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Srila Narada Muni

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THE MAINTAINER OF HIS DEVOTEES
Sriḷa Narada Muni

After considering the oneness of existence, activity and paraphernalia and after realizing the self to be different from all actions and reactions, the mental speculator [*muni*], according to his personal realization, gives up the three states of wakefulness, dreaming and sleep. When one understands that result and cause are one and that duality is ultimately unreal, like the idea that the threads of a cloth are different from the cloth itself, one reaches the conception of oneness called *bhāvādvaita*. My dear Yudhisthira, when all the activities one performs with his mind, words and body are dedicated directly to the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one reaches the second oneness, that of activities, *kriyādvaita*. When the ultimate goal and interest of one's self, Bhāgavata Mahāvīdyālaya

one's wife, one's children, one's relatives and all other embodied living beings is one, this third attainment is called *dravyādvaita*, oneness of interest. The eternally individual soul thus has subsequent realisations of three kinds of oneness.

O King Yudhisthira, in normal conditions, in the absence of danger, every person should perform their prescribed activities according to their status of life with the things, endeavours, process and living place that are allocated for them, and not by any other means. O King, one should perform his occupational duties according to these instructions, as well as other instructions given in the *Vedic* literature, just to remain a devotee of Lord Krishna. Thus, even while at home, one will be able to reach the destination. By dint of your service to the Supreme Lord, O King Yudhisthira, you Pandavas defeated the greatest dangers posed by numerous kings and demigods. By serving the
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lotus feet of Krishna, you conquered great enemies, who were like elephants, and thus you collected ingredients for sacrifice. By His grace, may you all be delivered from material involvement.

Long, long ago, in another millennium (*mahā-kalpa*), I existed as the celestial Gandharva known as Upabarhana and was well respected by the other Gandharvas. I had a beautiful face and a pleasing, attractive bodily structure. Decorated with flower garlands and sandalwood pulp, I was most pleasing to the women of my city. Thus I was bewildered, always feeling amorous desires. Once, in the celestial realm, there was a *sankīrtana* festival to glorify the Supreme Lord in an assembly of the demigods, and the Gandharvas and Apsaras were invited by the Prajapatis to take part in it.

Accepting the invitation to that festival, I went there, and, surrounded by women, I began musically singing the glories of the demigods. Seeing this, the prajapatis, the great demigods in charge of the affairs of the universe, forcefully cursed me with these words: "Because you have committed an offense by cohorting with women at a religious ceremony, may you immediately become a *śūdra*, devoid of beauty." Although I took birth as a *śūdra* from the womb of a maidservant, I engaged in the service of Vaisnava devotees of the Lord who were well-versed in *Vedic* knowledge. Consequently, in this life I got the opportunity to take birth as the son of Lord Brahma. That is my history.

The process of chanting the holy name of the Lord is so powerful that by this chanting even householders can very easily gain the ultimate result achieved by those in the renounced order. Maharaja Yudhisthira, I have now explained to you that process of religion. My dear Maharaja, you Pandavas are so fortunate that many great saints, who can purify all the planets of the universe, come to your house just like ordinary visitors. Furthermore, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is living confidentially with you in your house, just like your brother. How wonderful it is that the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Parabrahman, Krishna, who is sought by great sages for the sake of liberation and transcendental bliss, is acting as your best well-wisher, your friend, your cousin, your heart and soul, your worshipable director, and your spiritual master. Present here now is the same Supreme Personality of Godhead whose true form cannot be understood even by

such great personalities as Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva. He is realized by devotees because of their unflinching surrender. May that same Personality of Godhead, who is the maintainer of His devotees and who is worshiped by silence, by devotional service and by cessation of material activities, be pleased with us.

Sri Sukadeva Gosvami said: Maharaja Yudhisthira, the best member of the Bharata dynasty, thus learned everything from the descriptions of Narada Muni. After hearing these instructions, he felt great pleasure in his heart, and in great ecstasy, love and affection, he worshiped Lord Krishna. Narada Muni, after being worshiped by both Krishna and Maharaja Yudhisthira, bade them farewell and went away. Yudhisthira Maharaja, having heard that Krishna, his cousin, is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, was struck with wonder. On all the planets within this universe, the varieties of living entities, moving and non-moving, including the demigods, demons and human beings, were all generated from the daughters of Maharaja Daksa. I have now described them and their different dynasties.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) > Canto 7: The Science of God > Chapter Fifteen > Verses: 62-80.

ATTAINING THE GRACE OF KRISHNA

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Presenting himself as an ordinary householder, Maharaja Yudhisthira inquired from Narada Muni how a *grha-mūḍha-dhī*, a person who is entangled in household life and who thus continues to remain a fool, can be delivered. Narada Muni encouraged Maharaja Yudhisthira by saying, "You are already saved because you, along with your entire family, have become pure devotees of Krishna."

The fact is that by Krishna's grace, the Pandavas conquered in the Battle of Kuruksetra and were saved from many dangers posed not only by kings but sometimes even by the demigods. Thus they are a practical example of how to live in security and safety by the grace of Krishna. Everyone should follow the example of the Pandavas, who showed how to be saved by the grace of Krishna. Our Krishna consciousness movement is intended to teach how everyone can live peacefully in this material world and at the end of life return home, back to Godhead.



In the material world there are always dangers at every step (*padam padam yad vipadam na tesam* [SB 10.14.58]). Nonetheless, if one takes shelter of Krishna without hesitation and keeps under the shelter of Krishna, he can easily cross the ocean of nescience. *Samāśritā ye pada-pallava-plavaṁ mahat-padam puṇya-yaśo murāreḥ*. To the devotee, this great ocean of nescience becomes like a puddle of water in the hoofprint of a cow. A pure devotee, without embarrassing himself by trying to be elevated by so many means, stays in the safest position that of a servant of Krishna and thus his life is eternally safe without a doubt.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) > Canto 7: The Science of God > Chapter Fifteen > Verses: 68, Purport.

THE MENTALITY OF A SURRENDERED SOUL

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

Unalloyed devotees of the Lord unhesitatingly accept all the Lord's arrangements without protest or argument. Displaying impatience regarding the Lord's arrangements proves that one lacks faith in Him and desires material enjoyment. Devotees are not concerned whether the Lord's mercy seems like punishment, cruelty, or benediction because

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they are fully surrendered to the Lord. No amount of material inconvenience can distract them from their surrender or from accepting the Lord as their maintainer.

The Lord is the ultimate seer of everything but various obstacles impede the vision of the conditioned souls. By expressing displeasure at, or restlessness with the Lord's arrangements, one certainly invites inauspiciousness. The surrendered devotees have no intention other than to constantly engage in Lord Hari's service by being pleased to accept all His arrangements.

— *Amṛta Vāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality; His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada; Compiled by Sripada Bhakti Mayukha Bhagavat Maharaja; Adapted and Published by Isvaradasa; Translated from Bengali by Bhumipatidasa.*

THE MOST FORTUNATE IN THE THREE WORLDS

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

According to the scriptures, there are six types of surrender which are impossible to explain in full detail. In brief they are as follows:

1. Accepting everything favourable for service to the Lord.

2. Rejecting everything unfavourable for service to the Lord.
3. Having faith in Krishna as one's protector.
4. Knowing that Krishna is one's preserver and maintainer.
5. Thinking oneself as low and worthless.
6. Being self - surrendered.

If one does not cultivate these attitudes while chanting, one will simply accumulate material gain in his life. That which always helps us to develop devotion should be accepted with relish, whereas those things which impede devotion should be rejected in disgust. One should believe that other than Krishna, there is no one on whom to depend. One should also cultivate faith that Krishna alone is one's maintainer. One should think that one is very low and unqualified, with no true assets or possessions. As an eternal servant of Krishna, one will be willing to do anything that Krishna desires. To believe that one is the doer, the giver, the protector, that one owns their body, house, wife and offspring; to think oneself to be an esteemed intellectual or priest (*brāhmaṇa*) or a lowly worker (*śūdra*), husband or wife, king or citizen—all such thinking should be rejected. Instead, by focusing one's thoughts on Krishna, one should meditate on Krishna as the controller and doer and that Krishna's desire is the most important thing in his life. One will do as Krishna desires, not as one independently wants to do.

One should think, 'By Krishna's wish I will stay in this world, and by Krishna's wish I will cross over it. If there is pain, if there is rejoicing, still I am Krishna's servant. By His will He gives mercy to all beings (*jīva*). My material enjoyment and renunciation are all dependent on Krishna.' When this attitude is present it is called *ātmā-nivedana*, surrender of the self.

"When these six types of *śaraṇāgati* (full surrender) are not present in the heart of an individual, they possess the intelligence of "I and mine". Such a person is considered a low rascal because he believes that he is the doer, that the world is his, that he is the creator of his destiny and the enjoyer of the fruits of his activities, that he is his own protector and maintainer, that these are his wife, brothers, sons and daughters, and that by his own endeavour he can achieve all perfection and glory. Such people are proud of the power of

their acquired knowledge. Not considering the Lord's control, they think that by their intelligence they can increase and extend the arts and sciences beneficially.

If these people hear the glories of the name, they do not believe them; or if they do chant Krishna's name, it is only out of social custom. Being pretenders and cheaters, they may chant the name in the stage of reflected, neglectful chanting (*hela-nāmābhāsa*), but will never get to the stage of loving chanting (*prema nāmā*). The offense of faithlessness is due to being tightly bound by *māyā*, and deliverance from it is very difficult,

However, one can see that there are some people who, taking up chanting the name and reaching the level of pure devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*), have completely given up material attachment and humbly worship Krishna's lotus feet and joyfully sing His name. One should seek out this type of person, take his association, and serve him with the desire to give up their material attachment. Gradually one will become fixed in the name and the mentality of seeing in terms of 'I and mine' will dwindle as one transcends attachment to illusion (*māyā*). Giving up this erroneous mentality, one will cultivate full surrender, which is the constitutional position of the living entity and the intrinsic nature of *bhakti*. By doing this one can get love for Krishna, *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

One who gives up the ten offenses and performs devotional service correctly is the most fortunate person in the three worlds, is full of all good qualities and is very likely to soon be blessed by Krishna Himself. While chanting the holy name, very soon, by Krishna's mercy, that person will come to the level of spiritual emotion (*bhāva*) and love for the Lord, *prema*. Lord Chaitanya has stated Himself that whoever takes the name without offenses will attain *prema*, and whoever takes the name without giving up the offenses will never attain pure *bhakti* in spite of all his practices. The practice of *jñāna* gives liberation, and fruitive activities give material enjoyment, but pure Krishna *bhakti* and *prema* are attained only by correct execution of regulated devotional service, *sādhana-bhakti*. As liberation and material enjoyment are both unsatisfying and incomplete, and as *bhakti* is the only solution, the real form of liberation and the glory of the soul, the *jīvas* need is to obtain *bhakti*. By carefully performing *sādhana-bhakti* without offense, the creeper of

bhakti will soon yield the fruit of *prema*. Carefully performing *sādhana* means to diligently avoid the ten offenses.

Therefore, one who is desirous of obtaining *bhakti* will take the name, being attentive to never commit any of the ten offenses, and in his heart fervently beg at the feet of the holy name to bless him by removing all his offenses. One can never be released from offenses against the name by atonement (*prāyaścitta*) or by performing unlimited pious activity. That impunity will come only by again taking shelter of the name continuously. Chanting day and night, feeling repentant, the offenses will go and the fruit of the name will come. One will gradually attain the stage of purity in chanting (*śuddha-nāma*), then taste in chanting (*bhāva-nāma*), and finally pure loving chanting (*prema-nāma*).

Ultimately, to keep the offenses from entering the heart, one should constantly pray for the mercy of Lord Chaitanya, who is absorbed in the nectar of chanting the pure holy names of Krishna."

— *Hari-nāma-cintāmaṇi*; translation by H.H. Bhanu Swami.

NO ONE IS HATED OR NEGLECTED BY KRISHNA

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

Sri Krishna is the only maintainer of all universes filled with animate and inanimate beings. It has been ascertained by all scriptures that He is the supreme shelter and only benefactor of all living entities. That is why no one is actually destined to receive Krishna's hatred or negligence. Since all living entities are constitutionally eternal servants of Krishna, they are all natural recipients of His mercy or compassion.

The phrase *sakala-suhr̥t* means "all-auspicious." As stated: *sarveṣāṁ hitakārī yaḥ sa syāt sarva-śubhanīkaraḥ* – "An all-auspicious person is he who is engaged in the welfare of everyone."

That no one is hated or neglected by Krishna is explained in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.38.22). There Sri Sukadeva Gosvami narrates the thoughts of Akrura as he approached Gokula:

*na tasya kaścīd dayitaḥ suhr̥ttamo
na cāpriyo dveṣya upekṣya eva vā
tathāpi bhaktān bhajate yathā tathā
sura-drūmo yadvad upāśrito 'rtha-dah*

"The Supreme Lord is impartial and has no favourite and no dearest friend. Nor does He consider anyone undesirable, despicable or fit to be neglected. Nevertheless, He lovingly reciprocates with His devotees in whatever manner they worship Him; just as the trees of the celestial realm fulfill all the desires of whoever approaches them."

In the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (*Dakṣiṇa-vibhāga*, Chapter One) it is stated:

*kṛtā kṛtārthā munayo vinodaiḥkhala-
kṣayeṇākhila-dharmikāś ca
vapur vimardena khalāś ca yudhe
na kasya pathyaṁ hariṇā vyadhāyi*

"Who has not been benefited by that Lord, Sri Hari, who has destroyed all inimical kings and pleased the self-satisfied sages and pious persons by glorifying their good qualities? In a benevolent mood He ultimately satisfied those belligerent kings by personally killing them on the battlefield, rather than having His agents deliver their just deserts."

— Purport to *Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavata Madhya-khaṇḍa 2.049* of His Divine Grace Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada, Vrajaraja Press.

THE TEST OF DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

The bona fide spiritual master can give relevant direction to the neophyte devotee on the principles of the primary stages of devotional service of the Lord. If one has not developed the aptitude of loving service of the Lord by engaging himself under the direction of the spiritual master, one cannot make any progress on the path of devotion. Nobody can claim to have made any progress in devotional service without demonstrating by the symptoms.

Srila Jiva Gosvami gives an analogy. He says that when we speak of inviting a warrior it does not mean we invite the weapons of the warrior. The warrior is naturally always decorated with or followed by his weapons. However, the host does not mean to please the weapons – rather he wishes to please the warrior himself. Similarly we must know whether the Lord is satisfied by our service, without being too attached to mechanically following the standard procedures. There are



many who pass by the name of devotees, but when they are put in the acid test of genuine symptoms, generally they can be seen as belonging to the class of mundane people. Lord Chaitanya says that *kṛṣṇa-prema*, a genuine love for the Lord, is the last word in the kingdom of devotional service. In the absence of such genuine love for Krishna, which is followed by the symptoms of detachment for mundane things, one cannot be certified as an advanced devotee. The word *anu* suggests service of the Lord without any interval. The true devotee is always fully absorbed in the service of his beloved Lord. There will naturally be no interruption in such progress of devotional service. These are some of the symptoms of devotional service in reality. Besides these, there are other secondary symptoms which are as follows:

The devotee must be completely freed from all desires other than devotional service. That is the standard of first grade devotional service. Desires other than devotional service are many and come under the headings of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, etc. *Jñāna*, knowledge is generally accepted in the sense of monism or to become one with the Supreme. When we say that devotional service must be untouched by *jñāna* we mean this philosophy of undifferentiated oneness with the Lord. Otherwise, knowledge pertaining to the culture of pure devotional service has to be attained with full vigour. Without specific knowledge in the matter of pure devotional service, particularly with reference to the context of *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, *Mahābhārata* and *pañcarātric* regulations, no devotional service will stand as genuine. Any pretension of devotional service without knowledge of the above men-

tioned scriptures is nothing but a disturbance on that path.

When we speak of *karma* detached from devotional service, we mean fruitive works which are mentioned in the *smṛiti śāstras*. They are meant for obtaining elevation in material existence. Devotional service must be freed from such fruitive activities. However, the activities (work) that is conducive to the development of devotional service must be cultivated. The work which helps enlightenment of devotional service must be cultured. The word *adi* is the sum total of all such non-devotional activities like yoga or unnecessary penances for sense gratification.

Great kings like Ravana or Hiranyakasipu had undergone severe penances for many, many years just to obtain the temporary benefit of sense enjoyment. But ultimately, in spite of all these penances, they could not protect themselves, from the punishment imposed upon them by the Personality of Godhead. The conclusion is that, the culture of devotional service to the Lord must be restricted within the pure devotional activities, and nothing more. Such activities are elaborately mentioned in the *Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures. The text *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is also within the category of those scriptures.

— Śrī Prema Bhakti-Candrikā - Srīla Narottama Dasa Thakura, Published by Ishvara Das, Touchstone Media.

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