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## REFORM IS BETTER THAN REJECTION

*His Divine Grace A. C.  
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*



It is better to correct him to the standard point by friendly gestures. We can reject anyone — that is very easy — but to reform him requires great skill and tact. If you can reform him by kind words and dealings, that is best. When I was there in Sydney, I observed that \_\_\_\_\_ is a very, very good boy, and that he has great intelligence and talent. Simply it has become a little misguided due to circumstances. Now you big leaders in Australia, along with the others, should make a concerted attempt to help him over his difficulties. Persuade him that everything is all right and that I am not angry or displeased in any way. Tell him that these things will sometimes happen even with the best devotees. In this way try and persuade him to become engaged with his previous enthusiasm for becoming a great devotee. He is a young boy, so we should not take his actions too seriously. Better to forget the past and try to reform him. His service can once again be very valuable there in Australia. I know that he is a very good boy. Do not drive him away — that will be a discredit to

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all of you leaders. If there is great difficulty, for the time being he may come and live with me here in Los Angeles. I have no objection. But he has done very nicely in Sydney up to the present time, so if you can utilize his experience and talents there, that is the best plan. ☸

— Letter to Madhudvisa and Amogha. 24 August 1972.

## KRISHNA'S SATISFACTION

*Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja*

If someone can satisfy Krishna, then automatically he can satisfy one and all. There will be no dissatisfaction. But how many of you are trying to satisfy Krishna? You may say, "Yes, we are all trying. We are all working for Krishna's satisfaction. We are all engaged in loving devotional service to Krishna." But if we are engaged in loving service to Krishna, then why are we feeling dissatisfaction? Are you really satisfying Krishna? The *Gītā* says and the *Bhāgavatam* says. The *vaiṣṇavas* and gurus have been teaching you this every day — *yuktasya bhaktāṁś ca niyuñjato 'pi* — the guru engages you in the service of Krishna. That is the guru's business. If an aspirant devotee comes to the guru, he will engage him in the loving service of Krishna. But why can't you satisfy Krishna? What is wrong? Where is the mistake? Does anyone know?

**Devotee:** Because we have some material desires?



**Gour Govinda Swami:** Yes. In his purport to the verse we are studying today, (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.24), my revered spiritual master says:

If, however, anyone has any material desire to be fulfilled, he had better pray for it to the Supreme Lord (although that is not pure devotion), and he will thus achieve the desired result.

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ  
tīvreṇa bhakti-yogena yajeta puruṣaṁ param*

The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (2.3.10) says that whatever desire one may have, whether they have many material desires, *sarva-kāma*, they are desirous of liberation, *mokṣa-kāma*, or they may have no desires, *akāma*, let one pray to the Supreme Lord Krishna, and when he sanctions it, then one's desire will be fulfilled.

Take the example of Dhruva Maharaja; he had the material desire to sit on the throne of his father. He went to the forest and underwent severe austerities under the guidance of his spiritual master, Narada Muni. Within a short six months, Dhruva satisfied the Supreme Lord Vishnu. Then Lord Vishnu came and asked Dhruva, "Ask for any boon." However, by getting Lord Vishnu, all Dhruva's material desires had disappeared. Dhruva then replied, "I have nothing to ask from you."

In the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (7.28), Dhruva Maharaja states:

*sthānābhilāṣī tapasi sthito 'haṁ  
tvām prāptavān deva-munīndra-guhyam  
kācam vicinvān api divya-ratnam  
svāmin kṛtārtho 'smi varaṁ na yāce*

"I had a desire for position, so I underwent *tapasya*, penance. I was just searching for some pieces of glass, but I found *divya-ratna*, an invaluable jewel. *kṛtārtho 'smi varaṁ na yāce* — I am fully satisfied. I have no boon to ask for."

This is most important. At first, Dhruva had a material desire. Therefore he underwent *tapasya*. But then he became so satisfied that he didn't ask for anything. Still, Lord Vishnu said, "No, no. You go and sit on the throne of your father." That was his first desire. Vishnu told him, "Sit there for 36,000 years and rule." Not one or two years, but 36,000 years. He received such a great boon without even asking. All his desires were fulfilled. Lord Vishnu created a planet for him, the Dhruva planet, which will never be annihilated even during the complete annihilation. It is an

eternal planet. Therefore it is said that if anyone has any material desires they should pray to the Supreme Lord. Krishna or Vishnu gives us boons in such a way that we will never ask again for anything material.

A very nice description is given in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *madhya* 22.38:

*kṛṣṇa kahe, — 'āmā bhaje, māge viṣaya-sukha  
amṛta chāḍī' viṣa māge, — ei baḍa mūrkhā*

Krishna says, "He is worshiping me, and in return asking for material enjoyment. He is such a foolish *mūrkhā*. *sva-caraṇāmṛta diyā 'viṣaya' bhulāiba* — He is such a rascal that he is not asking for my lotus feet (*Cc. madhya* 22.39). He is asking for sense gratification. But I am a wise man. *ei mūrkhē 'viṣaya' kene diba* — Why will I give such a fool material enjoyment? I will give him my lotus feet and make him forget his desire to enjoy." Krishna, Vishnu, does like this. All desires will be fulfilled, and at last you will get the lotus feet of Vishnu, Krishna.

Better to worship Vishnu, Krishna, and satisfy him. Then you can satisfy one and all. But how can you do that? There is a very easy way. Srila Viswanath Chakravarti Thakur describes it in his *Guro-aṣṭaka*, text eight: *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi* — If you can satisfy and get the mercy of your spiritual master, the bona fide representative and intimate associate of Krishna, then automatically you can satisfy and get the mercy of Krishna. Otherwise, whatever you may do, it is not possible. Therefore, although we try, still we cannot satisfy Lord Krishna, or Vishnu, because we don't satisfy our guru. ❀

— Excerpted from a lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā*. New Vrindavan, West Virginia. 3 October 1990.

## RAMACHANDRA MEETS SRINIVAS

*Adapted from Yadunandana Das'  
Karnānanda, chapters one and three*

One day, Srinivas Acharya Prabhu was sitting on the bank of a pond to the west of his house when he saw a marriage party passing nearby. The bridegroom, who was being carried on a palanquin, was extremely attractive. His skin was the color of a golden *ketaki* flower. His arms were long, with shoulders like that of a lion. His navel deep, his feet and palms reddish, and he had silky

curling hair. He had a sharp, high nose and beautifully set teeth, and his lips were reddish like the *bimba* fruit. His face was effulgent like the full moon, his eyes like lotus petals, and his neck was like a conch shell. He had a slender waist, and well-shaped thighs. He wore silken cloth, had a garland of flowers, and his body was adorned with sandalwood paste.

Srinivas thought to himself, "Is he the son of a Gandharva? Or Kamadev himself? Such a beautiful person should certainly utilize his life in the service of Krishna. Otherwise what is the use of such extraordinary beauty?"

Srinivas inquired about the bridegroom from some members of the marriage party, and was informed that the young man was Sri Ramachandra Kaviraj, a great scholar with qualities equal to those of Brihaspati or Sarasvati. He belonged to a high-class family, was a famous physician, and was formerly a resident of Kumaranagar. After obtaining this information, Srinivas returned to his house, and Ramachandra, who had overheard Srinivas' enquiries, returned to his place.

Ramachandra spent the night in a brahmin's house, thinking deeply about Srinivas Prabhu. In the morning, he came running to Srinivas and fell at his feet, crying loudly. Overwhelmed with emotion, he begged the blessings of Prabhu. Srinivas lovingly lifted him from the ground and embraced him warmly. Sri Acharya emotionally declared that they had a long, deep-rooted relationship, and were meeting again after a long separation. Srinivas then chanted *kṛṣṇa-nāma* in his ear and sang *rādhā-kṛṣṇa-līlā* to him. He also assisted Ramachandra in the study of *vaiṣṇava* literatures, and blessed him to become an earnest lover and devotee of Krishna. Srinivas told Ramachandra about the glories of Narottam Thakur, and instructed him to go and meet him in Vrindavan. In due course of time, Narottam and Ramachandra became such good friends that people considered them to be like one soul.

One day, as Srinivas was entering into the compound of his house with Ramachandra, they saw what appeared to be a snake. Srinivas jumped across it in fear. Ramachandra Kaviraj searched for the snake but was unable to find it. Rather, he

discovered that Prabhu had mistaken a coil of straw to be a snake. Nevertheless, he did not contradict his master. When Srinivas himself discovered that it was a coil of straw and pointed it out, Ramachandra at once accepted his opinion. Later, when the wives of Srinivas were resting, Sri Acharya came to them and began to explain to them the exalted characteristics of Ramachandra. He compared Ramachandra to Arjuna by citing a story from the Mahabharata.

Once upon a time, Dronacharya was teaching the art of using weapons to Duryodhan and his hundred brothers, along with Yudhisthir and the other four Pandavas. Dronacharya put a target bird on the highest branch of a tree and ordered them all to aim at the eye of the bird with an arrow. Duryodhan and his brothers took up their weapons and happily aimed at the mark. Drona then asked them what they were seeing at that moment, and they replied that they saw the tree, its branches, and the bird. The *ācārya*, angry and dissatisfied with their answer, rebuked them saying that they would never be able to learn the art of using weapons. Next, he called Arjuna to aim at the bird and asked him the same question. Arjuna replied that he saw nothing other than the eye of the bird. Dronacharya ordered him to shoot, and Arjuna's arrow perfectly hit the eye of the bird. Greatly satisfied, the guru explained to all that Arjuna never diverted his attention from the eye of the bird. That is why he passed the test. Arjuna bowed to the feet of his master and took his seat among the other disciples. With content, Drona told Arjuna that he would be the only person who would be able to compare to his master, and that he was his best disciple.

Srinivas took great pleasure in describing this incident and comparing Kaviraj to Arjuna. Ramachandra never disobeyed his master. He always sincerely listened to Prabhu, even when the latter ordered him to take his food after everyone else. Srinivas further described Ramachandra's faithfulness by citing the time when he himself had mistaken a coil of straw to be a snake, and although Ramachandra knew this, he nevertheless tried to find the snake in the courtyard as ordered by Srinivas.

Yet, when Prabhu told him that it was a coil of straw, not a snake, Ramachandra at once accepted his master's opinion. Ramachandra humbly submitted himself to Srinivas, saying that without the favor of his master, how could he know what was right or wrong? Thus Srinivas openly declared that just as Arjuna was the dearest disciple of Dronacharya, so Ramachandra was most dear to him. "From now on," Srinivas said, "everyone should take it for granted that Ramachandra's opinion is the same as mine." Srinivas explained that Ramachandra and Narottam were like his two eyes. Srinivas said, "He who receives the favor of Ramachandra also attains the blessings of Lord Krishna." In this way Sri Acharya took great pleasure in glorifying Ramachandra. ❀

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## A PLEA FOR MERCY

By the poet Prema Das

The scholar Sukumar Sen in A History of Brajabuli Literature writes that Prema Das,

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or Premananda Das, lived in the early 1700s and was a disciple of Hari Goswami, a devotee in the line of Lord Nityananda Prabhu's wife, Jahnava Devi. Amongst other writings, Prema Das was the author of Vamśī-sikṣā, a poem dealing with the life and teachings of Mahaprabhu's associate Vamsi Vadananda. He also wrote Caitanya-candrodaya-kaumudī, a Bengali metrical version of the Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭakam of Srila Kavi Karnapur.

(Kāmoda-rāga)

bhakta-gaṇa-śrī-caraṇe mora ei nivedane  
sabe āśirovāda kara more  
caitanya baliba mukhe caitanya baliba sukhe  
tāre bhajī janma-janmāntare

I place a request before the glorious feet of the devotees. O devotees, please bless me. Please bless me that my mouth will chant the name Chaitanya, that I will always be delighted to chant the name Chaitanya, and that I will worship Lord Chaitanya birth after birth.

śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma viśaya āśraya sadma  
tāhā gati jīvana-maraṇe  
prabhu chila rāmacandra jāhnavā-caraṇa-dvandva  
sva-gaṇa caitanya yāra mane

Bless me that I will take shelter of my spiritual master's lotus feet, and that his feet will be my goal in life and death. Bless me that Ramachandra Das will be my master, Ramachandra who took shelter of Jahnava's feet. Bless me that I will consider association with his disciples to be my very life.

kāla-sarpa-bhayaṅkara premānanda-hīna nara  
anātha dākiche gaura-hari  
prema-dāsa ageyāne premāmṛta dei dāne  
kṛpā-kara ātma-sātha kari

A certain person, terrified of the snake of time, a person who does not know spiritual bliss and spiritual love, a person without a master or a shelter, calls out "Gaura-Hari!" O Lord, please be merciful to that person, the fool Prema Das. Please give him the nectar of ecstatic spiritual love. Please accept him as one of your associates. ❀

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