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SEPARATION IS THE HIGHEST

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

In the *śāstra* it is said: *vr̥ndāvanam parityajya padam ekam na gacchati* — "Krishna does not go even one step from Vrindavan." He is so much attached to Vrindavan. So how is it that we see that Krishna left Vrindavan and went so far away to Mathura and did not return for many years? No. Krishna actually did not leave Vrindavan. However, since Krishna left Vrindavan all the inhabitants were simply thinking of Krishna and crying. That was their business. Mother Yasoda, Nanda Maharaja, Radharani, all the *gopīs*, all the cows, all the calves, and all the cowherd boys — their only business was to think of Krishna and cry in separation.

Krishna can be felt, Krishna can be present more acutely in separation. That is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teaching — to love Krishna in separation. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has written, *śūnyāyitan jagat sarvam govinda-virahena me* — "Everything is vacant without Govinda, without Krishna." That is the highest perfection. When we see that everything is nothing and only Krishna consciousness is there, that is the highest. That is the *gopīs*. Therefore the *gopīs* are so exalted. They could not forget Krishna for a single moment. When Krishna was going to the forest with his cows and calves, the *gopīs* at home were disturbed in their minds, "Oh, Krishna is walking

bare-footed. There are so many stones and nails. They will prick Krishna's lotus feet that are so soft that we think our breasts hard when Krishna puts his lotus feet on them." They are absorbed in these thoughts and crying. They are so anxious to see Krishna return home that in the evening they are standing on the roof watching, "Now Krishna is coming back with his cows and friends." This is Krishna consciousness. Krishna cannot be absent from a devotee when he is absorbed in thoughts of Krishna. This is the process of Krishna consciousness.

Kuntidevi was very anxious that Krishna will be absent. But when Krishna will be absent physically he will be more present within the mind of the devotee. So Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teaching is *vipralambha-sevā*. He has shown this by his practical life. He was searching out Krishna. He was crying, tears were coming like torrents of rain from his eyes, and he was feeling everything vacant for want of Krishna. This is separation, *vipralambha*. There are two stages, *sambhoga* and *vipralambha*. When he is personally present, personally meeting, and personally embracing, that is called *sambhoga*. And when there is separation, that is called *vipralambha*. These are two ways that a devotee can be benefited. (Lecture in Los Angeles, 1 May 1973)

When Sri Krishna left Vrindavan and accepted the kingdom of Mathura, Srimati Radharani, out of ecstatic feelings of separation, expressed how Krishna can be loved in separation. Thus, devotional service in separation is central to this verse. Worship in separation is considered by the *Gauḍīya-madhva-sampradāya*

to be the topmost level of devotional service. According to this conception, the devotee thinks of himself as very poor and neglected by the Lord. Thus he addresses the Lord as *dīna-dayādrā-nātha*, as did Madhavendra Puri. Such an ecstatic feeling is the highest form of devotional service. Because Krishna had gone to Mathura, Srimati Radharani was very much affected, and She expressed herself thus, "My dear Lord, because of your separation my mind has become overly agitated. Now tell me, what can I do? I am very poor and you are very merciful, so kindly have compassion upon me and let me know when I shall see you." Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was always expressing the ecstatic emotions of Srimati Radharani that she exhibited when she saw Uddhava at Vrindavan. Similar feelings, experienced by Madhavendra Puri, are expressed in this verse. Therefore, *vaiṣṇavas* in the *Gauḍīya-madhva-sampradāya* say that the ecstatic

feelings experienced by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu during His appearance came from Sri Madhavendra Puri through Iswara Puri. All the devotees in the line of the *Gauḍīya-madhva-sampradāya* accept these principles of devotional service. (Purport to *Cc. madhya* 4.197)

A person who is advanced in Krishna consciousness always feels separation from Krishna because such a feeling of separation is superior to the feeling of meeting Krishna. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in his last twelve years of existence within this world at Jagannath Puri taught the people of the world how, with a feeling of separation, one can develop his dormant love of Krishna. Such feelings of separation or meeting with Krishna are different stages of love of Godhead. These feelings develop in time when a person seriously engages in devotional service. (*Cc. ādi* 13.39)

Nāma-tattva

THE ESOTERIC SECRET OF KRISHNA NAMA

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode
From *Jaiva Dharma*, chapter 23

Vijaya inquired, "Gurudeva, I understand that *harināma* is transcendental. However, to accept without a trace of doubt that *harināma* is in fact absolutely transcendental even though the names are composed of apparently material sounds and syllables, then I must first realize how this is so. Kindly enlighten me on this aspect."

Raghunath Das Babaji said, "The *Padma Purāṇa* states:

*nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto 'bhīmatcān nāma-nāminoh*

Kṛṣṇa-nāma is transcendently blissful and bestows all spiritual benediction, for *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is Krishna himself, the reservoir of all pleasure. *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* is complete and the form of all transcendental *rasa*. *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* is not a material name under any condition and no less powerful than Krishna himself. Since *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is transcendental to any material quality, there is no question of *kṛṣṇa-nāma* being involved with *māyā*. *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* is always liberated and spiritual, never conditioned by the laws of material nature, because *kṛṣṇa-nāma* and Krishna himself are identical.

Vijaya said, "How can the sound vibration of *kṛṣṇa-nāma* be different from mundane sounds? How can it be supramundane?"

Raghunath Das Babaji replied, "*Kṛṣṇa-nāma* is not a product of this material universe. When the eternal spiritual spark, the *jīva*, attains his *svarūpa* in the transcendental realm, he is eligible to pronounce *śuddha-kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Now, in his present condition under the enslavement of *māyā* and covered with the gross material senses, the *jīva* is unqualified to utter *śuddha-kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Nonetheless, by the unconditional mercy of *hlādinī-sakti* Srimati Radharani, when the *svarūpa* of the purified *jīva* begins to emerge, then *śuddha-kṛṣṇa-nāma* automatically begins to manifest. Within the fertile field of purified consciousness, *śuddha-kṛṣṇa-nāma* appears and dances upon the devotionally enlivened tongue of the devotee by the infinite compassion of Sri Krishna himself. *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* does not possess a mundane form in the shape of material sounds and syllables, but possesses a *sac-cidānanda* form of eternal transcendental bliss and knowledge. When *kṛṣṇa-nāma* gambols upon the tongue of the *śuddha-bhakta*, he may appear to be material sounds and syllables to those whose consciousness is covered by *māyā*, however he is always pure and transcendental. This is the esoteric mystery which surrounds *kṛṣṇa-nāma*." ❀

— Adapted from the edition translated by Sri Sarvabhavana Das. Published by Brhat Mrdanga Press. Vrindavan. 2003.

The *gopīs* of Vrindavan were so attached to Krishna that they were not satisfied simply with the *rāsa* dance at night. They wanted to associate with him and enjoy his company during the daytime also. When Krishna went to the forest with his cowherd boyfriends and cows, the *gopīs* did not physically take part, but their hearts went with him. And because their hearts went, they were able to enjoy his company through strong feelings of separation. To acquire this strong feeling of separation is the teaching of Lord Chaitanya and his direct disciplic succession of *gosvāmīs*. When we are not in physical contact with Krishna we can associate with him like the *gopīs* through feelings of separation. Krishna's transcendental form, qualities, pastimes and entourage are all identical with him. There are nine different kinds of devotional service. Devotional service to Krishna in feelings of separation elevates the devotee to the highest perfectional level, to the level of the *gopīs*. (*Krishna Book*, chapter 35)

Those who are in the disciplic succession of the *Madhva-gauḍīya-sampradāya* should always feel separation from Krishna, worship his transcendental form, and discuss his transcendental teachings, his pastimes, his qualities, and his entourage. That will enrich the devotees to the highest devotional perfection. Feeling constant separation while engaged in the service of the Lord is the perfection of Krishna consciousness. (*Krishna Book*, chapter 35) ❀

INITIATION INTO SPIRITUAL LIFE

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta

Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Sri Sajjana-toshani, volume 26, number 7

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The ceremony of *dīkṣa*, initiation, is that by which the spiritual preceptor admits one to the status of a neophyte on the path of spiritual endeavor. The ceremony tends to confer spiritual enlightenment by abrogating sinfulness. Its actual effect depends on the degree of willing co-operation on the part of the disciple and is, therefore, not the same in all cases. It does not preclude the possibility of reversion of the novice to the non-spiritual state if he slackens in his effort or misbehaves. Initiation puts a person on the true track and also imparts an initial impulse to go ahead. It cannot, however, keep one going for good unless one chooses to put forth his own voluntary effort. The nature of the initial impulse also varies in accordance with the condition of the recipient. But although the mercy of the good preceptor enables

us to have a glimpse of the absolute and of the path of attainment of the absolute, the seed that is thus sown requires very careful tending under the direction of the preceptor if it is to germinate and grow into a fruit-and-shade-giving tree. Unless the soul of its own accord chooses to serve Krishna after obtaining a working idea of his real nature, it cannot long retain the spiritual vision. The soul is never compelled by Krishna to serve him.

But initiation is never altogether futile. It changes the outlook of the disciple on life. If he sins after initiation he may fall into even greater depths of degradation than the uninitiated, but although after initiation temporary setbacks may occur, they do not ordinarily prevent final deliverance. The faintest glimmering of real knowledge of the absolute has not only sufficient power to change radically and for good the whole of our mental and physical constitution, but this glimmering is also incapable of being totally extinguished except in extraordinarily unfortunate cases.

It is undoubtedly practicable for the initiated, if only he is willing, to follow the directions of the preceptor and thus progress by slow degrees to the absolute. The good preceptor is verily the savior of fallen souls. However, it is very rare in modern culture that a person feels inclined to submit to the guidance of another, especially in spiritual matters. Yet the very same person submits readily enough to the direction of a physician for being cured of his bodily ailments, because these latter cannot be ignored without consequences that are obvious to everyone. The evil that results from our neglect of the ailments of the soul is of a nature that paralyzes and deludes our understanding and thus prevents us from recognizing it. Its gravity is not recognized as it does not stand in the way of our worldly activities as clearly as bodily ailments do. The average cultured man therefore feels himself at liberty to ask questions such as the following without realizing the urgent necessity of submitting to the treatment of spiritual maladies at the hands of a really competent physician: "Why should it be at all necessary to submit to any particular person, or to subscribe to any particular ceremony, for the purpose of realizing the absolute, who by his nature is unconditioned?" "Why should Krishna require our formal declaration of submission to himself?" "Would it not be more generous and logical to permit us to live a life of freedom in accordance with the principles of our perverted nature which is also his creation?" "Admitting that it is our duty to serve Krishna, why should we have to be introduced to him by a third party?" "Why is it impossible for one to serve Sri Krishna directly?"

It would no doubt be highly convenient and helpful to be instructed by a good preceptor who is well-versed in the scriptures to understand the same. However, we should never submit to someone to the extent that might give a rascal the opportunity to do us harm. The bad preceptor is a familiar character. It is inexplicable how those gurus who live in open sin nevertheless manage to command unquestioning allegiance of the cultured persons among their disciples. Such being the case, can we blame anyone who hesitates to submit unconditionally to a preceptor, regardless of whether he is good or bad? It is of course necessary to be quite sure of the bona fides of a person before we even tentatively accept him as our spiritual guide. A preceptor should be a person who appears likely to possess those qualities that will enable him to improve our spiritual condition.

Those and similar thoughts are likely to occur to most persons who have received an English education when they are asked to accept the help of any particular person as spiritual preceptor. The literature, science, and art of the West advocate the principle of the liberty of the individual and denounce the mentality that leads one to surrender to someone regardless of how superior they are. They inculcate the necessity and value of having faith in oneself.

But the good preceptor claims our sincere and complete allegiance. The good disciple makes a complete surrender of himself at the feet of the preceptor. But the

submission of the good disciple is neither irrational nor blind. It is offered on the condition that the preceptor continues to be altogether good. The disciple retains the right of renouncing his allegiance to the preceptor the moment he is satisfied that the preceptor is a fallible creature like himself. Nor does a good preceptor accept anyone as his disciple unless the latter is prepared to submit to him freely. A good preceptor is duty bound to renounce a disciple who is not sincerely willing to follow his instructions fully. If a preceptor accepts as his disciple one who refuses to be wholly guided by him, or if a disciple submits to a preceptor who is not wholly good, such preceptor and such disciple are both doomed to fall from their spiritual state.

No one is a good preceptor who has not realized the absolute. One who has realized the absolute is saved from the necessity of walking on the worldly path. The good preceptor who lives the spiritual life is, therefore, bound to be wholly good. He should be wholly free from any desire for anything of this world, whether good or bad. The categories of good and bad do not exist in the absolute. In the absolute, everything is good. We can have no idea in our present state of this absolute goodness. Submission to the absolute is not real unless it is also itself absolute. It is on the plane of the absolute that the disciple is required to submit completely to the good preceptor. On the material plane there can be no such thing as complete submission. The pretence of complete submission to the bad preceptor is responsible for the corruptions that are found in the relationship of the ordinary worldly guru and his equally worldly-minded disciples.

All honest thinkers will realize the logical propriety of the position set forth above. But most persons will be disposed to believe that a good preceptor in the above sense may not be found in this world. This is really so. Both the good preceptor and his disciple belong to the spiritual realm. But spiritual discipleship is nevertheless capable of being realized by persons who belong to this world. Otherwise there would be no religion at all in the world. But because spiritual life can be realized in this world, it does not follow that the worldly existence is capable of being improved into the spiritual. As a matter of fact, the one is perfectly incompatible with the other. They are categorically different from one another. Although the good preceptor appears to belong to this world, he is not really of this world. No one who belongs to this world can deliver us from worldliness. The good preceptor is a denizen of the spiritual world who has been enabled by the will of God to appear in this world in order to enable us to realize the spiritual existence. ❀

(To be concluded in the next issue)

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