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Sukadeva Goswami

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His Divine Grace
A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

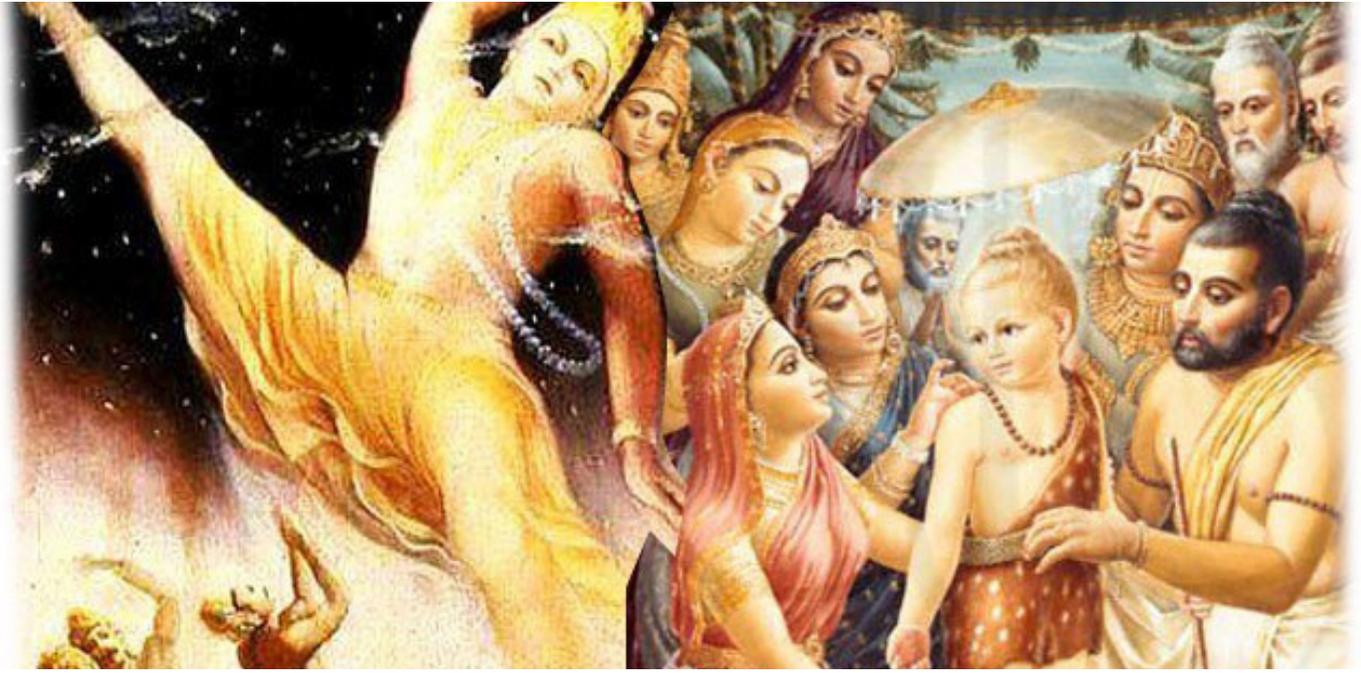
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LORD VAMAṆADEVA, THE DWARF INCARNATION
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Sukadeva Goswami said: After Lord Brahma had thus spoken, glorifying the Supreme Lord's activities and prowess, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is never subject to death like an ordinary living being, appeared from the womb of Aditi. At that time the Lord appeared very beautiful. His four hands were decorated with a conch shell, club, lotus and disc, He was dressed in yellow garments, and His eyes resembled the petals of a blooming lotus. The body of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, blackish in complexion, was free from all imperfections. His lotus face, decorated with ear-rings in the shape of sharks, appeared very beautiful, and on His bosom was the mark of *Śrīvatsa*. He wore bangles on His wrists, armlets on His arms, a helmet on His head a belt on His waist, a sacred thread across His chest, and ankle bells decorating His lotus feet. An uncommonly beautiful garland of flowers decorated His bosom, and because the flowers were extremely fragrant, a large group of bees, making their natural humming sounds, invaded them for honey. When the Lord appeared, wearing the *Kaustubha* gem on His neck, His effulgence vanquished the darkness in the home of Prajapati Kasyapa. At that time, there was happiness in all directions, in the reservoirs of water like the rivers and oceans, and in the core of everyone's heart.

The various seasons displayed their respective qualities, and all living entities in the upper planetary system, in outer space and on the surface of the earth were jubilant. The demigods, the cows, the *brāhmaṇas* and the hills and mountains were all filled with joy.

On the day of *Śravaṇa-dvādaśī* [the twelfth day of the bright fortnight in the month of *Bhādra*], when the moon came into the lunar mansion *Śravaṇa*, at the auspicious moment of *Abhijit*, the Lord appeared in this universe. Considering the Lord's appearance very auspicious, all the stars and planets, from the sun to saturn, were munificently charitable. O King, when the Lord appeared on *Dvādaśī*, (the twelfth day of the moon) the sun was at the meridian, as every learned scholar knows. This *Dvādaśī* is called *Vijayā*. Conch shells, kettledrums, drums, *paṇavas* and *ānakas* vibrated in concert. The sound of these and various other instruments was tumultuous. Being very pleased, the celestial dancing girls [*Apsarās*] danced in jubilation, the best of the *Gandharvas* sang songs, and the great sages, demigods, *Manus*, *Pitās* and fire-gods offered prayers to satisfy the Lord. The *Siddhas*, *Vidyādharas*, *Kimpuruṣas*, *Kinnaras*, *Cāraṇas*, *Yakṣas*, *Rākṣasas*, *Suparṇas*, the best of serpents, and the followers of the demigods all showered flowers on Aditi's residence, covering the entire house, while glorifying and praising the Lord and dancing.

When Aditi saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who had appeared from her womb, having accepted a transcendental body by His own spiritual potency, she was struck with wonder and was very happy. Upon seeing the child, Prajapati Kasyapa exclaimed, “*Jaya! Jaya!*” in great happiness and wonder. The Lord appeared in His original form, with ornaments and weapons in His hands. Although this ever-existing form is not visible in the material world, He nonetheless appeared in this form. Then, in the presence of His father and mother, He assumed the form of Vamana, a *brāhmaṇa*-dwarf, a *brahmacārī*, just like a theatrical actor.

When the great sages saw the Lord as the *brahmacārī*-dwarf Vamana, they were certainly very pleased. Thus, they placed before them Kasyapa Muni, the Prajapati, and performed all the ritualistic ceremonies, such as the birthday ceremony. At the sacred thread ceremony of Vamanadeva, the sun-god personally uttered the *Gāyatrī mantra*, Brhaspati offered the sacred thread, and Kasyapa Muni offered a straw belt. Mother earth gave Him a deerskin, and the demigod of the moon, who is the king of the forest, gave Him a *brahma-danda* [the rod of a *brahmacārī*]. His mother, Aditi, gave Him cloth for underwear, and the deity presiding over the heavenly kingdom offered Him an umbrella. O King, Lord Brahma offered a waterpot to the inexhaustible Supreme Personality of Godhead, the seven sages offered Him *kuśa* grass, and mother Sarasvati gave Him a string of *Rudrākṣa* beads. When Vamana-deva had thus been given the sacred thread, Kuvera, King of the *Yakṣas*, gave Him a pot for begging alms, and mother Bhagavati, the wife of Lord Siva and most chaste mother of the entire universe, gave Him His first alms. Having thus been welcomed by everyone, Lord Vamanadeva, the best of the *brahmacārīs*, exhibited His Brahman effulgence. Thus, He surpassed in beauty that entire assembly, even though it was filled with great saintly *brāhmaṇas*. After Lord Sri Vamanadeva set a sacrificial fire, He offered worship and performed a fire sacrifice on the sacrificial field.

When the Lord heard that Bali Maharaja was performing *āsvamedha* sacrifices under the patronage of *brāhmaṇas* belonging to the Bhrgu dynasty, the Supreme Lord, who is full in every respect, proceeded there to show His mercy to Bali Maharaja. By His weight, He pushed down the earth

with every step. While engaged in performing the sacrifice in the field known as *Bhrgukaccha*, on the northern bank of the Namada River, the brahminical priests, the descendants of Bhrgu, saw Vamanadeva to be like the sun rising nearby. O King, because of Vamanadeva’s bright effulgence, the priests, along with Bali Maharaja and all the members of the assembly, were robbed of their splendour. Thus, they began to ask one another whether the sun god himself, Sanat-kumara or the fire-god had personally come to see the sacrificial ceremony. While the priests of the Bhrgu dynasty and their disciples talked and argued in various ways, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vamanadeva, holding in His hands the rod, the umbrella and a water pot full of water, entered the arena of the *āsvamedha* sacrifice. Appearing as a *brāhmaṇa* boy, wearing a belt of straw, a sacred thread, an upper garment of deerskin, and matted locks of hair, Lord Vamanadeva entered the arena of sacrifice. His brilliant effulgence diminished the brilliance of all the priests and their disciples, who thus stood from their seats and welcomed the Lord properly by offering obeisance. Bali Maharaja, jubilant upon seeing Lord Vamanadeva, whose beautiful limbs contributed equally to the beauty of His entire body, offered Him a seat with great satisfaction. After offering a proper reception to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is always beautiful in the vision of the liberated souls, Bali Maharaja worshiped Him by washing His lotus feet. Lord Siva, the best of demigods, who carries on his forehead the emblem of the moon, receives on his head with great devotion the Ganges water emanating from the toe of Visnu. Being aware of religious principles, Bali Maharaja knew this. Consequently, following in the footsteps of Lord Siva, he also placed on his head the water that had washed the Lord’s lotus feet.

Bali Maharaja then said to Lord Vamanadeva: O *brāhmaṇa*, I offer You my hearty welcome and my respectful obeisance. Please let us know what we may do for You. We think of You as the personified austerity of the great *brāhmaṇa* sages. O my Lord, because You have kindly arrived at our home, all my forefathers are satisfied, our family and entire dynasty have been sanctified, and the sacrifice we are performing is now complete because of Your presence. O son of a *brāhmaṇa*, today the fire of

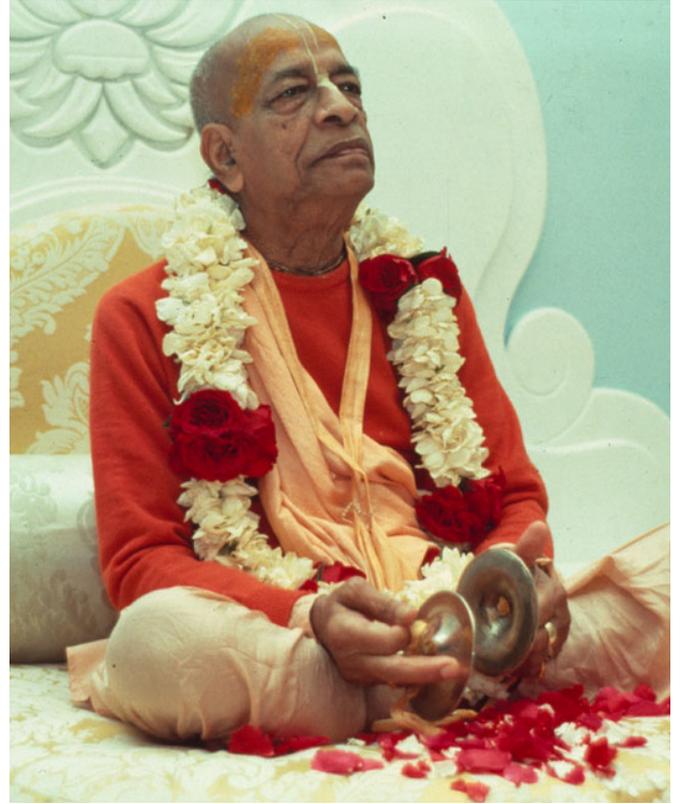
sacrifice is ablaze according to the injunction of the *śāstra*, and I have been freed from all the sinful reactions of my life by the water that has washed Your lotus feet. O my Lord, by the touch of Your small lotus feet the entire surface of the world has been sanctified. O son of a *brāhmaṇa*, it appears that You have come here to ask me for something. Therefore, whatever You want You may take from me. O best of those who are worshipable. You may take from me a cow, gold, a furnished house, palatable food and drink, the daughter of a *brāhmaṇa* for Your wife, prosperous villages, horses, elephants, chariots or whatever You desire.

- *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) > Canto 8: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creation > Chapter 18: Lord Vamanadeva, the Dwarf Incarnation, Verses: 1-32.

THE TRANSCENDENTAL APPEARANCE OF THE LORD His Divine Grace

A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

An actor changes dress to play different parts, but is always the same man. Similarly, as described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.33, 39), the Lord assumes many thousands and millions of forms (*advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam ādyaṁ purāṇa-puruṣam*). He is always present with innumerable incarnations (*rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan nānāvātāram akarod bhuvaneṣu kintu*). Nonetheless, although He appears in various incarnations, they are not different from one another. He is the same person, with the same potency, the same eternity and the same spiritual existence, but He can simultaneously assume various forms. For example, when Vamanadeva appeared from the womb of His mother, He appeared in the form of Narayana, His four hands equipped with the necessary symbolic weapons, and then immediately transformed Himself into a *brahmacārī* (*vaṭu*). This means that His body is not material. One who thinks that the Supreme Lord assumes a material body is not intelligent. He has to learn more about the Lord's position. As confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9), *janma karma ca me divyam evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ*. One has to understand the transcendental appearance of the Lord in His original transcendental body, natural-



ly full of knowledge and bliss (*sac-cid-ānanda-vigraha* [Bs. 5.1]).

- *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) > Canto 8: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creation > Chapter 18: Lord Vamanadeva, the Dwarf Incarnation, Verses: 13, Purport.

ALWAYS REMEMBERING ME Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.11.34-41, 11.19.20-23, and 11.29.9-12) the Supreme Lord speaks the following words: “My dear Uddhava, one can give up false pride and prestige by engaging in the following devotional activities. One may purify oneself by seeing, touching, worshiping, serving, and offering prayers of glorification and obeisance to My form as the Deity and to My pure devotees. One should also glorify My transcendental qualities and activities, hear with love and faith the narrations of My glories and constantly meditate on Me. One should offer to Me whatever one acquires, and accepting oneself as My eternal servant, one should completely give oneself to Me. One should always discuss My birth and activities and enjoy life by participating in festivals, such as *Janmāṣṭamī*, which glorify My pastimes. In My temple, one should also participate in festivals

and ceremonies by singing, dancing, playing musical instruments and discussing Me with other *Vaiṣṇavas*. One should observe all the regularly celebrated annual festivals by attending ceremonies, pilgrimages and making offerings. One should also observe religious vows such as *Ekādaśī* and take initiation by the procedures mentioned in the *Vedas*, *Pañcarātra* and other, similar literatures. One should faithfully and lovingly support the installation of My Deity, and individually or in cooperation with others one should work for the construction of Krishna conscious temples and cities as well as flower gardens, fruit gardens and special areas to celebrate My pastimes. One should consider oneself to be My humble servant, without duplicity, and thus should help to clean the temple, which is My home. First one should sweep and dust thoroughly, and then one should further cleanse with water and cow dung. Having dried the temple, one should sprinkle scented water and decorate the temple with *maṇḍalas*. One should thus act just like My servant. A devotee should never advertise his devotional activities; therefore his service will not be the cause of false pride. One should never use lamps that are offered to Me for other purposes simply because there is need of illumination, and similarly, one should never offer to Me anything that has been offered to or used by others. Whatever is most desired by one within this material world, and whatever is most dear to oneself—one should offer that very thing to Me. Such an offering qualifies one for eternal life. Firm faith in the blissful narration of My pastimes, constant chanting of My glories, unwavering attachment to ceremonial worship of Me, praising Me through beautiful hymns, great respect for My devotional service, offering obeisance with the entire body, performing first-class worship of My devotees, consciousness of Me in all living entities, offering of ordinary, bodily activities in My devotional service, use of words to describe My qualities, offering the mind to Me, rejection of all material desires, giving up wealth for My devotional service, renouncing material sense gratification and happiness and performing all desirable activities such as charity, sacrifice, chanting, vows and austerities etcetera should all be executed for My pleasure. Always remembering Me, one should perform all his duties for Me without impetuosity. With mind

and intelligence offered to Me, one should fix his mind in attraction to My devotional service. One should take shelter of holy places where My saintly devotees reside, and one should be guided by the exemplary activities of My devotees, who appear among the demigods, demons and human beings. Either alone or in public gatherings, with singing, dancing and other exhibitions of royal opulence, one should arrange to celebrate those holy days, ceremonies and festivals set aside specially for My worship. With a pure heart one should see Me, the Supreme Soul within all beings and also within oneself, to be both unblemished by anything material and also present everywhere, both externally and internally, just like the omnipresent sky.”

- Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja, *Gauḍīya-bhāṣya Commentary on Sri Caitanya Bhagavata of Srila Vṛndavana dasa Thakura, Madhya Khanda, Chapter 2, Verse 42.*

TAKING SHELTER OF DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura

The eternal associates of Lord Caitanya have preached and thereby firmly established the path of devotional service all over the world. All this has been done by Lord Caitanya's grace alone, for pure devotional service is attained solely by the blessings of the Supreme Lord and His pure devotees. The *Śāṅḍilya Sūtra* confirms this in the following verse, describing Lord Caitanya's mercy as unlimited and freely distributed. The verse further explains that no one can obtain devotion to Lord Krishna by the process of yoga, the practice of austerities, or any other method except by the mercy of Lord Caitanya and His pure followers:

*bhaktiḥ pūrvaiḥ śrīta tāntu rasam paśyed yadāttadhiḥ
tām naumi satatam rūpa-nāma-priya-janam hareḥ*

In the past, saintly persons have always taken shelter of devotional service. Five hundred years ago such a person appeared by whose mercy spiritual seekers are able to distinctly perceive that path of devotional service to Lord Krishna, a path steeped in spiritual mellows. I offer my repeated obeisance to that great soul Srila Rupa Gosvami, who is very dear to the Lord.

Devotees from previous ages like Uddhava, Narada, Sukadeva Gosvami, Sri Yamunacarya,



Nathmuni, and others have rendered loving devotional service to the Supreme Lord. However, Lord Caitanya propagated spontaneous, unalloyed devotion, and on the Lord's order Srila Rupa Goswami established this platform. This process is therefore available only to the followers of Srila Rupa Goswami, and so Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura offers his invocatory prayers to Srila Rupa Goswami.

- Madhurya-Kadambini - Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura Translated by Sarvabhavana dasa

SIXTY-FOUR LIMBS OF DEVOTIONAL SERVICE Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

There are innumerable ways to execute devotional service, and in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa* we find descriptions of many of them. Broadly speaking, sixty-four limbs of devotional service are considered as the main disciplines or processes of *bhakti-yoga*. They are all grouped under the categories of *vaidhi-bhakti* (devotional service according to rules and regulations) and *ra-ganuga-bhakti* (spontaneous devotional service). In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Prahlada Maharaja especially glorifies pure spontaneous devotional service. As Lord Gaurasundara has said: "The congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord is the most perfect form of devotional service."

Approaching the Supreme

Those who are knowledgeable in the transcendental science of the Absolute Truth have defined the supreme non-dual substance, understood in the preliminary stage through *jñāna*, as brahman. Understood further in its eternal aspect, it is defined as *paramatma*, or the Supersoul. In the full and complete manifestation of all its potencies and its transcendental nature of complete knowledge, eternity and bliss, that Supreme Absolute Truth is known as *bhagavan*. *Bhagavan*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is called Vasudeva when He manifests His supreme opulence, and Krishna when He covers His opulence with His conjugal loving mood. Lord Narayana responds to His devotees in two main devotional mellows, or *rasas*, while Lord Krishna is the worshipable object of all five *rasas*. Lord Balarama, Lord Krishna's *vaibhava prakasa* expansion manifested in relation with His excellences, is the Supreme Lord of Vaikunthaloka, residing there permanently in His eternal four-fold (*catur-vyuha*) expansions.

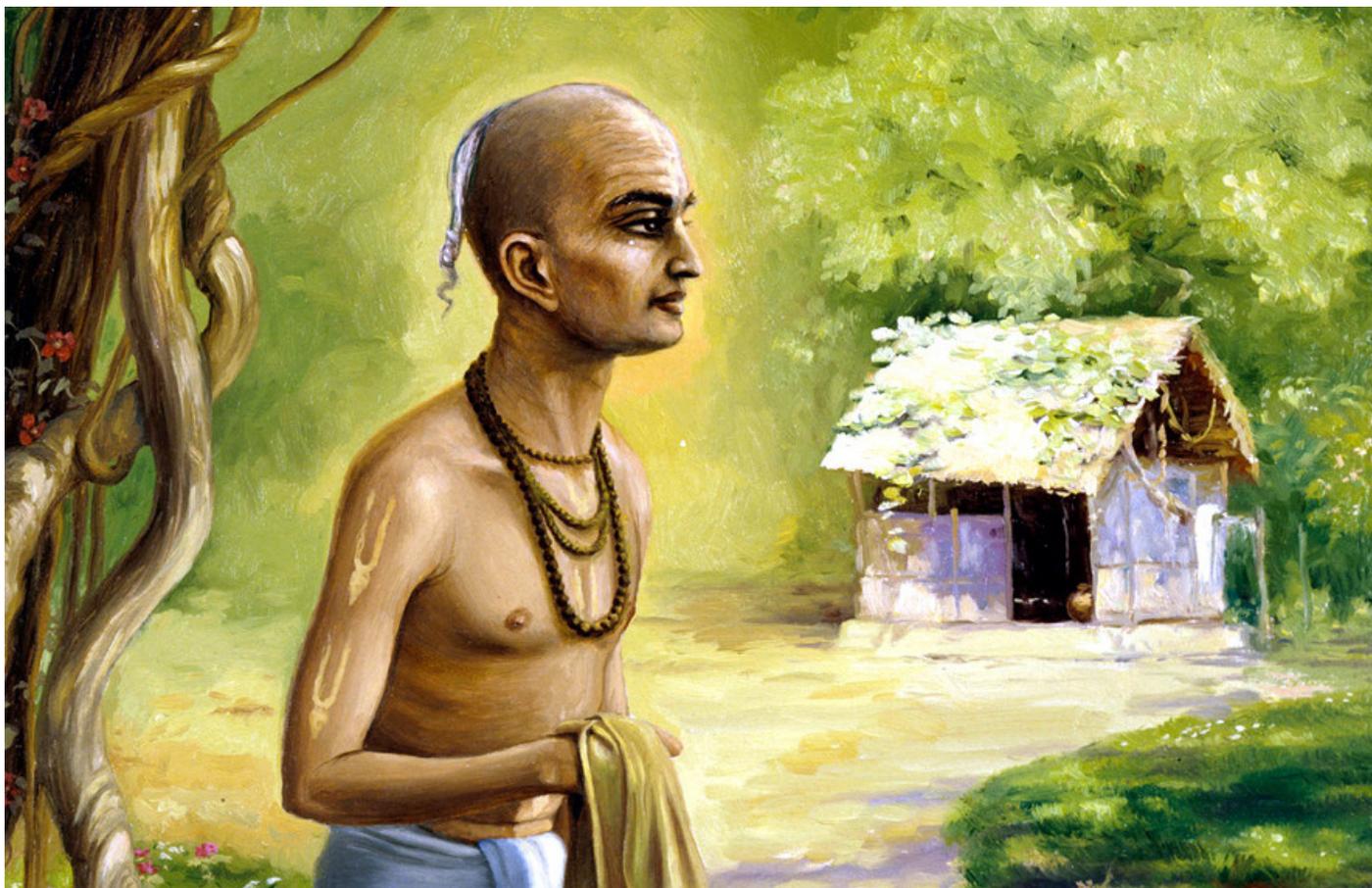
Japa, kīrtana and saṅkīrtana

Japa is defined as chanting in the mind. By performing such chanting the chanter will achieve the desired perfection. Chanting audibly with lip movements is *kīrtana*; it is more effective than *Japa* and brings about the greatest benefit to the hearer. *Saṅkīrtana* means 'complete *kīrtana*', for it is unnecessary to perform any other devotional activities if one performs *saṅkīrtana*. Partial or imperfect *kīrtana* of Lord Krishna's holy name is not the same as *saṅkīrtana*. Imperfect chanting of Krishna's name (*nāma-bhāsa*) is unable to cause the optimum spiritual change in the living entities. Witnessing this lack of change will lead the spiritual practitioners to doubt the potency of *kīrtana*. Therefore, let the complete and perfect chanting of Krishna's holy name, *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, alone be victorious!

- Śrī Sanmodana Bhāṣyam on Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka Translated by Sarvabhavana dasa

BHAKTI TRANSFORMS BODIES Srila Sanatana Goswami

Devotional service is thus established by the mercy of Lord Krishna as transcendental activity



that naturally manifests itself in the purified hearts of the devotees; it is not material. Still, someone might question how self-manifesting *bhakti* could appear in the devotee's person, as activities such as hearing and chanting, naturally involve the material body and its senses. To clear this doubt, we need to understand that devotees of the Supreme Lord, both in Vaikuntha and elsewhere, perform *bhakti* with spiritual bodies and senses. There is no discrepancy in this conception, because the limbs and senses of the pure Vaisnavas are equal in spiritual quality with pure devotional service. Even devotees who still live in this world in bodies made of material energy can engage in pure *bhakti* because the appearance of *bhakti* transforms their bodies. Either their bodies become literally *sac-cid-ānanda*, or *bhakti* enters their material bodies by the potency of the Supreme Lord's special mercy. Alternatively, their bodies and senses become suitable for performing *bhakti* by some God-given potency inherent in the *jīvas* themselves. These are the means by which transcendental *bhakti* manifests in the heart of the materially conditioned soul.

- Śrī Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvami, Volume Two. BBT. Translated by Gopiparanadhana Dasa. 2.3.140.

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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