

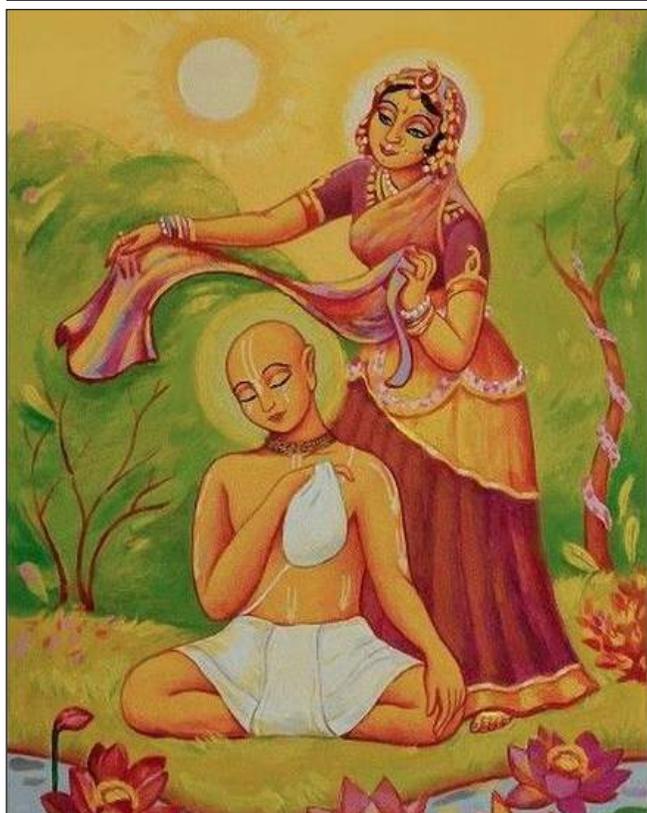


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The Characteristics Of Liberated Souls



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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF RSABHADEVA

Srila Sukadeva Goswami

Sri Sukadeva Goswami said: Sri Rsabhadeva was born as the son of Maharaja Nabhi. From His very birth He manifest symptoms of the Supreme Lord, such as marks on the bottom of His feet (flag, thunderbolt, etc.). This child was equal to everyone and was very peaceful. He could control His senses and His mind, and, possessing all opulence, He did not hanker for material enjoyment. Endowed with all these attributes, the son of Maharaja Nabhi became more powerful day by day. Seeing this, the citizens, learned *brāhmanas*, demigods and ministers wanted Rsabhadeva to be the appointed ruler of the earth. When the son of Maharaja Nabhi became visible, He evinced all good qualities described by the great poets, namely, a well-built body with all the symptoms of the Godhead, personal prowess, strength, beauty, name, fame, influence and enthusiasm. When His father Maharaja Nabhi, saw all these qualities, he thought his son to be the best of human beings or the supreme being. Therefore he gave Him the name Rsabha.

Indra, the King of heaven, who is very materially opulent, became envious of King Rsabhadeva. Consequently, he stopped pouring water on the planet known as *Bhārata-varṣa*. At that time the Supreme Lord, Rsabhadeva, the master of all mystic power, understood King Indra's purpose and smiled to Himself. Then, by His internal potency (*yoga-māyā*), He showered profuse rainfall on His kingdom, which was known as *Ajanābha*. Due to getting a perfect son as he had desired, King Nabhi was overwhelmed with transcendental bliss and was always very affectionate to Him. With ecstasy and a faltering voice he addressed Him saying, "My dear son, my darling." The mentality of accepting the Supreme Lord, the father of all as his son was brought about by the *yoga-māyā* energy of the Lord. Out of His supreme good will, the Lord became his son and dealt with everyone as if He were an ordinary human being. Thus King Nabhi began to raise his transcendental son with great affection, and he was overwhelmed with transcendental bliss, joy and devotion.

POPULARITY OF RSABHADEVA

King Nabhi understood that his son, Rsabhadeva, was very popular with the citizens and government officers and ministers. Understanding the popularity of his son, Maharaja Nabhi enthroned Him as the emperor of the world with the duty of giving protection to the general

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

populace in terms of the Vedic religious system. To support Him in this, Maharaja Nabhi entrusted Him into the hands of learned *brāhmanas*, who would guide Him in His governmental administration. Then Maharaja Nabhi and his wife, Merudevi, went to Badarikashrama in the Himalayan Mountains, where the King very jubilantly and with expertise engaged himself in performing austerities and penances. In full *samādhi* he worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nara-Narayana, who is Krishna in His plenary expansion. By doing so, in course of time, Maharaja Nabhi was elevated to the spiritual world known as Vaikuntha.

GLORIES OF MAHARAJA NABHI

yasya ha pāṇḍaveya ślokāv udāharanti —

O Maharaja Pariksit, to glorify Maharaja Nabhi, the sages of yore composed two verses:

*ko nu tat karma rājarṣer
nābher anv ācaret pumān
apatyatām agād yasya
hariḥ śuddhena karmaṇā*

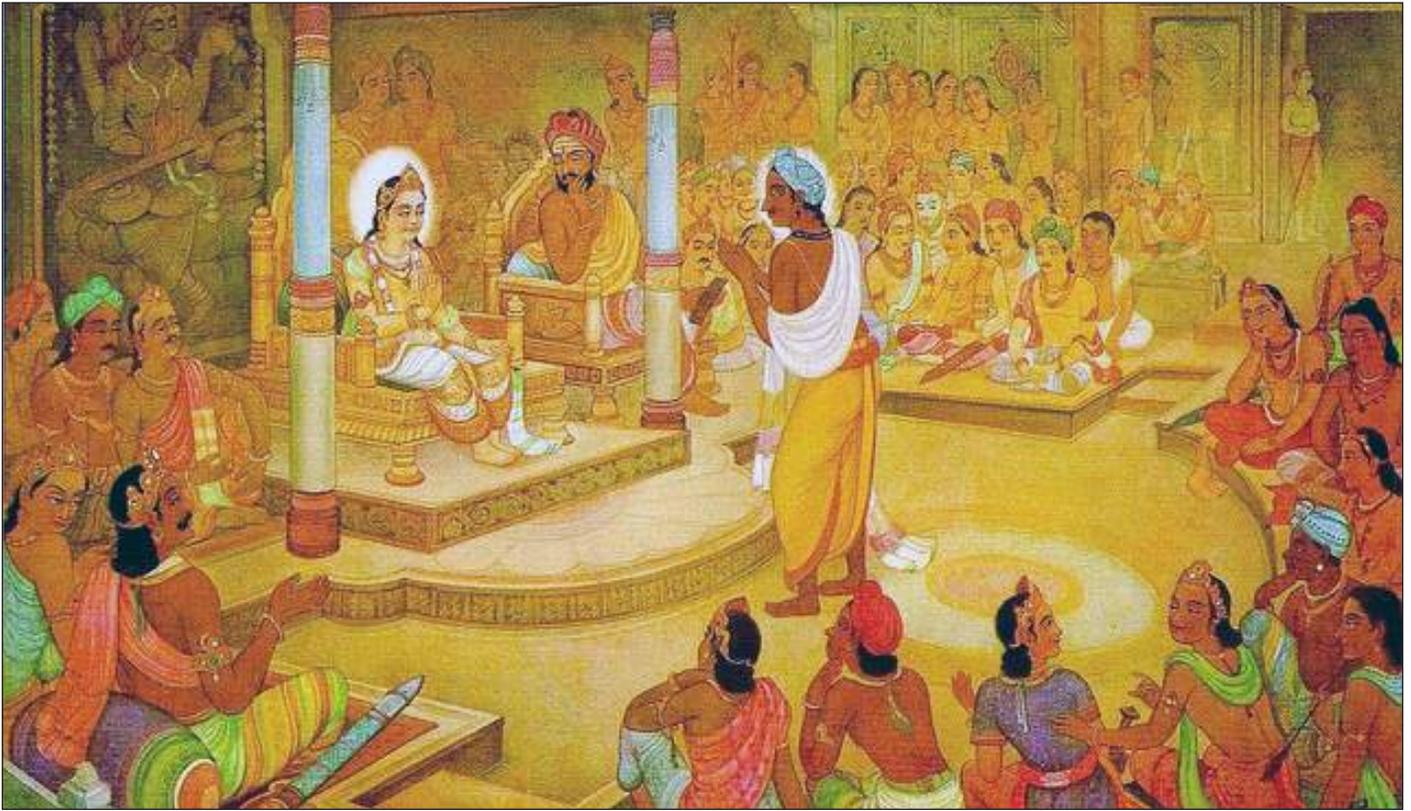
"Who can attain the perfection of Maharaja Nabhi? Who can duplicate his activities? Because of his devotional service, the Supreme Personality of Godhead agreed to become his son."

*brahmaṇyo 'nyaḥ kuto nābher
viprā maṅgala-pūjitāḥ
yasya barhiṣi yajñeśam
darśayām āsur ojasā*

"Who is a better worshiper of *brāhmanas* than Maharaja Nabhi? Because he worshiped the qualified *brāhmanas* to their full satisfaction, the *brāhmanas*, by their brahminical prowess, brought before Maharaja Nabhi the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana."

HOUSEHOLD LIFE OF RSABHADEVA

After Maharaja Nabhi departed for Badarikashrama, the Supreme Lord, Rsabhadeva, understood that the kingdom was His field of activities. He therefore became exemplary in His behavior and taught the duties of a householder by first accepting *brahmacarya* under the direction of spiritual masters. He also went to live at the spiritual masters' place, the *gurukula*. After His education was complete, He gave gifts (*guru-*



dakṣiṇā) to His spiritual masters and then began the life of a householder. He married a woman named Jayanti and begot one hundred sons who were as powerful and qualified as He Himself. His wife Jayanti had been offered to Him by Indra, the King of heaven. Rṣabhadeva and Jayanti performed householder life in an exemplary way, carrying out ritualistic activities ordained by the *śruti* and *smṛti śāstra*. Of Rṣabhadeva's one hundred sons, the eldest, named Bharata, was a great, exalted devotee endowed with great qualities. In his honor, this planet has become known as *Bhārata-varṣa*. After Bharata, ninety-nine other sons were born. Among them were nine elderly sons, named Kushavarta, Ilavarta, Brahmavarta, Malaya, Ketu, Bhadrāsena, Indrasprk, Vidarbha and Kikata. In addition to these sons were Kavi, Havi, Antarikṣa, Prabuddha, Pippalayana, Avirhotra, Drumila, Camasa and Karabhajana. These were all very exalted, advanced devotees and authorized preachers of *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*. These devotees were glorious due to their unflinching devotion to Vasudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore they were very exalted. To satisfy your mind perfectly, I (Sukadeva Goswami) shall hereafter describe the characteristics of these nine devotees when I discuss the conversation between Narada and Vasudeva. In addition to these nineteen sons mentioned above, there were eighty-one younger ones, all born of Rṣabhadeva and Jayanti. According to the order of their father, they became very cultured, well-behaved, pure in their activities and expert in Vedic knowledge and the

performance of Vedic rituals. Thus they all became perfectly qualified *brāhmaṇas*.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTIC AND BEHAVIOUR OF RSABHADEVA

Being an incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Rṣabhadeva was fully independent. His form was spiritual, eternal and full of transcendental bliss. He was never touched by the four principles of material misery (birth, death, old age and disease). Nor was He ever materially attached. He was always equipoised, and saw everyone on the same level. He was unhappy to see others unhappy, as He was the well-wisher of all living entities. Although He was a perfect personality, the Supreme Lord and controller of all, He nonetheless acted as if He were an ordinary conditioned soul. He strictly followed the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma* and acted accordingly. Over the course of time, the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma* had become neglected; therefore through His personal characteristics and behavior, He taught the ignorant public how to perform duties within the *varṇāśrama* system. In this way He regulated the household life of general populace, enabling them to develop religion and economic well-being and to attain reputations, sons and daughters, material pleasure and finally eternal life. Through His instructions on following the principles of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, He showed how people could remain as householders and at



the same time become perfect. Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow. Although Lord Rsabhadeva knew all confidential Vedic knowledge, which includes instructions on all occupational duties, He still maintained Himself as a *kṣatriya* and followed the instructions of the *brāhmaṇas* as they related to mind control, sense control, tolerance and so on. Thus He ruled the people according to the system of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, which enjoins that the *brāhmaṇas* instruct the *kṣatriyas* and the *kṣatriyas* administer the state through the *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*. Lord Rsabhadeva performed all kinds of sacrifices one hundred times according to the instructions of the Vedic literatures. Thus He satisfied Lord Vishnu in every respect. All the rituals were enriched by first-class ingredients. They were executed in holy places according to the proper time and by priests who were all young and faithful. In this way Lord Vishnu was worshiped, and the *prasāda* was offered to all the demigods. Thus the functions and festivals were all successful. No one likes to possess anything that is like a will-o'-the-wisp or a flower in the sky, for everyone knows very well that such things do not exist. When Lord Rsabhadeva ruled this planet of *Bhāratavarṣa*, even common men did not want to ask for anything, at any time or by any means. This was because everyone was completely satisfied at heart. The people were absorbed in

nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā

great affection for the King and since this affection was always growing they were never inclined to ask for anything. Once while touring the world, Lord Rsabhadeva, the Supreme Lord, reached a place known as Brahmaparvata. At that place was a great conference of learned *brāhmaṇas*, and all the King's sons attentively heard the instructions of the *brāhmaṇas* there. At that assembly, within the hearing of the citizens, Rsabhadeva also instructed His sons, although they were already very well-behaved, devoted and qualified. He instructed them so that in the future they could perfectly rule the world.

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)* » Canto 5: The Creative Impetus
» Chapter 4: The Characteristics of Rṣabhadeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead » Verses: 1-19. 🙏

THE EIGHT SYMPTOMS OF A *JIVAN-MUKTA* His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupada

When Maharaja Nabhi saw that his son Rsabhadeva was popular with the general populace and the governmental servants, he chose to install Him on the imperial throne. In addition, he wanted to entrust his son into the hands of the learned *brāhmaṇas*. This means that a monarch was supposed to govern strictly according to Vedic principles. He is supposed to be under the guidance of learned *brāhmaṇas*, who could advise Him according to the standard Vedic scriptures like *Manu-smṛiti* and similar *śāstras*. It is the duty of all kings to rule the citizens according to Vedic principles. According to Vedic scriptures, society is divided into four categories—*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* and *śūdra*. *Cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ* (Bg. 4.13). After dividing society in this way, it is the King's duty to see that everyone executes Vedic principles according to his caste. A *brāhmaṇa* must perform the duty of a *brāhmaṇa* without cheating the public. It is not that one attains the name of a *brāhmaṇa* without having the necessary qualifications. In addition, retirement at the end of life is compulsory. Maharaja Nabhi, although still a king, retired from family life and went with his wife to a place called Badarikashrama in the Himalayas, where the Deity Nara-Narayana is worshiped. The King accepted all kinds of austerity very expertly and jubilantly. He did not at all mind leaving his comfortable life at home, although he was the emperor. Despite undergoing severe austerities and penances, he felt very pleased at Badarikashrama, and he did everything there expertly. In this way, being fully absorbed in Krishna consciousness (*samādhi-yoga*), always thinking of Krishna, Vāsudeva, Maharaja Nabhi



attained success and was promoted to the spiritual world, Vaikunthaloka.

This is the way of Vedic life. One must stop the process of repeated birth and death and return home, back to Godhead. We should act in such a way that after giving up this body, we will become liberated from the bondage of repeated birth and death. This is called *jivan-mukti*. Srila Viraraghava Ācārya states that in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* there are eight symptoms of a *jivan-mukta*, a person who is already liberated even when living in this body. The first symptom of one so liberated is that he is freed from all sinful activity (*apahata-pāpa*). As long as one is under the clutches of *māyā* in the material energy, one has to engage in sinful activity. *Bhagavad-gītā* describes such people as *duṣkṛtinaḥ*, which indicates that they are always engaged in sinful activity. One who is liberated in this life does not commit any sinful activities.

Sinful activity involves illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication and gambling. Another symptom of a liberated person is *vijara*, which indicates that he is not subjected to the miseries of old age. Another symptom is *vimṛtyu*. A liberated person prepares himself in such a way that he does not take any more material bodies, all of which are destined to die. In other words, he does again not fall into the cycle of repeated birth and death. Another symptom is *viśoka*, which indicates that he is callous to material happiness and distress. Another is *vijighatsa*, which indicates that he no longer desires material enjoyment. Another symptom is *apipātā*, which means that he has no desire other than to engage in the devotional service of Krishna, his dearest desirable Lord. A further symptom is *satya-kāma*, which indicates that all his desires are directed to the Supreme Truth, Krishna. He does not want anything else. He is *satya-saṅkalpa*. Whatever he desires is fulfilled by the grace of Krishna. First of all, he does not desire anything for his material benefit, and secondly if he desires anything at all, he simply desires to serve the Supreme Lord. That desire is fulfilled by the Lord's grace. That is called *satya-saṅkalpa*. Srī Sukadeva says that the devotee attains the qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is called *sadhama*, (the same quality). Just as Krishna is never born and never dies, His devotees who return to Godhead never die and never take birth within the material world.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)* » Canto 5: *The Creative Impetus*
» Chapter 4: *The Characteristics of Ṛṣabhadeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead* » Verse: 5, Purport. 

AT WHAT STAGE IS A BHAKTA CONSIDERED *MĀYĀ-MUKTA*?" Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

Raghunatha dasa Babaji, “As soon as the jiva is initiated into *śuddha-bhakti*, he receives the designation *māyā-mukta* jiva, a liberated soul. However, he is only truly emancipated from the subjugation of *māyā* when he has fully matured in *sādhana-bhakti*. Prior to this maturity, the jiva is liberated only to the extent he has attained *svārūpa-gata-māyā-mukti*, awareness of his constitutional spiritual nature and liberation from false ego. *Vastu-gata-māyā-mukti*, complete liberation, takes place when the jiva is completely freed from his gross and subtle material bodies and established in his *svārūpa* and his transcendental service. Sincere adherence to the process of *sādhana-bhakti* ignites at some stage the spark of *bhāva-bhakti*. If the flame of *bhāva-bhakti* is kept burning and the jiva has thus become firmly fixed in this elevated state of spiritual consciousness, then at the time of



leaving the gross body, his subtle body will also dissolve and he will obtain his pure transcendental *svarūpa* and transcendental service.”

“The material conditioning of the jiva remains therefore throughout the period of *sādhana-bhakti*, even spilling over into the beginning stage of *bhāva-bhakti*, though only residual amounts persist. Therefore, the authorities in our line have included *sādhana-bhakti* and *bhāva-bhakti* within the five levels of consciousness considered *māyā-kavalita*, under the influence of *māyā*. The gross materialist seeking *bhukti* and the *jñānī* seeking *mukti* most certainly also belong to these five levels.”

“Amongst those souls who are liberated, complete emancipation from subservience to *māyā* is eventually accomplished only by those jivas blessed with *suddha-bhakti* to Sri Hari. The imprisonment of the jiva began when the jiva forgot his position as the eternal servant of Sri Krishna. This forgetfulness is the original offence of the jiva and is the root of all the jiva’s subsequent offences. Only the mercy of Sri Krishna can forgive all these offences and nothing else. Therefore, the mercy of Sri Krishna alone is the indispensable instrument

that can fully release the jiva from the captivity of *māyā*.”

“The monistic philosophers cultivating empirical knowledge are under the false impression that just by acquiring knowledge one can attain *mukti*. However, it is impossible to attain complete *mukti* without the benediction of Sri Krishna. In the *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.2.32-33, this point is explained:

*ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padam tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādrta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*

‘O lotus-eyed one, those who think they are liberated in this life, but do not render devotional service to You, must be of impure intelligence. Although they accept severe austerities and penances, and rise to the spiritual position, to the impersonal Brahman realization, they fall down again because they neglect to worship Your lotus feet.’

*tathā na te mādharma tāvakāḥ kvacid
bhraśyanti mārgāt tvayi baddha-sauhrdāḥ
tvayābhiguptā vicaranti nirbhayā
vināyakāṅkapa-mūrdhasu prabho*

‘O Supreme Personality of Godhead, Madhava, Your intimate and surrendered devotees are held tightly by the bonds of love they have for Your lotus feet. Hence, they are not afraid of falling from the path of *bhakti*, unlike those who proudly consider themselves as *vimukta*, liberated. O Lord, Your devotees are so well protected by You that they dauntlessly dance on the heads of those who try to hinder them.’

Vrajanatha, “How many types of *māyā-mukta* jivas are there?”

Raghunatha dasa Babaji, “Initially, there are two types of *māyā-mukta* jivas: the *nitya-mukta* jivas, eternally liberated souls; and the *baddha-mukta* jivas, those who have attained liberation from their previous conditioned, material existence. The *nitya-mukta* jivas were never captured by *māyā*. They are categorized into two groups: *nitya-mukta* jivas who are *aiśvarya-gata*, engrossed in the opulence of the Lord in a reverential mood; and those who are saturated in *mādhurya-gata*, the nectarean moods of the divine conjugal love of Sri Sri Radha Krishna.”

“The *aiśvarya-gata-nitya-mukta* jivas are the *nitya-pārsadās* of Sri Narayana, the presiding Lord of Vaikuntha. They are the particles of the spiritual effulgence emanating from Sri *Mūla-Saṅkarsaṇa*, who resides in Vaikuntha.”

“The *mādhurya-gata-nitya-mukta* jivas are the *nitya-pārsadās* of Sri Krishna, the Lord of *Vraja-vṛndāvana*. They are the particles of the spiritual effulgence emanating from the body of Sri Balarāma, who is situated in *Goloka-Vṛndāvana*.”

“The *baddha-mukta* jivas after the attainment of *mukti* are of three types: *aiśvarya-gata*, those steeped in the opulences of the Lord; *mādhurya-gata*, those absorbed by the sweetness of the Lord; and *brahma-jyotir-gata*, those who meditate upon the impersonal *brahma-jyotir* effulgence of the Lord.”

“The jivas who in their period of *sādhana* were inclined to the reverential moods of *bhakti* in *aiśvarya* were elevated to the planets of Sri Narayana in Vaikuntha as the associates of His *nitya-pārsadās*. Those jivas who in their period of *sādhana* were attracted to the intimate moods of *bhakti* in *mādhurya* became the eternal residents of Sri Krishna’s *Goloka-Vṛndāvana* and now relish nectarine *rasa* as the associates of Sri Krishna and His *nitya-pārsadās*. However, those jivas who sought to merge into the non-dual Absolute Brahman and as a result have attained *sāyujya-*

mukti after death are in the debilitated situation of *brahma-sāyujya*, amalgamation into the impersonal *brahma-jyotir*.”

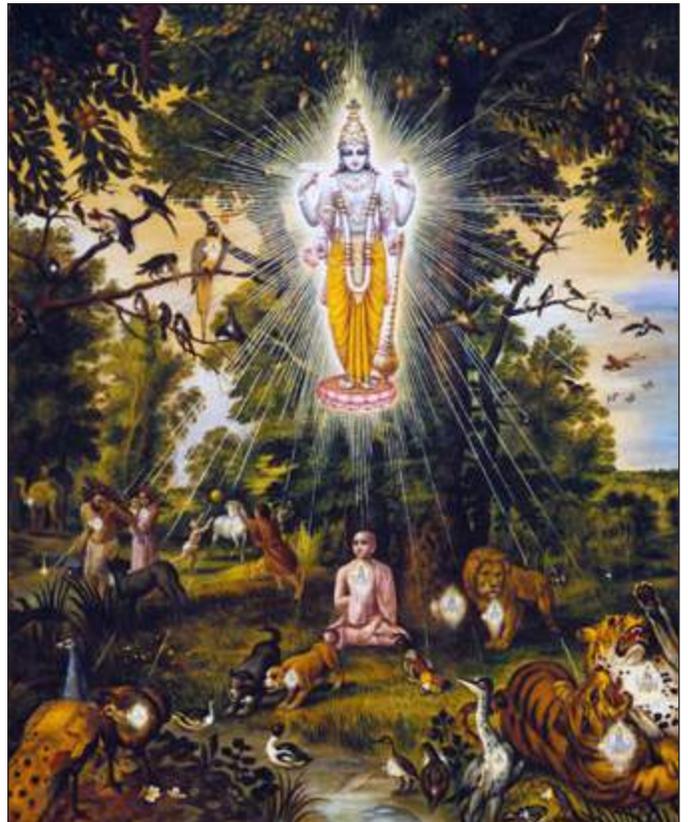
—Jaiva-dharma » Chapter Seventeen: Nitya-dharma: Sambandha, Abhidheya and Prayojana » Part Five: The Liberation of the Jīva from the Prison House of Māyā » Translated by Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Int. and Sarvabhāvana dāsa

A DEVOTEE IS FREE FROM ALL MATERIAL DESIGNATIONS Sri Jagadananda Pandita

The natural propensity for one who is in the material concept of life is to be attracted to speculative knowledge, fruitive activities and the designations of caste and social order. When the pure soul begins associating with the body, he develops the mood of false identification, thinking in terms of 'me' and 'mine'. But one who is free from such false identification is to be considered an eternally liberated soul and dear to the Supreme Lord Hari.

He who is free from possessiveness and is completely detached from material things does not make bodily distinctions like 'you' and 'me', which create imaginary friends and enemies. One who looks equally upon all living entities, making no distinctions between them, is equipoised and free from anxiety. He is certainly to be counted amongst the best of the devotees of the Lord.

Such a devotee never leaves the shelter of





the Lord's lotus feet, even if he is offered all the opulence of the entire universe. The Lord's lotus feet are the most coveted object of the demigods and sages. Never for a single moment does he forget the lotus feet of Sri Krishna. He is foremost amongst the pure devotees of the Lord, and he is always in a blissful state of consciousness.

—From *Sri Prema-Vivarta* of *Srila JagadanandaPandita* » Translated by *Sarvabhāvanadāsa*.

CAN A PERSON BECOME LIBERATED SIMPLY BY BECOMING A *SANNYĀSĪ*? *Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura*

Dressing like a *sannyāsī* and becoming a real *sannyāsī* are not the same thing. We have to take *sannyāsa* from material enjoyment and the desire for liberation. One who has made Krishna's devotional service the essence of life by renouncing the desire for religiosity, economic development, sense gratification, and liberation is the real *sannyāsī*.

To become a real *sannyāsī* means to follow in the footsteps of the *mahājanas* and to become attached to the transcendental Lord. In addition, dressing like a *sannyāsī* is nothing but imitation, pretense. Sri Mahāprabhu states: *parātma-niṣṭhā-mātraveṣa-dhāraṇa, mukunda-sevāya haya saṁsāra-tāraṇa*: "The real purpose of accepting *sannyāsa* is to dedicate oneself to the service of Mukunda. By serving Mukunda, one can actually be liberated from the bondage of material existence." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhya 3.8)

If after accepting *sannyāsa* one lovingly serves Krishna with body, mind, speech, wealth, knowledge, intelligence, and his possessions, he can both become liberated from material existence and become a *bhakta*. It is impossible to attain any benefit without rendering the Supreme Lord service. Whether one lives at home or in the Temple, one must engage in the Lord's service as his life and soul. Then only can he please the Lord. He must give up miserliness and the propensity to cheat. If he can make the Lord's service the goal of life, he can attain the Lord's mercy in this lifetime.

—*AmṛtaVāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality* by *Srila Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī* Compiled by *Sripāda Bhakti Mayukha Bhāgavat Mahārāja*. Adapted and Published by *Īsvaradāsa* Translated from Bengali by *Bhumipatidāsa*.

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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