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## Nature Of Association

### Features

**DELIVERANCE OF  
NALAKUVERA AND MANIGRIVA**  
*Conversation between  
Sukadeva Goswami and Maharaja Parikshita*

**CAUSELESS MERCY OF NARADA MUNI**  
*His Divine Grace  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

**HOW CAN ONE DESTROY  
HIS MATERIAL BONDAGE?**  
*Sri Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakura*

**HOW CAN WE MEET A  
BONAFIDE SPIRITUAL MASTER?**  
*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura*

**NATURE OF ASSOCIATION**  
*Compilation of Verses*

**DELIVERANCE OF NALAKUVERA AND MANIGRIVA**  
*Conversation between*  
*Sukadeva Goswami and Maharaja Parikshita*

**King Parikṣita inquired from Sukadeva Goswami:** O great and powerful saint, what was the cause of Nalakuvera's and Manigriva's having been cursed by Narada Muni? What did they do that was so abominable that even Narada, the great sage, became angry at them? Kindly describe this to me.

**Sukadeva Goswami said:** O King Parikṣita, because the two sons of Kuvera had been elevated to the association of Lord Shiva, of which they were very much proud, they were allowed to wander in a garden attached to Kailasa Hill, on the bank of the Mandakini River. Taking advantage of this, they used to drink a kind of liquor called *vāruṇī*. Accompanied by women singing to them, they would wander in that flower garden, their eyes always rolling in intoxication.

Within the water of the Mandakini Ganges, which teemed with lotus flowers, the two sons of Kuvera would sport with young girls, just like two male elephants sporting in the water with female elephants.

O Maharaja Parikṣit, by some chance auspicious opportunity for the two boys, the great saint *Devarṣi* Narada once appeared there. Seeing them intoxicated, with rolling eyes, he could understand everything. Upon seeing Narada, the naked demigod girls were very much ashamed. Afraid of being cursed, they hastily covered themselves with their garments. But the two sons of Kuvera did not do so; instead, not caring about Narada, they remained naked. Seeing the two sons of the demigods naked and intoxicated by opulence and false prestige, *Devarṣi* Narada, in order to show them special mercy, desired to give them a special curse. Thus he spoke as follows.

**Narada Muni said:** Among all the attractions of material enjoyment, the attraction of riches bewilders one's intelligence more than having beautiful bodily features, taking birth in an aristocratic family, and being learned. When one is uneducated but falsely puffed up by wealth, the result is that one engages his wealth in enjoying wine, women and gambling. Unable to control their senses, rascals who are falsely proud of their riches or their birth in aristocratic families are so cruel that to maintain their perishable bodies, which they think will never grow old or die, they kill poor animals without mercy. Sometimes they kill animals merely to enjoy an excursion. While living one may be proud of one's body, thinking oneself a very big man, minister, president or even demigod, but whatever one may be, after death this body will turn either into worms, into stool or into ashes. If one kills poor animals to satisfy the temporary whims of this body, obviously he does not know that he will suffer in his next birth. Such a sinful miscreant must go to



hell and suffer the results of his actions. While alive, does this body belong to its employer, to the self, to the father, the mother, or the mother's father? Does it belong to the person who takes it away by force, to the slave master who purchases it, or to the sons who burn it in the fire? Or, if the body is not burned, does it belong to the dogs that eat it? Among the many possible owners, who is the rightful claimant? To not properly ascertain this but instead to maintain the body by sinful activities is not at all good. This body, after all, is produced by the un-manifested nature and at death, it is again annihilated and merged in the natural elements. Therefore, it is the common property of everyone. Under the circumstances, who but a rascal claims this property as his own and while maintaining it commits such sinful activities as killing animals just to satisfy his whims? Unless one is a complete rascal, he cannot commit such sinful activities. Atheistic fools and rascals who are very much proud of their wealth fail to see things as they are. Therefore, returning them to poverty is the proper ointment for their eyes so they may see things as they are. At least a poverty-stricken man can realize how painful poverty is, and therefore he will not want others to be in a painful condition like his own. By seeing their faces, one who has been pricked by pins can understand the pain of others who are pin pricked. Realizing that this pain is the same for everyone, he does not want others to suffer in this way. But one who has never been pricked by pins cannot realise this. A poverty-stricken man must automatically undergo austerities and penances because he does not have the wealth to possess anything of substance. Thus his false prestige is vanquished. Always in need of food, shelter and clothing, he must be satisfied with what is obtained by the mercy of providence. Undergoing such compulsory austerities is good for him because this purifies his heart and completely frees him from



false ego. Always hungry, longing for sufficient food, a poverty-stricken man gradually becomes weaker and weaker. Having insufficient strength, his senses are automatically pacified. A poverty-stricken man, therefore, is unable to perform harmful, envious activities. In other words, such a man automatically gains the results of the austerities and penances adopted voluntarily by saintly persons.

Saintly persons may freely associate with those who are poverty-stricken, but not with those who are rich. A poverty-stricken man, by association with saintly persons, very soon becomes uninterested in material desires, and the dirty things within the core of his heart are completely eradicated. Saintly persons [*sādhus*] think of Krishna twenty-four hours a day. They have no other interest. Why should people neglect the association of such exalted spiritual personalities and try to associate with materialists, taking shelter of non-devotees, most of whom are proud and rich? Therefore, since these two persons, drunk with the liquor named *Vāruṇī*, or *Mādhvī*, and unable to control their senses, have been blinded by the pride of celestial opulence and have become attached to women, I shall relieve them of their false prestige. These two young men, Nalakuvara and Manigriva, are by fortune the sons of the great demigod Kuvera; but because of false prestige and madness after drinking liquor, they are so fallen that they are naked but cannot understand it. Therefore, because they are living like trees (for trees are naked but are not conscious), these two young men should receive the bodies of trees. This will be proper punishment. Nonetheless, after they become trees and until they are released, by my mercy they will have full remembrance of their past sinful activities. Moreover, by my special favor, after the expiry of one hundred years by the measurement of the demigods, they will be able to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva, face to face, and thus revive their real position as devotees.

Having thus spoken, the great saint *Devarṣi* Narada returned to his *āśrama*, known as *Nārāyaṇa-āśrama*, and Nalakuvara and Manigriva became twin arjuna trees. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, to fulfill the promise of the greatest devotee, Narada, slowly went to that spot where the twin arjuna trees were standing.

“Although these two young men are the sons of the very rich Kuvera and I have nothing to do with them, *Devarṣi* Narada is My very dear and affectionate devotee, and therefore because he wanted Me to come face to face with them, I must do so for their deliverance.” Having thus spoken, Krishna soon entered between the two arjuna trees, and thus the big mortar to which He was bound turned crosswise and stuck between them. By dragging behind Him with great force the wooden mortar tied to His belly,

the boy Krishna uprooted the two trees. By the great strength of the Supreme Person, the two trees, with their trunks, leaves and branches, trembled severely and fell to the ground with a great crash. Thereafter, in that very place where the two arjuna trees had fallen, two great, perfect personalities, who appeared like fire personified, came out of the two trees. The effulgence of their beauty illuminating all directions, with bowed heads they offered obeisances to Krishna, and with hands folded they spoke the following words.

O Lord Krishna, Your opulent mysticism is inconceivable. You are the supreme, original person, the cause of all causes both immediate and remote, and yet You are beyond this material creation. Learned *brāhmaṇas* know [on the basis of the Vedic statement *sarvaṁkhalvidam brahma*] that You are everything and that this cosmic manifestation, in its gross and subtle aspects, is Your form. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of everything. The body, life, ego and senses of every living entity are Your own self. You are the Supreme Person, Vishnu, the imperishable controller. You are the time factor, the immediate cause, and You are material nature, consisting of the three modes passion, goodness and ignorance. You are the original cause of this material manifestation. You are the Supersoul within the core of the heart of every living entity, and therefore You know everything about everyone. O Lord, You exist before the creation. Therefore, who, trapped by a body of material qualities in this material world, can understand You? O Lord, whose glories are covered by Your own energy, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. You are Sankarsana, the origin of creation, and You are Vasudeva, the origin of the *caturvyūha*. Because You are everything and are therefore the Supreme Brahman, we simply offer our respectful obeisances unto You. Appearing in bodies like those of an ordinary fish, tortoise and pig, You exhibit activities impossible for such creatures to perform - extraordinary, incomparable, transcendental activities of unlimited power and strength. These bodies of Yours, therefore, are not made of material elements, but are incarnations of Your Supreme Personality. You are the same Supreme Personality of Godhead, who have now appeared, with full potency, for the benefit of all living entities within this material world.

O supremely auspicious, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You, who are the supreme good. O most famous descendant and controller of the Yadu dynasty, O son of Vasudeva, O most peaceful, let us offer our obeisances unto Your lotus feet. O supreme form, we are always servants of Your servants, especially of Narada Muni. Now please give us permission to leave for our home. It is by the grace and mercy of Narada Muni that we have been able to see You face to face. Henceforth, may all our words describe Your pastimes, may our ears engage in aural



reception of Your glories, may our hands, legs and other senses engage in actions pleasing to You, and may our minds always think of Your lotus feet. May our heads offer our obeisances to everything within this world, because all things are also Your different forms, and may our eyes see the forms of Vaisnavas, who are non-different from You.

The two young demigods thus offered prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although Sri Krishna, the Supreme Godhead, is the master of all and was certainly Gokuleshvara, the master of Gokula, He was bound to the wooden mortar by the ropes of the gopis, and therefore, smiling widely, He spoke to the sons of Kuvera the following words.

**The Supreme Personality of Godhead said:** The great saint Narada Muni is very merciful. By his curse, he showed the greatest favor to you, who were mad after material opulence and who had thus become blind. Although you fell from the higher planet *svarga-loka* and became trees, you were most favored by him. I knew of all these incidents from the very beginning.

When one is face to face with the sun, there is no longer darkness for one's eyes. Similarly, when one is face to face with a *sādhu*, a devotee who is fully determined and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one will no longer be subject to material bondage. O Nalakuvara and Manigriva, now you may both return home. Since you desire to be always absorbed in My devotional service, your desire to develop love and affection for Me will be fulfilled, and now you will never fall from that platform.

**Sukadeva Goswami said:** Having been spoken to in this way by The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the two demigods circumambulated the Lord, who was still bound to the wooden mortar, and offered obeisances to Him. After taking the permission of Lord Krishna, they returned to their respective homes.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 10: The Deliverance of the Yamala-arjuna Trees » Verse: 1-43* ❀

### HOW CAN ONE DESTROY HIS MATERIAL BONDAGE?

*Sri Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura*

One is released from material bondage by seeing those whose minds are not disturbed by respect or disrespect, and those who have offered their minds completely to Krishna.

One's bondage will continue until he sees (*darśana*) a devotee. Just as the sun destroys the darkness just by rising, one's bondage is destroyed immediately upon seeing a pure devotee. However, it should be

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

understood from this example that even though the sun rises, the darkness will not be dissipated if a person is blind. Similarly, if one commits *nāma-aparādha*, as in the case of the demons, he will not be released from bondage even if he sees a *sādhu* like Narada Muni.

— *From Sārārtha-darśinī commentary on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by Srila Vishvanātha Cakravartī Thakura » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 10: The Deliverance of the Yamala-arjuna Trees » Verse 41 » Translated by His Holiness Bhanu Swami.* ❀

### CAUSELESS MERCY OF NARADA MUNI His Divine Grace

*A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Nalakuvara and Manigriva actually had nothing to do with devotional service or seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face, for this is not an ordinary opportunity. It is not that because one is very rich or learned or was born in an aristocratic family one will be able to see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face. This is impossible. But in this case, because Narada Muni desired that Nalakuvara and Manigriva see Him face to face, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Vasudeva wanted to fulfill those words of His very dear devotee. If one seeks the favor of a devotee instead of directly asking favors from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one is very easily successful. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has therefore recommended: *vaiṣṇava ṭhākura tomāra kukkura bhuliyā jānaha more, kṛṣṇa se tomāra kṛṣṇa dite pāra*. One should desire to become like a dog in strictly following a devotee. Krishna is in the hand of a devotee. *Adurlabhamātma-bhaktau*. Thus without the favor of a devotee, one cannot directly approach Krishna, what to speak of engaging in His service. Narottama dasa Thakura therefore sings, *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā*: unless one becomes a servant of a pure devotee, one cannot be delivered from the material condition of life. In our Gaudiya Vaishnava society, following in the footsteps of Rupa Goswami, our first business is to seek shelter of a bona fide spiritual master (*ādaugurv-āśrayaḥ*).

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 10: The Summum Bonum » Chapter 10: The Deliverance of the Yamala-arjuna Trees » Verse: 25, Purport.* ❀

### HOW CAN WE MEET A BONAFIDE SPIRITUAL MASTER?

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura*

#### What type of guru should we take shelter of?

If I am fortunate enough, I will take shelter of a spiritual master who always worships Hari. I should surrender to a spiritual master who is cent percent engaged in the Lord's service. Otherwise, unable to



follow his ideal example, I will not be able to engage myself cent percent in the Lord's service. A person devoid of proper etiquette, a platform speaker, or a professional priest cannot become *guru*. If we accept such a spiritual master, unfortunately, we cannot learn to worship Hari. A spiritual master must be free from material desire, self-controlled, well conversant with scripture, and self-realized. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.3.21) states,

*tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta, jijṣāsuḥ śreyāuttamam  
śābde pare ca niṣṇātām, brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam*

“Therefore, any person who seriously desires real happiness must seek a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. The qualification of the bona fide *guru* is that he has realized the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation and is able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities, who have taken shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, should be understood to be bona fide spiritual masters.”

### Is receiving the spiritual master's mercy the only way to attain Krishna's mercy?

The spiritual master is non-different from Lord Nityananda. By his mercy we receive Krishna's holy name, initiation into *kṛṣṇa-mantras*, and proper instruction by which we can attain eternal auspiciousness. Without the spiritual master's mercy we cannot receive the mercy of Lord Gaurāṅga and Sri Rādhā-Govinda. Our previous *ācārya*, Srīla Narottama dasa Thākura, has explained this: “The *jivas*' material existence is exhausted and the wealth of love of God is attained simply by their receiving the spiritual master's mercy.” The spiritual master, who is our devotional teacher, is an intimate devotee of Sri Gaurāṅga. By serving such a *guru* with love, our perfection is guaranteed.

Those whose hearts have become hard due to material attachment cannot purely chant the holy name of Krishna, who killed the Agha demon. If, however, we hear Hari's holy name attentively from the mouth of the spiritual master, then the holy name will certainly intoxicate us. If the spiritual master bestows unconditional mercy upon us, seeing our sincere humility and eagerness, glorification of Hari will come from our mouth with intensity.

### Who is the internal spiritual master?

The localized Paramatma, the individual Godhead situated within the heart of every living entity, who is described in the Vedas beginning with the verse *dvāsuparṇā*, is the internal, pure, unalloyed “conscience spiritual master,” the *caitya-guru*.

### How will we meet a bona fide spiritual master?

The Supreme Lord is present in our heart as the internal spiritual master and outside our heart as a pure devotee. If we are sincere, the Lord will guide us to a pure devotee. We may approach Him and beg for such mercy, but He is the sole in-charge for granting our wish. We cannot question Him if He refuses to grant it. Krishna is not the caretaker of our garden. Our duty is to wait patiently for His mercy. In the meantime, we should give up material desire and engage in His service. If we sincerely seek His mercy, He will certainly bestow it upon us. Simply by His mercy we will obtain a bona fide spiritual master. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states, *kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne, guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane*: “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.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya Lila, 22.47*)

### How can we understand the Absolute Truth?

The Absolute Truth is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is the cause of all causes. The Absolute Truth is self-manifest. He is not dead matter. He is fully cognizant. He manifests before us out of His own sweet will. It is impossible to know Him by mundane experience or the ascending path. The Absolute is not an object belonging to the three dimensions. We can measure objects belonging to the three dimensions. Anything that can be measured with our material senses belongs to the world of Maya.

As we have to open our eyes if we wish to see the sun, we have to wait until our internal spiritual consciousness is revived before we can realize the Absolute. As we cannot see the sun at night even if we illuminate the sky with thousands of electric lights—and as there is no need of artificial lighting once the sun rises in the morning—so the Absolute Truth cannot be illuminated by sensually acquired knowledge. As long as we are materially conditioned, we cannot understand the Absolute Truth's identity. We must hear about Him from our spiritual master. Thus there is no way to know the Absolute Truth except to surrender at our spiritual master's lotus feet.

### How will I understand whether or not a spiritual master is bona fide?

The spiritual master we choose, or a person who, according to our consideration is qualified to be *guru*, may not be bona fide. Only a person sent personally by Krishna will manifest before us as the bona fide spiritual master.



### **What is the function of the *caitya-guru* (Supersoul) and the other forms of *guru*?**

The Supreme Lord regulates the living entity's good and bad propensities by residing in their hearts as the Supersoul. The Supersoul or internal spiritual master directs all living entities. The Supersoul also guides us to a spiritual master. Aside from this, the spiritual master's servants act as instructing spiritual masters.

Persons who glorify the *sāstras*, who explain *sāstra* to others, and who act according to *sāstric* injunctions regulate the restless, materially contaminated minds of ignorant people. Such instructing spiritual masters help people before they receive initiation from a spiritual master.

Without the mercy of the internal spiritual master (*caitya-guru*), no one can become qualified to serve the lotus feet of the initiating and instructing spiritual masters. Until we accumulate piety in the form of Krishna's mercy, we cannot achieve the true mercy of the *caitya-guru*. As long as our hearts are filled with the desire for religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation, we cannot aspire for devotional service. However, if due to good fortune we desire to take shelter at the Lord's lotus feet, then the internal spiritual master will mercifully guide us to initiating and instructing *gurus*.

The devotee spiritual master is attained by the *caitya-guru*'s mercy. The *caitya-guru* bestows mercy in two ways, and it is because of these two forms of mercy that some people become materialists and others become devotees. Materialists are people who have accepted sense gratification as their ultimate goal. Instead of searching for devotional service, which is the ultimate goal of life, such people seek temporary happiness. This is the *caitya-guru*'s 'tricky mercy'. Only a cheater is fit to receive such 'tricky mercy.' Pious, sincere devotees, however, become glorious by receiving the *caitya-guru*'s true mercy. If someone, despite becoming the Supreme Lord's servant wants something other than his Lord's service, what can he be but a cheater?

An instructing spiritual master teaches a surrendered disciple to accept an initiating spiritual master. Therefore even though there may be many instructing spiritual masters, there is no difference in opinion between such *gurus* and the initiating spiritual master, who awards the disciple transcendental knowledge. Rather, an instructing spiritual master is a real friend to the initiating spiritual master.

A living entity's awareness of his constitutional position is revived when he receives transcendental knowledge. At that time, those who give instructions regarding the process of Hari's devotional service are called instructing spiritual masters. The initiating spiritual master is situated between the commander-in-chief and the ordinary soldiers who are in the form of instructing spiritual masters.

Only a person who is favored by the Lord in the form of the *caitya-guru* receives the good fortune to understand the devotee of the Lord as his bona fide spiritual master. Only by the Lord's mercy can a living entity see the beautiful toenails of a bona fide spiritual master's and thus make his life successful.

### **What do we need to do now?**

We must hear from a bona fide spiritual master. When we first hear from *guru* his words appear revolting to us. Some unfortunate people dare to think we can correct our spiritual master by our own experience. But the current of mundane thoughts cannot attack the spiritual master; he is situated millions of miles from such thoughts. He is known as *guru* because his position does not shift; he is the heaviest personality.

### **What is the result of taking shelter at the feet of a bona fide spiritual master?**

By taking shelter of a bona fide spiritual master a living entity can achieve the highest position on the path of worshiping Hari. By serving *guru* and Krishna a living entity's mundane conceptions are destroyed and he attains Goloka. As a result of such sincere service a living entity can attain an equal position with liberated souls—even eternally liberated souls. The spiritual master, who is non-different from Lord Nityananda, is not a lump of flesh and blood. By taking shelter at his lotus feet a living entity can attain freedom from the threefold material miseries.

### **Is it true that the dust from the feet of *guru* and Vaisnavas is worshipable?**

If the spiritual master and the saintly persons mercifully allow us to take dust from their lotus feet, we should respectfully accept it. However there is a possibility of inviting inauspiciousness if we forcibly or by request try to take dust from their lotus feet. One day, when a person named Vrindavanachandra Lashkar touched my spiritual master's lotus feet, my spiritual master became upset and said, "How dare you touch my feet? You will go to hell." When Lashkar told me about it I explained, "Even persons like Brahma have difficulty achieving the spiritual master's lotus feet. Attaining the spiritual master's feet is rare. Therefore what right or qualification do we have to touch the *guru*'s feet? We cannot approach the spiritual master unless we are eligible. We cannot approach the spiritual master with our sinful mentalities and offensive hearts."

One day, out of his causeless mercy, my spiritual master personally took the dust from his own lotus feet and smeared it on my head. Such was his mercy!



### What are the initiating and instructing gurus? What is the function of the guru who dwells in the heart?

There are three types of spiritual masters, the initiating *guru*, the instructing *guru*, and the *caitya-guru*. The spiritual master is never ordinary. He is godly. It is an offense to separate the spiritual master from Sri Krishna Chaitanya by considering him an ordinary, insignificant human being. In the form of the spiritual master, Krishna alone awakens the living entity's spiritual consciousness and thereby helps him attain eternal benefit.

The initiating spiritual master awards transcendental knowledge, knowledge of the Absolute Truth. "Krishna alone is my eternal master and I am His eternal servant": this transcendental knowledge or *sambandha-jnāna* is imparted by the initiating spiritual master.

An instructing spiritual master first tells us how to remove *anarthas* (the unprogressive impressions in our heart). He then teaches us the process of pure devotion. In most cases the initiating spiritual master acts as the instructing spiritual master. A conditioned soul cannot act as an initiating or instructing spiritual master. An initiating spiritual master gives both *mantras* and instructions on *bhajana* (the process of worship). An instructing spiritual master teaches the process of *bhajana* after our *anarthas* are destroyed.

Sri Hari, who dwells in our hearts as the Supersoul, is the internal spiritual master, *caitya-guru*. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* states, *kṛṣṇa yadi kṛpā kare kona bhāgyavāne, guru-antaryāmi-rūpe śikhāya āpane*: "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 from within as the Supersoul and externally as the spiritual master." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 22.47*)

The *caitya-guru* awards us the qualification to realize the instructions we have heard from the initiating and instructing *gurus*. He also imparts the strength to follow those orders. Without His mercy, no one can understand the intention of either the initiating or instructing spiritual master. Lord Sri Gaurangadeva alone awards transcendental knowledge and pure devotional service through the initiating spiritual master, protects that pure devotion by sending the instructing spiritual masters (who are nondifferent from Him), and as the internal spiritual master personally awards the strength to follow the *gurus'* orders and teachings.

### Is anything possible without the spiritual master's mercy?

I am blinded by ignorance, so who will show me the right path? Who will impart to me real knowledge? Everything is attained simply by the spiritual master's

mercy. We are fallen conditioned souls and the spiritual master is our only shelter. A spiritual master is he who always serves the Supreme Lord. The spiritual master is the servitor God. Are we looking at him in that way? If not, how can we expect to benefit from his association?

—*AmṛtaVāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda, Compiled by Śrīpāda Bhakti Mayukha Bhāgavat Mahārāja, Translated from Bengali by Bhumipatidāsa, Adapted and Published by Īsvara dāsa.* ❀

## NATURE OF ASSOCIATION

### Compilation of Verses

"Nature is born from association. One's nature is determined according to one's association. The faith that a living entity develops by his actions inspired by his previous life's association, is changed by the association in his present life. Therefore association is the root cause of a living entity's nature."

—*Sajjana Toṣaṇī 15/2, Bhakti Vinod Thakura*

*'śreyo-madhye kona śreyah jīvera haya sāra?'*  
*'Krishna-bhakta-saṅga vinā śreyah nāhi āra'*

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu asked, "Out of all auspicious and beneficial activities, which is best for the living entity?"

Ramananda Raya replied, "The only auspicious activity is association with the devotees of Krishna."

—*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 8.251*

*sat-saṅgān mukta-duḥsaṅgo*  
*hātum notsahate budhaḥ*  
*kīrtyamānam yaśo yasya*  
*sakṛd ākarṇya rocanam*

The intelligent, who have understood the Supreme Lord in association with pure devotees and have become freed from bad materialistic association, can never avoid hearing the glories of the Lord, even though they have heard them only once.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) 1.10.11*

*satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido*  
*bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ*  
*taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani*  
*śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati*

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.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) 3.25.25

*yaśaḥ śivam suśrava ārya-saṅgame  
yadṛcchayā copāśṛṇoti te sakṛt  
katham guṇa-jñō viramed vinā paśum  
śrīr yat pravavre guṇa-saṅgrahēcchayā*

My dear highly glorified Lord, if one, in the association of pure devotees, hears even once the glories of Your activities, he does not, unless he is nothing but an animal, give up the association of devotees, for no intelligent person would be so careless as to leave their association. The perfection of chanting and hearing about Your glories was accepted even by the goddess of fortune, who desired to hear of Your unlimited activities and transcendental glories.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) 4.20.26

*durlabho mānuṣo deho  
dehinām kṣaṇa-bhaṅguraḥ  
tatrāpi durlabham manye  
vaikuṅṭha-priya-darśanam*

For the conditioned souls, the human body is most difficult to achieve, and it can be lost at any moment. But I think that even those who have achieved human life rarely gain the association of pure devotees, who are dear to the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) 11.2.29

*ata ātyantikam kṣemam  
pṛcchāmo bhavato 'naghāḥ  
saṁsāre 'smin kṣaṇārdho 'pi  
sat-saṅgaḥ śevadhīr nṛṇām*

O completely sinless ones, I ask you to kindly tell me what the supreme good is. After all, even half a moment's association with pure devotees within this world of birth and death is a priceless treasure for any man.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) 11.2.30

*kona bhāgye kāro saṁsāra kṣayonmukha haya  
sādhu-saṅge tabe kṛṣṇe rati upajaya*

“By good fortune one becomes eligible to cross the ocean of nescience, and when one's term of material existence decreases, one may get an opportunity to associate with pure devotees. By such association, one's attraction to Krishna is awakened.

—Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 22.45

nityam bhāgavata-sevayā  
śrī-bhagavān uvāca  
na rodhayati mām yogo  
na sāṅkhyam dharma eva ca  
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo  
neṣṭā-pūrtam na dakṣiṇā  
vratāni yajñāś chandāmsi  
tīrthāni niyamā yamāḥ  
yathāvarundhe sat-saṅgaḥ  
sarva-saṅgāpaho hi mām

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: My dear Uddhava, by associating with My pure devotees one can destroy one's attachment for all objects of material sense gratification. Such purifying association brings Me under the control of My devotee. One may perform the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* system, engage in philosophical analysis of the elements of material nature, practice nonviolence and other ordinary principles of piety, chant the Vedas, perform penances, take to the renounced order of life, execute sacrificial performances and dig wells, plant trees and perform other public welfare activities, give in charity, carry out severe vows, worship the demigods, chant confidential *mantras*, visit holy places or accept major and minor disciplinary injunctions, but even by performing such activities one does not bring Me under his control.

—Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) 11.12.1-2



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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