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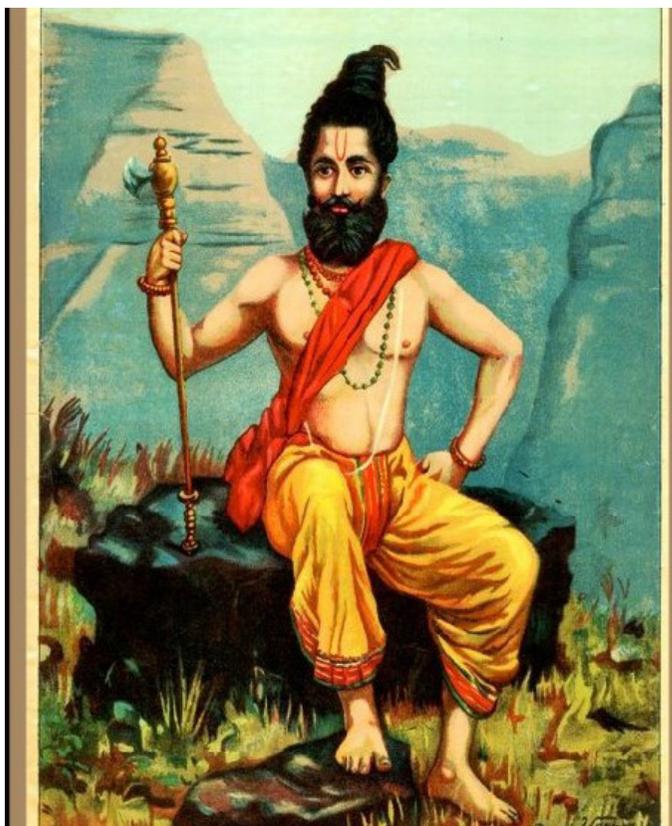
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**LORD PARASURAMA DESTROYS
THE WORLD'S SINFUL RULING CLASS**

Srila Sukadeva Goswami

Sukadeva Goswami said: My dear Maharaja Pariksit, son of the Kuru dynasty, when Lord Parasurama was given this order by his father, he immediately agreed, saying, “Let it be so.” For one complete year he travelled to holy places. Then he returned to his father’s residence. Once when Renuka, the wife of Jamadagni, went to the bank of the Ganges to get water, she saw the King of the *Gandharvas*, decorated with a garland of lotuses and sporting in the Ganges with celestial women [*Apsarās*]. She had gone to bring water from the Ganges, but when she saw Citraratha, the King of the *Gandharvas*, sporting with the celestial girls, she was somewhat inclined toward him and failed to remember that the time for the fire sacrifice was passing. Later, understanding that the time for offering the sacrifice had passed, Renuka feared a curse from her husband. Therefore, when she returned, she simply put the water pot before him and stood there with folded hands. The great sage Jamadagni understood the adultery in the mind of his wife. Therefore, he was very angry and told his sons, “My dear sons, kill this sinful woman!” But the sons did not carry out his order. Jamadagni

then ordered his youngest son, Parasurama, to kill his brothers, who had disobeyed this order, and his mother, who had mentally committed adultery. Lord Parasurama, knowing the power of his father, who was practiced in meditation and austerity, killed his mother and brothers immediately. Jamadagni, the son of Satyavati, was very pleased with Parasurama and asked him to take any benediction he liked. Lord Parasurama replied, “Let my mother and brothers live again and not remember having been killed by me. This is the benediction I ask.” Thereafter, by the benediction of Jamadagni, Lord Parasurama’s mother and brothers immediately came alive and were very happy, as if awakened from sound sleep. Lord Parasurama had killed his relatives in accordance with his father’s order because he was fully aware of his father’s power, austerity and learning.

My dear King Pariksit, the sons of Kartaviryarjuna, who were defeated by the superior strength of Parasurama, never achieved happiness, for they always remembered the killing of their father. Once when Parasurama left the *āśrama* for the forest with Vasuman and his other brothers, the sons of Kartaviryarjuna took the opportunity to approach Jamadagni’s residence to seek vengeance for their grudge. The sons of Kartaviryarjuna were determined to commit sinful deeds. Therefore, when they saw Jamadagni sitting by the side of the fire to perform *yajña* and meditating upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is praised by the best of selected prayers, they took the opportunity to kill him. With pitiable prayers, Renuka, the mother of Parasurama and wife of Jamadagni, begged for the life of her husband. But the sons of Kartaviryarjuna, being devoid of the qualities of *kṣatriyas*, were so cruel that despite her prayers they forcibly cut off his head and took it away. Lamenting in grief for the death of her husband, the most chaste Renuka struck her own body with her hands and cried very loudly, “O Rama, my dear son Rama!” Although the sons of Jamadagni, including Lord Parasurama, were a long distance from home, as soon as they heard Renuka loudly calling “O Rama, O my son,” they hastily returned to the *āśrama*, where they saw their father already killed. Virtually bewildered by grief, anger, indignation, affliction and lamenta-

tion, the sons of Jamadagni cried, “O father, most religious, saintly person, you have left us and gone to the heavenly planets!” Thus lamenting, Lord Parasurama entrusted his father’s dead body to his brothers and personally took up his axe, having decided to put an end to all the *kṣatriyas* on the surface of the world.

O King, Lord Parasurama then went to Mahismati, which was already doomed by the sinful killing of a *brāhmaṇa*. In the midst of that city, he made a mountain of heads, severed from the bodies of the sons of Kartaviryarjuna. With the blood of the bodies of these sons, Lord Parasurama created a ghastly river, which brought great fear to the kings who had no respect for brahminical culture. Because the *kṣatriyas*, the men of power in government, were performing sinful activities, Lord Parasurama, on the plea of retaliating for the murder of his father, rid all the *kṣatriyas* from the face of the earth twenty-one times. Indeed, in the place known as Samanta-pancaka he created nine lakes filled with their blood. Thereafter, Parasurama joined his father’s head to the dead body and placed the whole body and head upon *kuśa* grass. By offering sacrifices, he began to worship Lord Vasudeva, who is the all-pervading Supersoul of all the demigods and of every living entity. After completing the sacrifice, Lord Parasurama gave the eastern direction to the hota priest as a gift, the south to the brahma priest, the west to the adhvaryu priest, the north to the udgata, and the four corners - northeast, southeast, northwest and southwest to the other priests. He gave the middle to Kasyapa and the place known as Aryavarta was gifted to the upadrasta priest. Whatever remained he distributed among the sadasyas, the associate priests. Thereafter, having completed the ritualistic sacrificial ceremonies, Lord Parasurama took the bath known as the *avabhṛtha-snāna*. Standing on the bank of the great river Sarasvati, cleared of all sins, Lord Parasurama appeared like the sun in a clear, cloudless sky. Thus Jamadagni, being worshiped by Lord Parasurama, was brought back to life with full remembrance, and he became one of the seven sages in the group of seven stars. My dear King Parikṣit, in the next *manvantara* the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead Lord Parasurama, the son of Jamadagni, will be a great proponent of Vedic knowledge. In other words, he will be one of the seven sages. Lord Parasurama still lives as an

intelligent *brāhmaṇa* in the mountainous country known as Mahendra. Completely satisfied, having given up all the weapons of a *kṣatriya*, he is always worshiped, adored and offered prayers for his exalted character and activities by such celestial beings as the *Siddhas*, *Cāraṇas* and *Gandharvas*. In this way the supreme soul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Lord and the supreme controller, descended as an incarnation in the Bhrgu dynasty and released the universe from the burden of undesirable kings by killing them many times.

Visvamitra, the son of Maharaja Gadhi, was as powerful as the flames of fire. From the position of a *kṣatriya*, he achieved the position of a powerful *brāhmaṇa* by undergoing penances and austerities. O King Parikṣit, Visvamitra had 101 sons, of whom the middle one was known as Madhucchanda. In relation to him, all the other sons were celebrated as the Madhucchandas. Visvamitra accepted the son of Ajigarta known as Sunahsepha, who was born in the Bhrgu dynasty and was also known as Devarata, as one of his own sons. Visvamitra ordered his other sons to accept Sunahsepha as their eldest brother. Sunahsepha’s father sold Sunahsepha to be sacrificed as a man-animal in the *yajña* of King Hariscandra. When Sunahsepha was brought into the sacrificial arena, he prayed to the demigods for release and was released by their mercy. Although Sunahsepha was born in the Bhargava dynasty, he was very advanced in spiritual life, and therefore the demigods involved in the sacrifice protected him. Consequently, he was also celebrated as the descendant of Gadhi named Devarata. When requested by their father to accept Sunahsepha as the eldest son, the elder fifty of the Madhucchandas, the sons of Visvamitra, did not agree. Therefore Visvamitra, became angry, and cursed them. “Due to your being opposed to the principles of Vedic culture,” he said, “may all of you bad sons become *mlecchas* .” When the elder Madhucchandas were cursed, the younger fifty, along with Madhucchanda himself, approached their father and agreed to accept his proposal. “Dear father,” they said, “we shall abide by whatever arrangement you like.” Thus, the younger Madhucchandas accepted Sunahsepha as their eldest brother and told him, “We shall follow your orders.” Visvamitra then said to his obedient sons, “Because you have accepted Sunahsepha as your

- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 9: Liberation » Chapter Sixteen » Verse: 20 » Puport by His Divine Grace A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

eldest brother, I am very satisfied. By accepting my order, you have made me a father of worthy sons, and therefore I bless all of you to become the fathers of sons also.” Visvamitra said, “O Kusikas, this Devarata [Sunahsepha] is my son and is one of you. Please obey his orders.” O King Pariksit, Visvamitra had many other sons, such as Astaka, Harita, Jaya and Kratuman. Visvamitra cursed some of his sons and blessed the others, and he also adopted a son. Thus, there were varieties in this Kausika dynasty, but among all the sons, Devarata [Sunahsepha] was considered the eldest.

- Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 9: Liberation » Chapter Sixteen » Verses: 1-37 » Translations by His Divine Grace A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

THE MISSION OF LORD PARASURAMA

His Divine Grace

A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Parasurama is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and his eternal mission is *paritrāṇāya sādḥūnām vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām* [Bg. 4.8]—to protect the devotees and annihilate the miscreants. To kill all the sinful men is one among the tasks of the incarnation of Godhead. Lord Parasurama killed all the *kṣatriyas* twenty-one times consecutively because they were disobedient to the brahminical culture. That the *kṣatriyas* had killed his father was only a plea; the real fact is that because the *kṣatriyas*, the ruling class, had become polluted, their position was inauspicious. Brahminical culture is enjoined in the *śāstra*, especially in *Bhagavad-gītā* (*cātur-varṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśah* [Bg. 4.13]). According to the laws of nature, whether at the time of Parasurama or at the present, if the government becomes irresponsible and sinful, not caring for brahminical culture, there will certainly be an incarnation of God like Parasurama to create a devastation by fire, famine, pestilence or some other calamity. Whenever the government disrespects the supremacy of the Personality of Godhead and fails to protect the institution of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, it will certainly have to face such catastrophes as formerly brought about by Lord Parasurama.

THE SCIENCE OF THE LORD'S INCARNATION

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

What is the science of the Lord's incarnation? Why does the Supreme Lord appear in this world?

When the conditioned souls receive a body according to their nature, the Supreme Lord Krishna, by His inconceivable potency, agrees to accompany them by incarnating and enjoying pastimes with them. When the living entities accept the body of a fish, the Lord accepted His fish incarnation, Matsya who is without a *daṇḍa* or spine. When the living entities accept the body of *vajradāṇḍa* or half-grown spine, the Lord incarnates as Kurma. When *vajradāṇḍa* gradually becomes *meru-daṇḍa* or fully-grown spine, the Lord incarnates as Varaha. When the living entities accept the combined position of human and animal, the Lord accepts His incarnation of Nrsimha. When the living entities are short, He appears as Vamana. When the living entities are uncivilized, He comes as Parasurama. When they are civilized, He appears as Ramacandra. When the living entities possess the wealth of practical knowledge, Lord Krishna Himself appears. When the living entities develop the tendency for argument, the Lord appears as Buddha. Moreover, when they are atheistic, the Lord comes as Kalki. These are well-known facts.

During the gradual development in the hearts of the living entities, the Lord incarnates in a form corresponding to the mood of the devotees. The source and activities of His forms are untouched by material contamination. After due consideration, the sages have divided the history of the living entities' advancement into ten divisions. Each one has different symptoms: each successive mood is superior to the previous one. The Lord's ten incarnations correspond to these ten moods. Some learned scholars have divided the living entities' advancement into twenty-four divisions and have stated that there are twenty-four incar-

nations. Yet others have divided it into eighteen and have stated eighteen incarnations.

- (Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā Chapter 3)

What is the scientific consideration about the truth of the Lord's incarnations?

From an invertebrate living entity up to a fully developed vertebrate human being, some sages have defined eight, eighteen, or twenty-four corresponding incarnations of the Lord. Most authentic sages agree that there are ten principal incarnations. From the conditional state up to the end of a living entities progress, the sages have defined ten stages. The first stage is life as an invertebrate, second a thin vertebrate, third a vertebrate, fourth a raised vertebrate or animalistic human being, fifth a small human being, sixth an uncivilized human being, seventh a civilized human being, eighth a knowledgeable human being, ninth a most knowledgeable human being. And the tenth stage is devastation. According to these stages of development of the living entities, the ten incarnations of the Supreme Lord appear and enjoy transcendental pastimes. The ten incarnations are Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Nrsimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Kalki.

- (Tattva-sūtra 6)

Who is the original incarnation?

With a desire to create the material worlds, San-karsana, who is a plenary portion of Krishna, lies in the causal ocean as the original *puruṣa* and glances over *māyā*. This act of glancing is the original cause of material creation.

- (Brahma-saṁhitā 5/8 purport)

Why does the Supreme Lord incarnate?

The Supreme Lord has two kinds of pastimes. The first is to create the material world and to maintain it by establishing stringent laws. The dry speculators can understand these pastimes to some extent. The second is the Lord's pastimes within this material world, where the living entities are His companions. Because of their desire for material enjoyment, some living entities separate themselves from their constitutional position. Whatever situation they go through in the association of

matter, the Supreme Lord responds accordingly. The principal cause for the Lord's appearance is His causeless mercy toward the living entities.

- (Tattva-sūtra 6)

What is the necessity for worshiping the deity form of the Lord?

All formless truths have some representation. A representation, although different from the object it represents, symbolizes the mood of the object. Watches represent formless time, essays represent subtle knowledge, and pictures represent acts of mercy. In the same way, there is no doubt that one gets benefit in performing devotional service to the deity.

- (Prema Pradīpa Chapter 5)

Is deity worship of the Vaiṣṇavas idol worship?

The deity worshiped by the *Vaiṣṇavas* is not an idol, which is separate from the Lord. The deity is a representation that invokes devotion to the Lord.

Is the deity the direct manifestation of the Lord?

The deity of the Lord cannot be anything other than the direct manifestation of the Lord. Just as in industry or in science, every unseen object has a gross image, the Lord, unseen by material eyes, has an image in the form of the deity. Because of their devotional propensity, the pure devotees constantly experience that the deity is truly the Supreme Lord. The connection between an electric light and a generator is understood only by seeing the result when the electric light is switched on. What will those who are ignorant of electricity understand when they see a generator? Similarly, what will those who have no devotion in their hearts say about the deity except "idol"?

- (Caitanya-śikṣāmrta 5/3)

What is the difference between the deity worshiped by the devotees and the symbols of the mental speculators?

At first, the Lord's form manifests in the spiritual consciousness of the living entities and thus He appears in their hearts. Such blessed devotees see

no difference between the spiritual form within their hearts and the external deity form. However, the mental speculators do not worship the deity in this way. According to their opinion, Brahman is imagined within a deity made of material elements, and that image is there as long as the worship continues. Thereafter, in their vision, the form remains a material object and nothing else.

- (Jaiva Dharma Chapter 5)

Are all levels of devotee qualified to worship the deity?

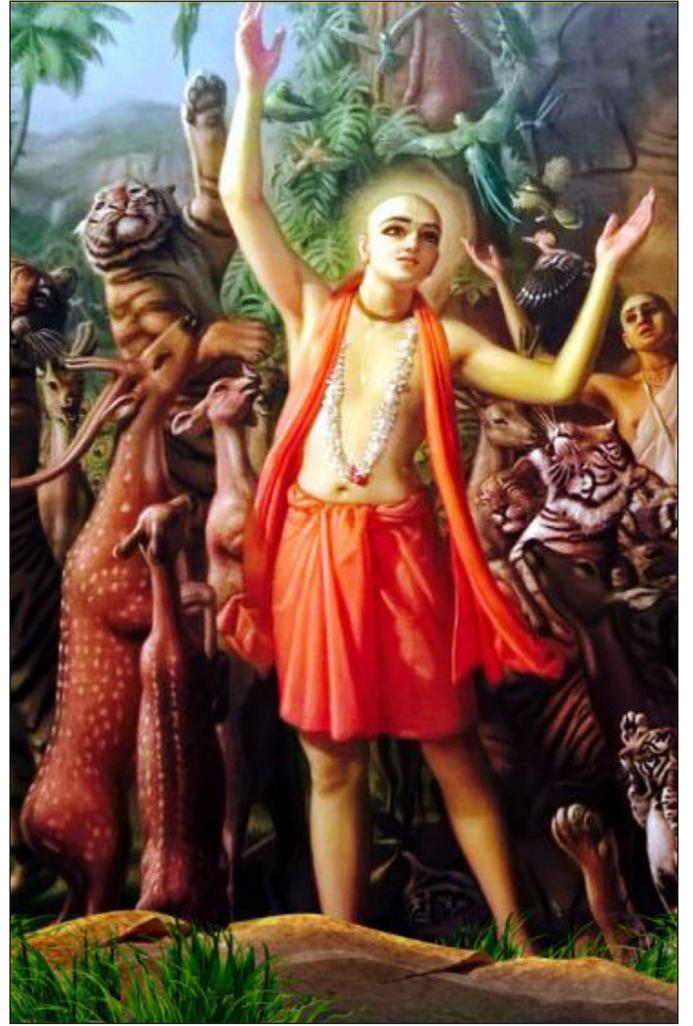
Worship of the Lord's deity is the foundation of religious principles for all human beings. Great devotees have seen the form of the Supreme Lord by pure knowledge and they meditate on this pure spiritual form. When the hearts of the devotees spread toward the material world, a reflection of that spiritual form is illustrated in the material world. The form of the Supreme Lord has thus manifest as a deity by the mercy of the *mahājanas*. For *uttama-adhikārīs*, the deity is always the spiritual form of the Lord. For *madhyama-adhikārīs*, the deity is the spiritual form in their heart. For *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs*, the deity at first appears material, but by gradual purification of their intelligence, they accept the deity as the spiritual form of the Lord. Therefore, it is the duty of all kinds of devotees to engage in the worship of the Lord's deity. There is no need to worship any concocted God. The worship of the eternal form of the Lord is auspicious.

- (Jaiva Dharma Chapter 11)

What is the nature of the worship of mental speculators, who do not have faith in the deity?

Some people establish with devotion the Supreme Lord's deity within their self, their mind, or the material world. They then worship that form considering it non-different from the Supreme Lord. The followers of some religions, due to attachment to argument, imagine the Lord's form within their mind and worship that form, but they do not accept the external deity form of the Lord. Actually, all these forms are His deities.

- (Caitanya-śikṣāṁṛta 1/1)



How do the swanlike Vaiṣṇavas see Sri Jagannatha Deva?

The worship of Jagannatha is viewed in two ways. Superstitious and ignorant people think it is idolatry to worship God Almighty, who has appeared in the shape of carved wood for the salvation of the people of Orissa. However, the *Sāragrāhī Vaiṣṇavas* accept the deities as eternal truth, as Vyasa has explained in *Vedānta-sūtra*.

- (The Temple of Jagannātha at Purī)

How did Sri Bhaktivinoda refute the atheistic philosophy that is opposed to deity worship?

Some are startled at the idea of worshipping the deity (*śrī-mūrti*). They say, "It is idolatry to worship the deity, which is an idol made by an artist and introduced by Beelzebub himself. Worshipping such an object would arouse the jealousy of God and limit His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence."

We reply to them in the following way. “Brothers, candidly understand the subject and do not allow yourselves to be misled by sectarian dogma. God is not jealous—He is without a second. Beelzebub or Satan is only an imaginary figure - or a being used in an allegory. An allegorical or imaginary person should not be allowed to act as an obstacle to *bhakti*. Those who believe God is impersonal simply identify Him with some power or quality of nature. In fact, He is above nature, her laws, and her rules. His holy wish is law, and it is sacrilege to confine His unlimited excellence by identifying Him with such attributes as omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience—attributes which may exist in within the created realm, in terms of time and space etc. His excellence is such that He has mutually contradicting powers and qualities, which are ruled by His supernatural Self. He is identical with His all-beautiful person, and His powers of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence cannot be found elsewhere. His holy and perfect person exists eternally in the spiritual world and is simultaneously existing in every created object and place in full. This understanding excels all other ideas about the deity.

“Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu also rejected idolatry, but considered deity worship to be the universal means of spiritual culture. It has been shown that God is personal and all-beautiful. Vyasa and other sages have seen God’s beauty with their souls’ eyes. They have described what they saw and thus preserved their visions. Of course, words carry the grossness of matter, but truth can be perceived through those descriptions. According to those descriptions one may delineate a deity and see the Supreme Lord of one’s heart with intense pleasure. Brothers, is that actually wrong or sinful?

Those who say that God has no form either material or spiritual, and then imagine a false form of worship are idolatrous. However, those who see the spiritual form of the deity in their souls’ eyes, and carry that impression as far as possible to the mind may then frame an emblem for the satisfaction of the material eye and for the continual study of higher feelings. This is perfect in all ways and is by no means idolatrous.

“When you see a deity, do not even see the image itself; see the spiritual form of the image. Then you are a pure theist. Idolatry and deity worship are two different things. But my brothers, don’t

simply confound one with the other in hastiness. To tell you the truth, deity worship is the only true form of worship of the Lord, without which you cannot sufficiently cultivate your religious feelings. The world attracts you through your senses and as long as you do not see God in the objects of your senses, you live in an awkward position, which scarcely helps you secure your spiritual elevation.

“Place a deity of the Lord in your house. Consider Him the guardian of the house and the food that you take as His mercy (*prasāda*). The flowers and scents are also His *prasāda*. The eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, and the sense of touch can be spiritually satisfied. Worship God with a sanctified heart. God will know and judge you by your sincerity. In this way, Satan and Beelzebub will have nothing to do with you.

“All sorts of worship are based on the principle of deity worship. Look into the history of religion and you will understand this noble truth. The Semitic idea of a patriarchal God, both in the pre-Christian period of Judaism and post-Christian period of Christianity and Mohammedanism, is nothing but a limited idea of deity worship. The monarchical idea of Jupiter among the Romans and Indra among the Aryan *karma-kāṇḍīs* is also based on the same principle. The idea of a force and *Jyotirmaya* Brahma of the meditators and a formless energy of the *Śaktas* is also a very faint view of the deity. In fact, the deity is the Truth differently exhibited by different people according to their beliefs. Even Jaimini and Compté, who were not prepared to accept a creating God, have prescribed certain forms of deity worship, simply because they were impelled by the soul. And we meet people who have adopted the cross, the *śālagrāma-śilā*, the *līṅgam*, and such emblems as indicators of the Lord within.

“Furthermore, if divine love, justice, and compassion can be portrayed by the pencil and expressed by the chisel, why shouldn’t the personal beauty of the deity (embracing all other qualities) be portrayed in poetry and in pictures, and carved by the chisel for the benefit of man? If a word provokes thought, a watch indicates time, and a sign tells us of history, why shouldn’t a picture or deity bring higher thoughts of and feelings for the transcendental beauty of the Divine Person?”

- (Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *Life and Precepts*)

- *Bhaktivinoda Vānī Vaibhāva* Published by *Isvara dasa*



WHY ARE WE UNABLE TO REALIZE THE SUPREME LORD?

Srila Bhaktisiddhanata Sarasvati Thakura

How will the living entities, who are Krishna's servants, realize the Lord, unless they constantly serve and associate with their *guru* and the *Vaiṣṇavas*? If we are busy in worldly or family activities, how can we possibly understand the Lord of the universe? Under the control of sinful desires, we have presently developed a detrimental mentality; we think we have great duties to perform in this world. This is because we are averse to the original fountainhead of all existences. Just as by stepping in quicksand one's legs are sucked down, so we have stepped into the quicksand of dependence on material phenomena and are being pulled down. Instead of becoming inclined to serve Krishna, we spend our time influenced by sinful desires. Lord Viṣṇu's illusory energy has conditioned us to think that we are enjoyers and expert *karmīs*. Be careful. Accept guidance at every step. Be extremely careful. It is vital that we accept the loving control of the spiritual master at every step.

In truth, serving the devotees is more beneficial to us than serving the Lord. The living entities

can receive more mercy by associating with devotees than from trying to associate directly with the Supreme Lord. The place where the spiritual master or a devotee resides is more favourable for the pure worship of Hari than the place where the Supreme Lord Himself resides. Try to understand the purport of Narottam das Thakura's declaration, "Wherever there are *Vaiṣṇavas*, that is Vṛndavana." If instead of putting priority to the Lord's devotees, we remain indifferent toward *guru-sevā*, it means we have failed to become servants. It means we are proud and entangled in material thought.

There is no greater topic of discussion in the theistic world than the topic of how to serve the lotus feet of Sri Radha-Govinda. Always hear *hari-kathā*. Do not become materialists, bereft of the transcendental Lord's service. Pay close attention to the worship of Hari. We have already passed so many lifetimes engaged in other activities. Be always cautious to attain the goal of life. Always carefully serve the spiritual master and Krishna with love and devotion and you will certainly realize the Supreme Lord.

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!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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