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UNDERSTANDING RADHA KRISHNA

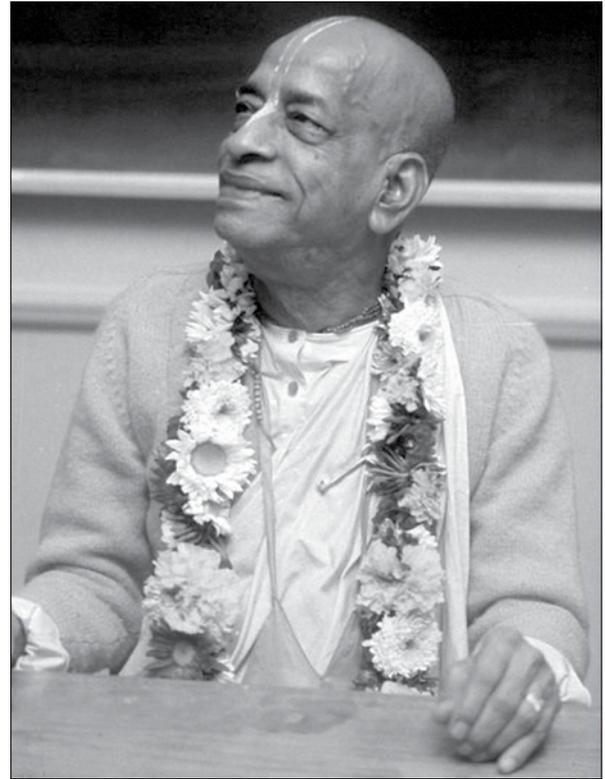
*His Divine Grace A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*

Rupa Goswami came on the order of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to rejuvenate and re-excavate the land of Vrindavan. The Six Goswamis were engaged in the service of Lord Chaitanya for preaching work. Whatever we are preaching now, it is based on the principles laid down by the Six Goswamis. Narottama Das Thakur has sung,

*rūpa-raghunātha-pade ha-ibe ākūti
kabe hāma bujhaba se yugala-pirīti*

The loving affairs of Radha and Krishna are not ordinary material things as we conceive. Generally, people are very much interested in paintings of Radha-Krishna's love. These pictures are very popular because they think, "Krishna is like us. He is after young girls, so he's a great support for us. We are also after young girls. And just as Krishna has done, we are also doing that."

But Krishna's affairs are different. It is not so easy to understand the loving affairs of Radha and Krishna. It is meant for the spiritually most advanced. That is not an ordinary thing. Not only the loving affairs of Krishna and Radharāṇī, but everything about them is not material. They are all spiritual. It has nothing to do with matter.



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

How these affairs are spiritual, that we have to understand through the teachings of Rupa Goswami's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Nectar of Devotion. Without reading all these books, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, if we jump over to the tenth canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* to understand Radha-Krishna, that is not good, and therefore it is not effective.

*nānā-sāstra-vicāraṇaika-niṣṭhau sad-dharma-saṁsthāpakau
lokānānī hīta-kāriṇau tri-bhuvane mānyau śaraṇyākarau
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāravinda-bhajanānandena mattālikau
vande rūpa-samātanau raghu-yugau śrī-jīva-gopālakau*

You'll find in *The Nectar of Devotion* that so many Vedic literatures are quoted. So, *śāstra-vidhi* is required. Then we'll be fixed up. *Vidhi-bhakti* is very important, then *rāga-bhakti*, then *prema-bhakti*. So we should not imitate *prema-bhakti* without going through *vidhi-bhakti*. Just like we rise early in the morning, perform *maṅgala-ārati*, all regulative principles, then wash the temple, dishes, and then dress the deities, then again *ārati*, then class. This is because we have not yet awakened our natural love for Krishna. So it requires the compulsory practice of this *vidhi-bhakti*. *Vidhi-bhakti* means that one has to follow the injunction of the *śāstras* and the order of spiritual master. Not that we act whimsically. ❀

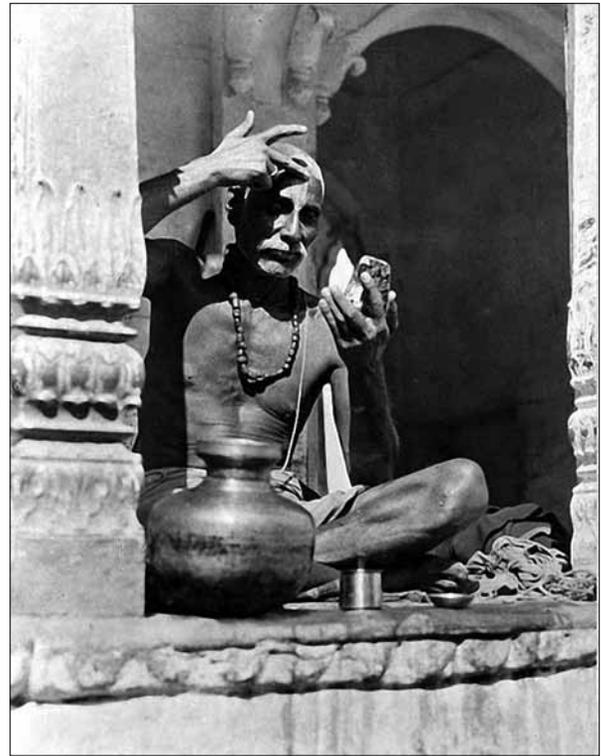
— Lecture in Vrindavan. 9 December 1975.

PROPER ATONEMENT Sri Thakur Bhaktivinode

In an article entitled "Pañca Saṁskāra", *Bhaktivinode Thakur* discusses the five saṁskaras associated with traditional *Vaiṣṇava* initiation. They are: *tāpa*, branding the body with the symbols of *Vishnu*, or using stamps with sandalwood paste to put the names of *Vishnu* on one's body; *puṅḍra*, wearing tilak which represents the body as the Lord's temple; *nāma*, chanting the Lord's names and receiving a new name at the time of initiation; *mantra*, receiving the *gayātrī* and other such mantras from guru; and *yāga*, deity worship. *Bhaktivinode* says that by receiving *pañca-saṁskāra*, a faithful person enters into the path of *bhajan*.

A question frequently arises, "If the practice of *saṁskāras* as found in *vaiṣṇava* culture is so good, then why are those who practice it still bound by distorted natures?" The answer is that *vaiṣṇava saṁskāra* is the best, but at the present time it is practiced in name only. Both the spiritual teacher and the student block their own spiritual advancement by being content with the external aspects of *saṁskāra*.

Nowadays, the deeper significance of the *saṁskāras* is not understood at all. When the student submits himself to the teacher, the teacher gives *pañca-saṁskāra* and then abandons him. What good can



A brahmin Vaishnava putting on tilak

Unknown photographer. Early 20th century.

come from *pañca-saṁskāra* of this type? Externally the student looks good, but internally there is nothing. The symbols of divine conch, disc, and the name of Hari mark the body. The tongue utters the name of Hari, and worship of *śālagrama-śilā* or *śrī mūrti* with *mantra* is performed. But the student is addicted to endless sinful practices. At night, he takes intoxicants and practices debauchery! Oh good teacher, how have you benefited your student? What is the difference in him before and after *dīkṣā*? In fact, he is worse; he is a hypocrite. Inside there are no feelings of remorse: "I am sinful. It is my fault. How can my sin be given up?" These days no one thinks like this when they take shelter of a spiritual teacher. Sinful activities are performed without the slightest concern. What misfortune!

Why is this? The reason is that a wrong kind of relationship exists between such a teacher and student. The *śāstras* give rules to guide this relationship, but they are not followed. The teacher should study the student for one year and observe his atonement. Only the student who analyses his predicament and concludes that he is burning in the fire of material life, who considers that his relationship with material nature is not permanent and therefore he must take shelter of a spiritual teacher in order to obtain the

feet of God — only he has reached the stage of faith and is qualified to take shelter of a spiritual teacher. This is called *tāpa*. During this examination period, the student is encouraged to atone even more, and when the teacher is satisfied, he brands the student with the symbols of conch and disc. These marks are permanent and they symbolize the purity that the student must maintain for the rest of his life. This is *tāpa*, the faithful soul's first *saṁskāra*. In English we define the word *tāpa* as “repentance, atonement, and the permanent impression of higher sentiment on the soul.” *Tāpa* applies not only to the body, but also to the mind and the soul. If it is only physical, in the form of branding or stamping, then *tāpa* has not actually taken place and religious practice becomes hypocritical. At the present time this kind of hypocrisy has weakened *vaiṣṇava* culture. Without *tāpa* or inner repentance, the soul cannot live as a *vaiṣṇava*. Without *tāpa*, the whole process becomes useless. Without *tāpa*, the heart remains impure. Therefore, good friends, seek atonement without delay!

When the teacher sees that the student has received *tāpa* properly — in other words, genuine atonement has occurred — then, out of his mercy, the teacher gives him *ūrdhva-puṇḍra*. What is *ūrdhva-puṇḍra*? It is effulgence! It is also known as *ūrdhva-gati*, the path of advancement. After receiving *tāpa*, the student voluntarily accepts a suitable amount of renunciation from worldly activities. This is the path of advancement. However, if the student accepts no renunciation, then his atonement is useless. So much trouble! So much asceticism! So much renunciation of one's happiness! So much work to control lust, anger and greed! But it is all useless labor if one does not perform these austerities in order to obtain *vaikuṇṭha*, the kingdom of God. In other words, by taking shelter of *saccidānanda-hari*, a soul follows the path of advancement, *ūrdhva-gati*. The illumination of the soul, the mind, and the body is called *ūrdhva-puṇḍra*. Aversion to material life and attachment to the Supreme Lord is called *tāpa* and *puṇḍra* respectively, and these two ornaments are absolutely necessary for the conditioned soul. Without *ūrdhva-puṇḍra*, the body is as good as dead. Realizing this, we must bathe in atonement. Without *ūrdhva-puṇḍra*, the mind drifts and becomes attached to lowly sense objects and then wastes its time discussing the lowest subjects. O repentant soul, do not delay!

Mark the body, mind and soul with *ūrdhva-puṇḍra* and follow the path of advancement which leads to the kingdom of God. Without *ūrdhva-puṇḍra*, the soul's real nature is extinguished.

Seeing the beloved student shining with *tāpa* and *ūrdhva-puṇḍra*, the teacher gladly gives *nāma*, the holy name of God, which awakens the soul's eternal nature. The eternal nature of the soul is servitude to the Lord, and by tasting the nectar of the Lord's holy name the soul is carried to the supreme abode. Then he says, “I am Hari Das. I am not the enjoyer of this world. Even Maya herself is eternally connected to Krishna, and I must utilize her in the service of Krishna.” The eternal soul is then enchanted by singing the name of Hari. By taking shelter in the nectar of the Lord's holy name, the soul becomes aware of his own spiritual nature. ❀

— Found in the Vaiṣṇava Folio Archives. Compiled by Sri Narasingha Caitanya Matha. No date.

SURRENDER TO KRISHNA

Sripada Ramanujacharya

athavā, sarva-pāpa-vinirmuktātyartha-bhagavat-priya-puruṣa-nirvatryatvād bhakti-yogasya tad-ārambha-virodhi-pāpānām ānanyāc ca tat-prāyaścitta-rūpaiḥ dharmaiḥ aparimita-kāla-kṛtaiḥ, teṣāṁ dustaratayā ātmano bhakti-yogārambhānarhatām ālocya, śocato 'rjunasya śokam apanudan śrī-bhagavān uvāca—sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja iti.

bhakti-yogārambha-virodhy-anādi-kāla-saṁcitta-nānā-vidhānanta-pāpānugūṇān tat-prāyāścitta-rūpān kṛcchra-cāndrāyaṇa-kūṣmāṇḍā-vaiśvānara-prājāpatya-vrātapati-pavitreṣṭi-trivṛd-agniṣṭomādikān nānā-vidhānantān twayā parimīta-kāla-vartinā durumuṣṭhān sarva-dharmān parityajya bhakti-yogārambha-siddhaye mām ekaṁ parama-kāruṇikam anālocita-viśeṣa-śeṣa-loka-śaraṇyam āśrita-vātsalya-jaladhīm śaraṇaṁ prapadyasva | ahaṁ tvā sarva-pāpebhyo yathodīta-svarūpa-bhakti-ārambha-virodhibhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi. mā sucaḥ.

An alternate explanation to this verse (Bg. 18.66, *sarva-dharmān parityajya ...*) is as follows: Those who are free from all sins and consider the Lord as being very dear are eligible to perform *bhakti-yoga*.

However, the sinful activities of most living entities are excessive and therefore it is not possible for them to execute atonements in the limited span of their life. Arjuna, thinking himself to be in the same category, was dejected since he thought that he too was unfit for the same. To assure Arjuna and to drive away his lamentation, the Lord said, “Give up all varieties of *dharmā* and surrender unto me.”

The word “*dharmā*” here specifically indicates atonements for counteracting sinful activities, such as the *kṛccha-vrata* (severe fasting for numerous days), *cāndrāyaṇa* (decreasing food intake with the waning of the moon and increasing it again with the waxing), *kūṣmāṇḍa*, *vaiśvanāra*, *prājāpatya vrātapati*, *pavitreṣṭi*, *trivṛt*, *agniṣṭoma*, etc., which are exceedingly difficult to perform.

Krishna says, “Therefore, giving up all these varieties of atonements for counteracting your sins, take exclusive shelter in me in order to successfully begin your practice of *bhakti*. I am the supremely merciful shelter for everyone, and I do not consider the apparent differences of character in those who are surrendered to me. Do not worry! By doing so, you shall be released from all variety of sins, which are obstructions in the commencement of my *bhakti*.” ❧

— Translated by Harshad Marathe, from *Śrī Rāmānuja Gītā Bhāṣya*.



Unknown artist.

Sri Chaitanya-lila Vyasa Sri Vrindavan Das Thakur

GRACEFUL GAURANGA

Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur

*madana-mohanaṇa tanu gaurāṅga sundara
lalāṭe tilaka śobhā ūrdhve manohara*

Graceful Lord Gauranga is more enchanting than Cupid. A glistening *vaiṣṇava-tilaka* adorns his forehead.

*tri-kaccha vasana śobhe kuṭīla-kuntala
prākṛta nayana dui parama cañcala*

He wears glorious *tri-kaccha* garments. His hair is curly. His two eyes are naturally restless.

[Note: The word *tri-kaccha* refers to a style in which some Bengalis wear their dhotis. When the left end of a dhoti is taken between the legs and tucked in at the back it is called *kāchā*. When the other end is tucked in at the navel it is called *koñcā*. When the other end of this *koñcā* is also tucked in at the navel it is called *tri-kaccha*.]

*śukla-yajña-sūta śobhe beḍiyā śarīre
sūkṣma-rūpe ananta ye hena kalebare*

Manifesting a very slender form, Lord Ananta has become his white sacred-thread.

*adhare tāmbūla hāse adhara cāpiyā
yāṇa vṛndāvana-dāsa se rūpa nichiyā*

On His lips rest betelnuts and a smile. Vrindavan Das worships him. ❧

— Translated from Jagabandhu Bhadra’s *Gaura-pada-taraṅgiṇī*. Sri Gauranga Press. Calcutta. 1931. Bengali.

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