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### HOW CAN WE PLEASE THE SUPREME LORD?

*Srila Narada Muni*

**Sri Prahlada said:** In the midst of the Lord's eight separated material energies, the three modes of material nature and the sixteen transformations of them [the eleven senses and the five gross material elements like earth and water], the singular spiritual soul exists as the observer. Therefore, all the great *ācāryas* have concluded that the individual soul is circumstantially conditioned by these material elements. There are two kinds of bodies for every individual soul - a gross body made of five gross elements, and a subtle body made of three subtle elements. Within these bodies, however, is the spirit soul. One must find the soul by analysis, saying, "This is not it. This is not it." Thus one must separate spirit from matter.

Sober and expert persons whose intellects have been purified by extensive analytical study of spiritual reality should search for the spirit soul in terms of the soul's connection with and distinction from all things that undergo creation, maintenance and destruction. Intelligence can be perceived in three states of activity wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep. The person who perceives these three is to be considered to be the original master, the ruler, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As one can understand the

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presence of the air by the aromas it carries, so, under the guidance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one can understand the living soul by these three divisions of intelligence. These three divisions, however, are not the soul; they are constituted of the three modes and are born of activities. Through polluted intelligence one is subjected to the modes of nature, and thus one is conditioned by material existence. Like a dreaming state in which one falsely suffers, material existence, which is due to ignorance, must be considered unwanted and temporary.

Therefore, my dear friends, O sons of the demons, your duty is to take to Krishna consciousness, which can burn the very seed of fruitive activities which have been artificially created by the modes of material nature. This heightened consciousness will then stop the flow of the materially contaminated intelligence in all phases - wakefulness, dreaming and deep sleep. In other words, when one takes to Krishna consciousness, his ignorance is immediately dissipated.

Of the different processes recommended for disentanglement from material life, the one personally explained and accepted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be considered flawlessly perfect. That process is the performance of duties by which love for the Supreme Lord develops. To begin this process, one must accept the bona fide spiritual master and render service unto him with great devotion and faith. Whatever one has in one's possession should be offered to the spiritual master, and in the association of saintly persons and devotees one should worship the Lord, hear the glories of the Lord with faith, glorify the transcendental qualities and activities of the Lord. The practitioner should always meditate on the Lord's lotus feet, and worship the Deity of the Lord strictly according to the injunctions of the scriptures and guru. One should always remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His localized representation as the Paramatma, who is situated in the core of every living entity's heart. Thus one should offer respect to every living entity according to that living entity's position or manifestation. By following these procedures one is able to dispell the influence of the enemies of spiritual emancipation, namely lust, anger, greed, illusion,



madness and jealousy. When one is thus aloof from these base qualities, one can render pure devotional service to the Lord. In this way one surely attains the platform of loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

One who is situated in devotional service is certainly the controller of his senses, and thus he is a liberated person. When such a liberated person, the pure devotee, hears of the transcendental qualities and activities of the Lord's incarnations in Their various pastimes, He experiences great joy. At that time his hair stands on end on his body, tears fall from his eyes, and in his spiritual realization his voice falters. Sometimes he very openly dances, sometimes he sings loudly, and sometimes he cries. Thus he expresses his transcendental jubilation.

In this way a perfect devotee appears like a person haunted by a ghost as he laughs and very loudly chants about the qualities of the Lord. Sometimes he sits to perform meditation, and he offers respects to every living entity, considering them a devotee of the Lord. Constantly breathing very heavily, he is heedless of social etiquette and loudly chants like a madman, "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna! O my Lord, O master of the universe!" The devotee is then freed from all material contamination because he constantly thinks of the Lord's pastimes and because his mind and body have been assimilated by the spiritual energy. Because of his intense devotional service, his ignorance, material consciousness and all kinds of material desires are completely burnt to ashes. This is the stage at which one can achieve the shelter of the Lord's lotus feet.

The real problem of life is the repetition of birth and death, which is like a wheel endlessly rolling up and down. This cycle, however, completely stops when one makes contact with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, by experiencing the transcendental bliss realized from constant engagement in devotional service, one is completely liberated from material existence. All learned men know this.

Therefore, my dear friends, O sons of the *asuras*, immediately begin meditating upon and worshiping the Supersoul who is within everyone's heart. O my friends, sons of the *asuras*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His Supersoul feature is ever present within the core of the hearts

of all living entities. Indeed, He is the well-wisher and friend of all living entities, and there is no difficulty in worshiping Him. Why, then, should people not engage in His devotional service? Why are they so addicted to unnecessarily producing artificial paraphernalia for sense gratification?

One's riches, beautiful wife and female friends, one's sons and daughters, one's residence, one's domestic animals like cows, elephants and horses, one's treasury, economic development and sense gratification; indeed, even the lifetime in which one can enjoy all these material plenitudes are certainly temporary and flickering. Since the opportunity of human life is temporary, what benefit can a sensible man who has understood himself to be eternal gain from these material luxuries?

It is learned from *Vedic* literature that by performing great sacrifices one may elevate himself to the heavenly planets. However, although life on the heavenly planets is hundreds and thousands of times more enjoyable than life on earth, the heavenly planets are not pure [*nirmalam*], as even there we find the taint of material existence. The heavenly planets are also temporary, and therefore they are not the goal of life. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, however, has never been seen to or heard of possessing inebriety. Consequently, for your own benefit and self-realization, you should worship the Lord with great devotion, as described in the revealed scriptures.

A materialistic person, thinking himself very progressive and intelligent, continually acts for economic development. However, as enunciated in the *Vedas*, again and again, he is frustrated by material activities, either in this life or in the next. Indeed, the results one obtains are inevitably the opposite of what he desires. In this material world, every materialist desires to achieve happiness and diminish his distress, and therefore he acts accordingly. In actuality, however, one is happy only as long as one does not endeavour for happiness. As soon as one begins his activities intended to create happiness, his conditions of distress begin. A living entity desires comfort for his body and makes many plans for this purpose, but actually the body is the property of others. Indeed, the perishable body embraces the living entity and then leaves him aside. Since the body



itself is ultimately meant to become stool or earth, what is the meaning of the paraphernalia related to the body, such as wives, residences, wealth, children, relatives, servants, friends, kingdoms, treasuries, animals and ministers? They are also temporary. What more can be said about this?

All this material paraphernalia is very dear to us as long as the body exists. However, as soon as the body ceases to exist, all things related to it are lost. Therefore, the truth is that a person actually has nothing to do with these accumulations, but because of ignorance one accepts them as valuable. Compared to the ocean of eternal happiness, they are most insignificant. What is the use of such insignificant relationships and objects for the eternal living being?

My dear friends, O sons of the *asuras*, know that the living entity receives different types of bodies according to his previous *karmic* activities. Thus he is seen to suffer with reference to his particular body in all conditions of life, beginning with his infusion into the womb. Please tell me after full consideration therefore, what is the living entity's actual interest in fruitive activities, which simply result in hardship and misery? The living entity, who has received his present body because of his past *karmic* activity, may exhaust the results of his past actions in this life, but this does not mean that he is liberated from bondage to material bodies. The living entity receives one type of body, and by performing actions with that body he creates another. Thus he transmigrates from one body to another, through repeated birth and death, because of his gross ignorance. The four principles of advancement in pious life - namely *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa* - all depend on the disposition of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, my dear friends, follow in the footsteps of devotees. Without desire, fully depend upon the will of the Supreme Lord, and worship Him, the Supersoul, in devotional service. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, is the soul and the Supersoul of all living entities. Every living entity is a manifestation of His energy in terms of both the spiritual soul and the material body. Therefore, the Lord is the most dear friend of all, and He is the supreme controller. If a demigod, demon, human being, Yaksa, Gandharva or anyone within this universe renders service to the lotus

feet of Mukunda, who can deliver liberation, he is actually situated in the most auspicious condition of life, exactly like ourselves.

My dear friends, O sons of the demons, you cannot please the Supreme Personality of Godhead by becoming perfect *brāhmaṇas*, demigods or great saints; nor can you please Him by becoming perfectly situated in etiquette or vast learning. None of these qualifications can awaken the pleasure of the Lord. Nor by charity, austerity, sacrifice, cleanliness or vows can one satisfy the Lord. The Lord is pleased only if one has unflinching, unalloyed devotion to Him. Without sincere devotional service, everything is simply a show.

My dear friends, O sons of the demons, in the same favourable way that one sees himself and takes care of himself, take to devotional service to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present everywhere as the indwelling Supersoul of all living entities. O my friends, O sons of demons, everyone, including yourselves (the Yaksas and Rakshasas), the uneducated women, *śūdras* and cowherd men, the birds, the lower animals and the sinful living entities, can revive his original, eternal spiritual life and exist forever simply by accepting the principles of *bhakti-yoga*. In this material world, to render service to the lotus feet of Govinda, the cause of all causes, and to see Him everywhere, is the only goal of life. This alone is the ultimate goal of human life, as explained by all the revealed scriptures.

— *Srimad Bhagavatam (Bhāgavata Purāna) » Canto 7: The Science of God » CHAPTER SEVEN Verses: 22-55, Translations.*

### ONE'S POSITION AS A SAINTLY PERSON

*His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swamī*

In (*Bhag.* 7.7.29),

*tatropāya-sahasrāṇām  
ayaṁ bhagavatodītaḥ  
yad īśvare bhagavati  
yathā yair aṅjasā ratīḥ*

it has been said that the process which immediately increases one's love and affection for the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the best of



the many thousands of means to become free from the entanglement of material existence. It is also said, *dharmasya tattvam nihitam guhāyām*; the actual truth of religious principles is extremely confidential. Nonetheless, that truth can be understood very easily if one adopts the genuine principles of religion. As it is said, *dharmā tu sāṅśād bhagavat-praṇūtam*. (Bhag, 6.3.19) the authentic process of religion is enunciated by the Supreme Lord because He is the supreme authority. This is also indicated in the previous verse by the word *bhagavatoditah*. The injunctions or directions of the Lord are infallible, and their benefits are fully guaranteed. According to His directions, which are explained in this verse, the perfect form of religion is *bhakti-yoga*.

To practice *bhakti-yoga*, one must first accept a bona fide spiritual master. Srila Rupa Goswami, in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.74-75), advises:

*guru-pādāśrayastasmāt  
kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam  
viśrambhenagurohsevā  
sādhu-varmāmūwartanam*

*sad-dharma-prcchābhogādi-  
tyāgaḥkṛṣṇasyahetave*

One's first duty is to accept a bona fide spiritual master. The student or disciple should be very inquisitive; he should be eager to know the  
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complete truth about eternal religion (*sanātana-dharma*). The words *guru-śuśrūṣayā* mean that one should personally serve the spiritual master by giving him bodily assistance, helping him in bathing, dressing, sleeping, eating and so on. This is called *guru-śuśrūṣaṇam*. A disciple should serve the spiritual master as a menial servant, and whatever he has in his possession should be dedicated to the spiritual master. *Prāṇair arthair dhiyā vācā*. Everyone has his life, his wealth, his intelligence and his words, and all of them should be offered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead through the via medium of the spiritual master. Everything should be offered to the spiritual master as a matter of duty, but the offering should be made to the spiritual master with heart and soul, not artificially to gain material prestige. This offering is called *arpana*. Moreover, one should live among devotees, or near to saintly persons, to learn the etiquette and proper behavior of devotional service. Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura remarks in this connection that whatever is offered to the spiritual master should be offered with love and affection, not for material adoration.

Similarly, it is recommended that one associate with devotees, but there must be some discrimination. Actually, a *sādhu*, a saintly person, must be saintly in his behavior (*sādhavaḥ sad-ācārāḥ*). Unless one adheres to the standard behavior, one's position as a *sādhu*, a saintly person, is not  
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complete. Therefore a Vaisnava, a *sādhū*, must completely adhere to the standard of behavior. Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura says that a Vaisnava, a person initiated into the Vaisnava cult, should be offered the respect befitting a Vaisnava, which means that he should be offered service and prayers. However, one should not associate with him if he is not a fit person with whom to associate.

— *Srimad Bhagavatam (Bhagavata Purana) » Canto 7: The Science of God » Chapter seven » Verses: 31 » Purport.*

### THE CHARACTERISTIC OF A SAINTLY PERSON

*Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura*

“The characteristic of a saintly person is that he does not waste time. By seeing such a characteristic in a *sādhū* one will certainly hanker after it. One will naturally think, ‘Alas! When will I become fortunate enough to chant, sing, and remember the holy names of the Lord like this saintly person?’ Such enthusiasm generated in the mind of a spiritually apathetic person will remedy his lethargy with the remembrance of Krishna.”

— *Harināma Cintāmani*

— *Bhaktivinoda Vānī Vaibhāva » Compiled teachings of Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura » Touchstone Media.*

### IS IT PROPER TO TOUCH A SANNYĀSĪS FEET?

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura*

One should not touch the lotus feet of a saintly person or *sannyāsī* with his body which has been used for so much material enjoyment and is thus contaminated with sin. If the saintly person becomes displeased as a result of our touching his lotus feet, then it will certainly create inauspiciousness for us. *Sannyāsī* devotees do not like people touching their feet. It is currently become a fashion—a disease—to touch the pure feet of guru and *sādhū*. We should pay close attention to whether the spiritual master and Krishna are being pleased by each one of our actions. If we do not do so, then we will dig our own grave.

Let me advise those who would sentimentally attempt to touch the feet of a *sannyāsī* like me. In the language of my spiritual master, “Why do they dare to reach out to take dust from the feet of the saintly persons? Are they so entitled? What right

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do they have to do so? Is such brazen audacity appropriate to their actual position?

An attached householder, who has no real interest in serving the saint, is certainly unjustified in touching his lotus feet. Better that he offers obeisance from a slight distance. If an attached householder forcibly tries to touch the saint's feet, it means his mind is attracted to gross matter. That will cause him more harm than good. Those who desire fortune should carefully refrain from committing such offensive activities.

— *Amṛtavani » Nectar of Instructions of Immortality » Compiled instructions of His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura » Touchstone Media.*

### ONE CAN ONLY BE SAVED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SAINTS

*Srila Narahari Chakravarti Thakura*

Whilst wandering aimlessly in the material world, taking one birth after another, if by chance the living entity comes in contact with a saintly person he becomes immediately knowledgeable of his true identity as pure spirit soul, an eternal servant of Krishna. Enlightened by this knowledge, he does not want to be material entangled any longer, and he laments: “Alas! Why have I served this illusory material energy for so long?”

He bitterly regrets and cries out, “Krishna! My Lord, I am Your eternal servant. Since I have neglected the shelter of Your lotus feet my life has been completely devastating.”

Lord Krishna is so merciful that if anyone pleads to Him with earnestly, He immediately releases the jiva from material entanglement. When the jiva is broken away from maya's captivating spell and strives to approach Lord Krishna by rendering devotional service, he gains the supreme shelter of the Lord's lotus feet. Lord Krishna fortifies him with His transcendental, internal potency, and the unstoppable power of the Lord's spiritual potency weakens maya's influence on the living entity.

The only thing truly desirable in this world is to be able to chant the holy name of the Lord in the association of pure and saintly devotees. This is the best and only true way to completely conquer the darkness of nescience.

I, Jagadananda, the eternal servant of Lord Gaurasundara, have given up all other hope



and supposed shelters and am sitting here with the sole aspiration of receiving the shelter of Sri Gaurasundara's lotus feet.

—*Prema-Vivarta* » Śrīla Jagadānanda Pandita » Translated by Sarva-bhāvama dāsa.

**ONE SHOULD NEVER CRITICIZE  
AN EXALTED VAISNAVA**  
*Srila Vrindavan Das Thakura*

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30) it is stated:

*api cet su-durācāro  
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk  
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ  
samyag vyavasīto hi sah*

“Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is fully engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination.”

In the *Upadeśāmṛta* (6) it is stated:

*dr̥ṣṭaiḥ svabhāva-janitair vapuṣaś ca doṣair  
na prakṛtatvam iha bhakta janasya paśyēt  
gaṅgāmbhasāni nakhali budbuda-phena-panikair  
brahma-draṅgatvam apagacchati nīra-dharmaih*

“Being situated in his original Krishna conscious position, a pure devotee does not identify with the body. Such a devotee should not be seen from a materialistic point of view. Indeed, one should overlook a devotee's having either a body born in a low family, a body with a bad complexion, a deformed body, or a diseased or infirm body. According to ordinary vision, such imperfections may seem significant in the body of a pure devotee, but despite such seeming defects, the body of a pure devotee cannot be polluted. It is exactly like the waters of the Ganges, which during the rainy season are full of bubbles, foam and mud. The Ganges waters however, do not become polluted. Those who are advanced in spiritual understanding will bathe in the Ganges without considering the condition of the water.”

—*Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata Antya-khaṇḍa 9.388* » Śrīla Vṛndāvanadāsa Thākura » With English Translation of the Gauḍīya-bhāṣya » Commentary and Chapter Summaries of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Mahārāja Vraja Raja press.



!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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