives up the association of crooked hypocrites, one can honestly engage in devotional service. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 10/11)

**Is the endeavour of the sinful living entities against the system of *varṇāśrama* beneficial?**

To preach religious principles without respecting the *varṇāśrama* system or the *saṁnyāsī's* engaged in devotional service is extremely harmful. The endeavors against the *varṇāśrama* system by impersonalists, whimsical devotees, and various unauthorized *sampradāyas*, such as *neḍā*, *bāula*, *kartābhajā*, *daraveśa*, *kumbhapaiya*, *ativāḍī*, are also extremely harmful. (*Caitanya-śikṣāmrta*)

**Is the *bāula* philosophy similar to the Vaishnava philosophy?**

The philosophies of the *bāulas*, *sānis*, *neḍās*, *daraveśas*, *kartābhajās*, and *ativāḍīs* are those of nondevotees. Their instructions and activities are most incoherent. Many people lose respect in Vaishnavism by discussing these philosophies. (*Prema-pradīpa* Chapter 6)

**Was the *bāula* philosophy propounded by Sri Sanatana Goswami or Sri Viracandra Goswami?**

The form in which the *bāula* philosophy is seen at present is totally opposed to the scriptures. There are two types of instructions on devotional service that are found in the *śāstras*: *vaidhī* and *rāgānugā*. The *bāulas* do not follow any limbs of *vaidhī-bhakti*; they engage in various improper activities on the pretext of *rāgānugā-bhakti*. It is very hard to say who started the *bāula* philosophy. Sometimes the *bāulas* claim Sri Sanatana Goswami and sometimes Sri Viracandra Goswami as their propounder. Actually neither Sri Sanatana

Goswami nor Viracandra Goswami ever thought of the sinful path of the *bāulas*. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 4/4)

**Are the following terms right and prestigious for the Vaishnava religion: *Vaiṣṇava-vaṁśa* (Vaishnava dynasty), *Vaiṣṇava-jāti* (Vaishnava caste), and *Vaiṣṇava-ācārya-vaṁśa* (dynasty of the Vaishnava acharya)?**

There cannot be a *Vaiṣṇava-vaṁśa*. There is no guarantee that every descendant of a particular dynasty will become a Vaishnava. We are seeing many rogues take birth in various Vaishnava families, and they are acting like demons. Whereas many great people have taken birth in the family of dog-eaters and Mohammedans, and have become Vaishnavas on the strength of pure devotional service. Many non-Vaishnavas are found in the families of Vaishnava *ācāryas*. On the other hand, many Vaishnavas have taken birth in the family of gross nondevotees. The prestige that is given to the caste Vaishnavas and descendants of Vaishnava *ācāryas* does not increase the glories of the Vaishnava religion; rather the audacity of non-Vaishnavism is increasing. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 9/9)

**How was the Vaishnava religion accepted during the time of Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura?**

The age of Kali is so formidable that it does not allow pious activities to go on for long. When the three *ācāryas* (Sri Srinivasa Acharya, Sri Shyamananda Prabhu, and Sri Narottama dasa Thakura) and their followers (such as Sri Govinda dasa) disappeared from this world, immediately the supreme religious principles began to vanish again. Gradually pure devotional service began to disappear from the land of Gauda. The descendants of the *ācārya* families began to act like official preachers of various religions, whether they were *vaiṣṇava*, *śāktas*, or *karma-kāṇḍīs*. As a result, the pure Vaishnava religion inaugurated by Sri Gauranga, Sri Nityananda, and Sri Advaita gradually disappeared from sight. On one side, the revolution of the *ācāryas* was going on, and on the other, disturbances created by *bāulas*, *sahajiyās*, and others gradually increased. That is why a pathetic condition of Vaishnava religion is found even today. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 6/2)

**Which persons tried to eliminate pure devotional service after the disappearance of Srīman Mahāprabhu?**

After the disappearance of the transcendental pastimes of Sri Gaurangadeva, various unauthorized *sampradāyas* such as *bāula*, *kartābhajā*, and *sahajiyā* as well as the *smārta-brāhmaṇas* and impersonalists tried their best to pollute the Vaishnava religion on the

pretext of supporting it. Even today there is no lack of such people. Gradually the number of these classes of people is increasing. It is extremely unreasonable and nondevotional to say that Haridasa Thakura was a mercy *brāhmaṇa*, that Sri Ishvara Puri belonged to a *brāhmaṇa* or *śūdra* family, and that nobody except a *brāhmaṇa* is qualified to teach the philosophy of Vaishnavism. These activities have not enhanced devotional service and therefore they are not respected by the devotees. (*Sajjana-toṣaṇī* 11/10)

— Compiled from the writings of Śrīla Bhaktivinode Thākura, *Daśa-mūla-tattva*, Translated by Sarvabhāvana dāsa

**THE PROCESS OF  
ADVANCING IN KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS**  
*His Divine Grace*  
A .C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

The first point is that one must seek the association of persons who are Krishna conscious and who engage in devotional service. Without such association one cannot make advancement. Simply by theoretical knowledge or study one cannot make any appreciable advancement. One must give up the association of materialistic persons and seek the association of devotees because without the association of devotees one cannot understand the activities of the Lord.

Generally, people are convinced of the impersonal feature of the Absolute Truth. Because they do not associate with devotees, they cannot understand that the Absolute Truth can be a person and have personal activities. This is a very difficult subject matter, and unless one has personal understanding of the Absolute Truth, there is no meaning to devotion. Service or devotion cannot be offered to anything impersonal. Service must be offered to a person. Nondevotees cannot appreciate Krishna consciousness by reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or any other Vedic literature wherein the activities of the Lord are described; they think that these activities are fictional, manufactured stories because spiritual life is not explained to them in the proper mood. To understand the personal activities of the Lord, one has to seek the association of devotees, and by such association, when one contemplates and tries to understand the transcendental activities of the Lord, the path to liberation is open, and he is freed. One who has firm faith in the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes fixed, and his attraction for association with the Lord and the devotees increases. Association with devotees means association with the Lord. The devotee who makes this association develops the consciousness for rendering service to the Lord, and then, being situated in the transcendental position of devotional service, he

gradually becomes perfect.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 3: The Status Quo » Chapter 25: The Glories of Devotional Service » Verses: 25-26*

**HOW TO ATTAIN DEVOTIONAL SERVICE**

*Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami*

Krishna is situated in everyone's heart as the *caitya-guru*, the spiritual master within. When He is kind to some fortunate conditioned soul, He personally gives him lessons so he can progress in devotional service, instructing the person as the Supersoul within and the spiritual master without.

*naivopayanty apacitiṁ kavayasa taveśa  
brahmāyusāpi kṛtam ṛddha-mudaḥ smarantaḥ  
yo 'ntar bahis tanu-bhṛtām aśubham vidhunvann  
ācārya-caitya-vapuṣā sva-gatiṁ vyanakti*

O my Lord! Transcendental poets and experts in spiritual science could not fully express their indebtedness to You, even if they were endowed with the prolonged lifetime of Brahma, for You appear in two features—externally as the *ācārya* and internally as the Supersoul—to deliver the embodied living being by directing him how to come to You. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.29.6)

By associating with a devotee, one awakens his faith in devotional service to Krishna. Because of devotional service, one's dormant love for Krishna awakens, and thus one's material, conditioned existence comes to an end.

*yadṛcchayā mat-kathādau  
jāta-śraddhas tu yaḥ pumān  
na nirvinṇo nāti-sakto  
bhakti-yogo 'sya siddhi-daḥ*

Somehow or other, if one is attracted to talks about Me and has faith in the instructions I have set forth in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and if one is neither falsely detached from material things nor very much attracted to material existence, his dormant love for Me will be awakened by devotional service. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.20.8)

Unless one is favored by a pure devotee, one cannot attain the platform of devotional service. To say nothing of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, one cannot even be relieved from the bondage of material existence.

*rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti  
na cejyayā nirvapaṇād grhād vā  
na cchandasaṁ naiva jalāgni-sūryair  
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-bhīṣekam*

O King Rahugana, without taking upon one's head the dust from the lotus feet of a pure devotee [a *mahājana* or *mahātmā*], one cannot attain devotional service. Devotional service is not possible to attain simply by undergoing severe austerities and penances, by gorgeously worshiping the Deity, or by strictly following the rules and regulations of the *sannyāsa* or *grhastha* order; nor is it attained by studying the Vedas, submerging oneself in water, or exposing oneself to fire or scorching sunlight. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.12.12)

Unless human society accepts the dust of the lotus feet of great *mahātmās*—devotees who have nothing to do with material possessions—mankind cannot turn its attention to the lotus feet of Krishna. Those lotus feet vanquish all the unwanted, miserable conditions of material life. The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment's association with a pure devotee, one can attain all success.

The value of a moment's association with a devotee of the Lord cannot be compared even to the attainment of the heavenly planets or liberation from matter, and what to speak of worldly benedictions in the form of material prosperity, which is for those who are meant for death.

The root cause of devotional service to Lord Krishna is association with advanced devotees. Even when one's dormant love for Krishna awakens, association with devotees is still most essential. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.51.53) Sri Mucukunda says:

*bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej  
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamah  
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau  
parāvareṣe tvayi jāyate matiḥ*

O my Lord! O infallible Supreme Person! When a person wandering throughout the universes becomes eligible for liberation from material existence, he gets an opportunity to associate with devotees. When he associates with devotees, his attraction for You is awakened. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the highest goal of the topmost devotees, and the Lord of the universe.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.25) Lord Kapila says:

*satān prasāṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido  
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyamāḥ kathāḥ  
taj-joṣaṅād āśv apavarga-varmani  
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

The spiritually powerful message of Godhead can be properly discussed only in a society of devotees, and it

is greatly pleasing to hear in that association. If one hears from devotees, the way of transcendental experience quickly opens, and gradually one attains firm faith that in due course develops into attraction and devotion.'

A Vaishnava should always avoid the association of ordinary people. Common people are very much materially attached, especially to women. Vaishnavas should also avoid the company of those who are not devotees of Lord Krishna. By association with worldly people, one becomes devoid of truthfulness, cleanliness, mercy, gravity, spiritual intelligence, shyness, austerity, fame, forgiveness, control of the mind, control of the senses, fortune and all opportunities. One should not at any time associate with a coarse fool who is bereft of the knowledge of self-realization and who is no more than a toy animal in the hands of a woman. The illusion and bondage that accrue to a man from attachment to any other object are not as complete as that resulting from association with a woman or with men too much attached to women. It is better to accept the miseries of being encaged within bars and surrounded by burning flames than to associate with those bereft of Krishna consciousness. Such association is a very great hardship.'

One should not even see those who are bereft of devotional service in Krishna consciousness and who are therefore devoid of pious activities. Without hesitation, one should take exclusive shelter of Lord Krishna with full confidence, giving up bad association and even neglecting the regulative principles of the four *varṇas* and four *āśramas*. That is to say, one should abandon all material attachment.

— *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* » *Madhya-līlā* » Chapter 22: *The Process of Devotional Service* » Verses: 47 - 60 & 82-93



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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