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ALWAYS SEEING GOD

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

Everything requires qualification. This Krishna consciousness movement is meant for qualifying you to see God twenty-four hours a day. This is the sum and substance of Krishna consciousness. If you learn this art, then you will see God twenty-four hours a day, without any stop. A yogi means that. Yogi does not mean to play some magic. Magicians can also play magic. A devotee is not interested to show any magic, but he is interested to see the supreme magician who is performing so much magic. The yogis, they are thinking, "If I can do some magic, then so many people will applaud, and that is my success." But a devotee doesn't want anything. A devotee only wants to see who is behind the magic, the supreme magician. ❁

— From a lecture in New Orleans on 31 July 1975.

HEAR AND DISTRIBUTE SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

The Supreme Lord descends in the form of *bhāgavata-kathā*. The *bhakta-bhāgavata* speaks *bhāgavata*. He is the embodiment of *bhāgavata*. We hear this word "*bhāgavata*" in two places — *grantha-bhāgavata* and *bhakta-bhāgavata* — the book *bhāgavata* and the devotee *bhāgavata*. The Supreme Lord gives *bhakti-rasa* through these two *bhāgavatas*. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (ādi 1.100) states:



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*dui bhāgavata dvārā diyā bhakti-rasa
tānhāra hṛdaye tānra preme haya vaśa*

Through the *grantha-bhāgavata* and *bhakta-bhāgavata* the Lord gives *prema*. Krishna becomes bound up by *prema-bhakti*, *bhakti-rasa*, the mellow of *bhakti*. Therefore the *bhāgavata-grantha* has its mercy. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 20.120) says:

*sādhu-sāstra-kṛpāya yadi kṛṣṇonmukha haya
sei jīva tāraye, māyā tāhāre chāḍāya*

If the conditioned soul becomes Krishna conscious by the mercy of saintly persons and the mercy of *sāstra*, he is then liberated from the clutches of *māyā*, who gives him up.

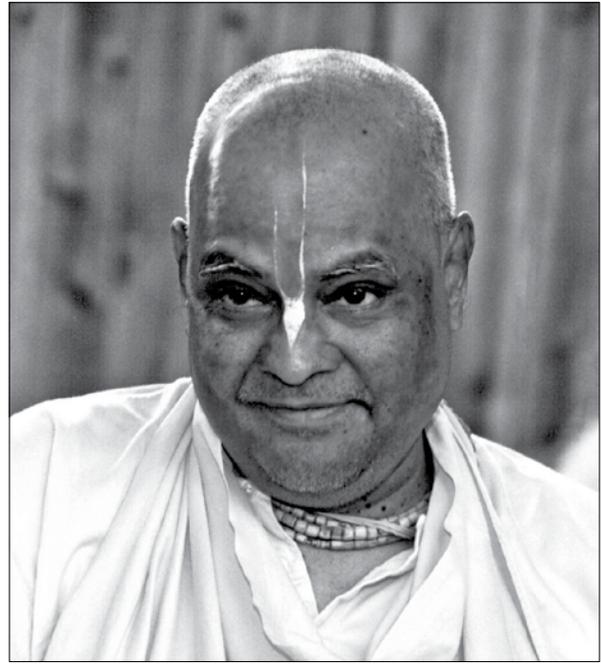
If some *jīva* is fortunate, he gets the mercy of *sādhu* and *sāstra*. *Sāstra* has *kṛpā*, mercy. It is not a mere book. The *Bhāgavata* is as good as Krishna — *kṛṣṇa-tulya bhāgavata* [Cc. *madhya* 24.318].

If someone thinks it is a mere book then he commits an *aparādha*. He is a *mleccha*, *yavana*, a great offender. He must be punished by Yamaraj life after life. We should not think that it is just a book. No. It has *krpā*. *Sādhu-śāstra-krpā*, *sādhu* has *krpā* and *śāstra* has *krpā*. Especially *bhāgavata-śāstra* has *krpā*.

If by the mercy of *sādhu* and *śāstra* someone develops Krishna consciousness, they will be free from the clutches of *māyā*. This is why Srila Prabhupada stresses book distribution. If someone distributes this *bhāgavata*, if someone takes it, even if they don't read it, if they only keep it in their house, still they will get mercy. The day will come when he will get mercy. We give the example of the ass. The ass is beast of burden carrying a heavy load of big logs of wood. His master gives him lashes, "You must carry this!" In the course of his labor, sometimes he carries a log of sandalwood. Sandalwood has a nice scent which touches the nostrils of the ass. He then thinks, "Oh, my life is successful today; I am carrying such a nice scented thing." A similar thing is there with the *bhāgavata*. When you distribute the *bhāgavata* in Western countries, materialistic persons don't know the glory of the *bhāgavata*. They are very interested to read fiction stories, novels, sexual topics between a girl and boy. They don't know what the *bhāgavata* is. Still you go and push, push, push: "Take one! Take one! Take one! Give some dollars, all right." A *vaiṣṇava* showers mercy thereby. "He took a *bhāgavata*. 'It is very cheap, sir. Please take it.'"

"All right," and he takes it.

If you give a necklace of pearls to a monkey, what will he do with it? A monkey will bite it, "Oh yes, this is nice food I can eat", and then he throws it. Western people sometimes throw the book in the garbage. But if he doesn't throw it into the garbage, if he keeps it in the house, then he will get mercy. Sooner or later a day will come, just as the ass smells the nice scent of sandalwood he is carrying, similarly such a person will get mercy, "What kind of book have I purchased?" He opens a page and is astonished, "Oh!" Because it is *nigama-kalpataror galita-phala* — "the most ripened, sweetest, nectarean juicy fruit of the Vedic tree." [Bhag. 1.1.3] It is not an ordinary book. "Oh, so sweet!" Getting mercy, either he or his son can taste the sweetness of that book. Or suppose he cannot taste it, and the



Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

book lays around his apartment or room. One day his son will say, "Oh, my father has brought some book. Let me read it." Then he will get some mercy.

If some fortunate *jīva* gets the mercy of *sādhu* and *śāstra*, he develops Krishna consciousness. He will be free from the clutches of *māyā* and he will be delivered. Such benefit and mercy is there. Therefore *bhāgavata-śravaṇa*, hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is a daily activity. The day you have not heard the *bhāgavata* is a very bad day. ❀

— From a lecture in Romford, England. 3 August, 1994.

THE GLORIES OF RAISING A FLAG OVER THE LORD'S TEMPLE

Adapted from *Nārada Purāṇa*,
Canto 1 chapter 20

In *Satya-yuga* there was a king named Sumati of the lunar dynasty. He was a great devotee of Lord Hari, being always absorbed in the Lord's worship and the narrations of his pastimes. He was very pious and truthful and he happily engaged in the service of the *vaiṣṇavas*.

Sumati's queen was named Satyamati. She was very chaste and endowed with all auspicious characteristics. Both the husband and wife were able to remember their past lives. Together they would worship Lord Hari. On every *dvādaśī* the king would place a nice flag atop the temple of Lord Vishnu. Knowing of King Sumati's reputation as a very pious devotee, the sage Vibhandaka came to visit him along with a group of his disciples.

Upon hearing of the arrival of the sage, the king and queen went out of the city to greet him, taking extensive paraphernalia for his worship. Finally, after the sage was seated comfortably, King Sumati took a lower seat and said, “I am very happy because of your visit. Good men always greatly praise the arrival of a saintly personality.

*yatra syān mahatānī prema tatra syuḥ sarva-sampadaḥ
tejaḥ kīrtir dhanānī putrā itī prāhur vipāścītaḥ*

Learned men say that all riches are where great men offer their affection. Brilliance, fame, wealth, and progeny also abide there. (Text 18)

*tatra vṛddhim upāyāntī śreyānīs yat udinānī mune
yatra santaḥ prakurvanti mahatānī karuṇānī prabho*

O holy sage, all good fortune and welfare flourish day by day where good men bestow their great mercy. (Text 19)

*yo mūrdhni dhārayed brahman mahat pāda-jalanī rajalā
sa snātaḥ sarva-tirtheṣu puṇyātmā nātra samśayah*

There is no doubt that he who wears on his head the dust and water that has washed the feet of great men is a meritorious soul. He has the benefit of bathing in all sacred rivers. (Text 20)

“O learned brahmin, my wife, sons, riches and whatever else I have are dedicated for your service. Please tell me what can I do to serve you.”

Being very satisfied by the king’s humility, the sage fondly stroked him with his hand and said, “O king, your actions and words are just befitting your exalted lineage. It is humility alone that awards one the four *puruṣārthas* — *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* — virtue, wealth, enjoyment and liberation. What is difficult to attain for noble souls such as you?”

“I wish to ask one thing of you. Of the many practices that are pleasing to Lord Vishnu, you have chosen to engage in the installation of a flag atop the temple as your main method of worship. Your wife also simply engages in dancing before the deity in the temple. Why is this? Kindly explain it to me.”

Maharaja Sumati said, “Formerly, I was an evil-minded *sūdra* named Malini. I hated righteousness, constantly

criticized others, and acted in a way to cause others harm. Among other sinful acts, I used to plunder the wealth of temples and kill cows and brahmins. My speech was always harsh and I passed my time dallying with prostitutes.

“After some time, my kinsmen rejected me, so I went to live in the forest where I ate the meat of deer and other animals and robbed whatever wayfarers came my way. It was a miserable life, isolated from society. One very hot summer day, when I was famished and thirsty, I came across an old, dilapidated temple of Lord Vishnu. Nearby was a lake teeming with swans and ducks. I drank the cool water and ate some fruit from the trees on the shore. In this way, I became refreshed and began to reside in that old, broken-down temple.

“Gradually, I repaired the temple by using pieces of wood and putting back the stones that had fallen. I kept it clean by sweeping the area daily. In this way, I continued living the life of a hunter, killing animals for my subsistence. I went on in this way for twenty years.

“One day, a Nishada lady happened to come there. She was from the land adjoining the Vindhya mountains. Her name was Avakokila and she had also been abandoned by her kinsmen. Like me, she was also miserable and emaciated. Upon seeing her, I felt sympathy and so I gave her water, fruit, and freshly killed meat. After being refreshed, she inquired from me about my life and told me about hers. She had been rejected by her family because she was unchaste, a thief, and was always maligning others. Still, her husband continued to maintain her, until one

JAGANNATH’S FLAG



A famous poem in Oriya states:

nilacakra ho!

*dekha uḍūchi bānā, patita-pāvana nāmaṭi yā’ra nān
āsa āsa bolī pātakī-mānaku dāku-achi parā saṅgāta anā*

O Nilachakra! [The Sudarshan Chakra on the roof of the Puri temple is called Nilachakra.] Just see the fluttering flag of Lord Jagannath next to you. Being non-different from Lord Jagannath, that flag is also known as *patita-pāvana*, since those whose are not allowed inside the temple can get the benefit of seeing the Lord by its *darśana*. In fact, by its fluttering it seems to be calling all fallen people to come together and get the mercy of Lord Jagannath. ❀

Photo by Sri Govinda Das



Flags over the Jagannath Temple in Puri

day he died. Ever since that time she had been wandering in the forest until she one day came to where I was staying.

“Thereafter, we remained together as husband and wife, living in that temple and subsisting upon fruit and meat. Then, one night, after becoming intoxicated by drinking wine, we began to dance in the temple,

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blissfully unconcerned about our condition. At that time, as the result of our past fruitive activities, the duration of both of our lives came to an end.

“As we were absorbed in dancing, the terrible servants of Yamaraja appeared upon the scene with their nooses prepared to take us to hell for terrible punishment. However, just at that time, being pleased by our service of cleaning his temple, Lord Vishnu sent his servants to protect us. These four-armed Vishnudutas, who were splendid like the sun, forbade the Yamadutas from binding us.

“An argument then took place between the Vishnudutas and the Yamadutas. The Yamadutas considered us to be great sinners and thus liable for punishment in hell. The Vishnudutas refuted this, however, pointing out that we had become freed from all sins by rendering service to the Lord.

“The Vishnudutas said, ‘At the time of death, this woman was dancing before the deity of Lord Vishnu and this man had just installed a flag atop the temple. Because of this, they became absolved of all sins. Simply by chanting the holy name of the Lord, or even by hearing it, at the time of death, one attains the Lord’s abode in the spiritual sky. What then can be said of those who engage in the Lord’s service? These two have been cleansing the temple of the Lord and repairing it. How then can they deserve to experience the torments of hell?’

“After saying this, the Vishnudutas cut our bonds and took us in celestial chariots to the abode of Lord Vishnu within this material world. [For more about Lord Vishnu’s planet in this material world, see the article “The Mouse, the Lamp and the Queen” in Bindu issue 187.] There, we attained the association of the Lord (*sāmīpya-mukti*). After enjoying divine pleasures there for a very long time, we were again born here on earth.”

King Sumati concluded his narration to the sage Vibhandaka by saying, “By rendering service to the Lord, without desiring anything in return, we attained this wonderful result.”

After hearing all this, the sage praised King Sumati highly and then returned to his ashram. ॐ

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