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HOW DO DEVOTEES OF KRISHNA OFFER RESPECT TO SHIVA?

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

It is said, *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ*: Lord Shiva is the best of all devotees. Therefore all devotees of Lord Krishna are also devotees of Lord Shiva. In Vrindavan there is Lord Shiva's temple called Gopishwara. The *gopīs* used to worship not only Lord Shiva but Katyayani, Durga, as well, but their aim was to attain the favor of Lord Krishna. A devotee of Lord Krishna does not disrespect Lord Shiva, but worships Lord Shiva as the most exalted devotee of Lord Krishna. Consequently, whenever a devotee worships Lord Shiva he prays to Lord Shiva to achieve the favor of Krishna, and he does not request material profit. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.20) it is said that generally people worship demigods for some material profit — *kāmais tais tair hr̥ta jñānāḥ*. Driven by material lust,

they worship demigods. But a devotee never does so, for he is never driven by material lust. That is the difference between a devotee's respect for Lord Shiva and an asura's respect for him. The asura worships Lord Shiva, takes some benediction from him, misuses the benediction, and ultimately is killed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who awards him liberation. 🙏

— Purport to Bhāg. 4.24.30

CHIEF OF THE VAISHNAVAS

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

Śiva-tattva is a special tattva. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* you will find that *śiva-tattva* has been discussed in many places. It is stated in the twelfth canto (12.13.16):

*nimna-gānām yathā gaṅgā devānām acyuto yathā
vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ purāṇānām idam tathā*

As the Ganges is the best of all rivers and Lord Vishnu is the best of all Lords, so *vaiṣṇavānām yathā śambhuḥ* — Shambhu, Shankara, Shiva is the chief of *vaiṣṇavas*. Similarly, *purāṇānām idam* — of all *purāṇas*, *idam bhāgavatam mahā-purāṇam*, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, is the best. So Shivaji is a *kṛṣṇa-bhakta*, he is a devotee of Krishna. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (ādi 6.79-81) it is stated:

*ananta brahmāṇḍe rudra — sadāśivera amśa
guṇāvatāra teiho, sarva-deva-avataṁsa*

Rudra, who is an expansion of Sadashiva and who appears in unlimited universes, is also a *guṇāvatāra*, a qualitative incarnation, and is the ornament of all the demigods in the endless universes.

*teṅho karena kṛṣṇera dāsyā-pratyāśā
nirantara kahe śiva, 'muñi kṛṣṇa-dāsa'*

He also desires only to be a servant of Lord Krishna. Sri Sadashiva always says, “I am a servant of Lord Krishna.”

*kṛṣṇa-preme unmatta, vihvala digambara
kṛṣṇa-guṇa-līlā gāya, nāce nirantara*

Intoxicated by ecstatic love for Lord Krishna, he becomes overwhelmed and incessantly dances without clothing and sings about Lord Krishna’s qualities and pastimes.

This is Shiva. He is a *kṛṣṇa-bhakta*, a dear devotee of Krishna. Again in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (12.10.34) Markandeya Muni offers this prayer to Lord Shiva:

*varam ekaṁ vṛṇe 'thāpi pūrṇāt kāmābhivarṣaṇāt
bhagavatya acyutām bhaktim tat-pareṣu tathā tvayi*

“O Shivaji, you are completely full, *pūrṇa*. You fulfill all the desires of your devotees; therefore, seeing you, I am offering this prayer. Please fulfill my desire. Let me have unflinching *bhakti* unto Krishna and unto you, who are completely surrendered unto Krishna.”

In many places you will find this *śiva-tattva*. In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (4.30.38) the Prachetas say to Lord Vishnu:

*vayam tu sākṣād bhagavan bhavasya
priyasya sakhyuḥ kṣaṇa-saṅgamena
suduścikitsyasya bhavasya mṛtyor
bhiṣaktamaṁ tvādyā gatiṁ gatāḥ sma*

“Dear Lord, by virtue of a moment’s association with Lord Shiva, who is very dear to You and who is Your most intimate friend, we were fortunate to attain You. You are the most expert physician, capable of treating the incurable disease of material existence. On account of our great fortune we have been able to take shelter at Your lotus feet.”

“Because of association with Lord Shiva for a moment we got this opportunity to meet you. *priyasya sakhyuḥ* — Shiva is Your very intimate friend.” 🍀

— From a Lecture in Bhubaneswar, 16 February 1994. Sri Krishna Kathamrita magazine, issue 7.

FROM THE LIPS PART 3

Good Fortune of Recordings

The age of technology has some advantages for devotees. One of which is the good fortune of having audio and video recordings of Srila Prabhupada and current saintly persons. Aside from recordings we now have social media that enable us to connect with different devotees. These mediums enable us to easily remember and contemplate on Srila Prabhupada’s teachings.

However, it’s not that recordings or social media can replace personal association. This is a simple matter of common sense. Imagine if, while sitting upstairs watching a video lecture of Srila Prabhupada, suddenly



Nāma-tattva

PARVATI’S VOW OF CHANTING

From Padma Purānā

In the sixth canto, chapter 254, of the *Padma Purāṇa*, Bhagavan Vyasa recounts how Parvati once appealed to the great sage Vamadev to initiate her into the worship of Lord Vishnu. Thus requested by the goddess, Vamadev gave her the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-stotram*. Parvati then began to daily worship Vishnu in the morning by chanting the *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*. A few days later, Parvati offered her obeisances to the sage and returned to her abode. There, on a charming peak of Mount Kailasa, Shankar Mahadeva was seated after having worshiped Lord Vishnu on the *dvādaśī* day. Seeing that his wife had returned, he told her, “O goddess worshiped by all of the three worlds, come and eat with me.”

Parvati replied, “O my lord, you may go ahead. I shall take my meal only after I have completed my chanting of the thousand names of Vishnu.”

Smiling, Lord Shiva said, “O Parvati, you are fortunate and blessed. You are Vishnu’s devotee. O goddess! Without good fortune it is very difficult to obtain devotion to Vishnu.

*rāma rāmeti rāmeti rame rāme manorame
sahasra-nāma tat-tulyam rāma-nāma varānane*

“I am reciting, ‘Rama’, ‘Rama’, ‘Rama’. I delight in the name of Rama, which attracts my mind. O woman with a lovely face, Rama’s name is equal to the thousand names of Vishnu. (20)

*rā-kārādini nāmāni śṛṇvato mama pārvatī
manaḥ prasannatām yāti rāma-nāmābhiṣaikayā
rāmety uktvā mahādevi bhūṅksva sārdaṁ mayādhunā*

“O Parvati, whenever I hear a name that begins with the syllable ‘rā’ my mind becomes pleased, expecting it to be the name of Lord Rama. O goddess, chant the name of Rama and come and eat with me.” Parvati uttered the holy name of Lord Rama and then took her meal with Shankar.” (21)

— Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa. *Padma Purāṇa*. Nag Publishers. Delhi. 2003. Sanskrit.





Unknown artist

Lord Shiva the greatest vaiṣṇava

someone rushed into the room and announced that Srila Prabhupada just arrived at your house, “He just walked inside and right now is giving class downstairs.” Who would refuse to go, saying, “There is no need for me to go downstairs to hear from him. I’m associating with him via a recording. It’s just as good.”

Srila Prabhupada’s divine presence in his books and recordings is an important principle in ISKCON. It is a great treasure in our society that devotees should take advantage of. By listening attentively and acting on his teachings, any sincere seeker of the truth can directly associate with him. However, that does not mean that recordings or social media can replace the principle of personal association in disciplic succession.

Directly from the Lips

For these reasons, Srila Prabhupada repeatedly emphasized the need for hearing directly from a person. He often used the phrase, “from the lips”. A few examples:

A businessman is always very eager to go to a place where business is transacted. Similarly, a devotee is very eager to hear from the lips of liberated devotees. As soon as one hears the glories of the Lord from the liberated devotees, he immediately becomes impregnated with Krishna consciousness. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 4.29.39-40.)

In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Arjuna is hearing about God from the lips of Sri Krishna himself. In this way Arjuna set the



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criterion for understanding the Supreme by submissive hearing. It is our position to hear *Bhagavad-gītā* from the lips of Arjuna or his bona fide representative, the spiritual master. (Chapter 3 of *Beyond Birth and Death*.)

When it is chanted by a pure devotee of the Lord in love, it has the greatest efficacy on hearers, and as such this chanting should be heard from the lips of a pure devotee of the Lord, so that immediate effects can be achieved. As far as possible, chanting from the lips of non-devotees should be avoided. Milk touched by the lips of a serpent has poisonous effects. (Chapter 6 of *Krishna Consciousness, the Topmost Yoga System*.)

The transcendental messages of the scriptures should be heard from the lips of realized souls. (Chapter 28 of *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*.)

Our movement is being carried by spiritual strength from chanting of the Hare Krishna mähā-mantra from the lips of pure devotees. Our disciples are pure and therefore the effect is that this movement is gaining in scope all over the world. (Letter to Murari, 4 February 1971.)

Only Through the Devotee

Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and other vaiṣṇava literature can only be approached via the medium of Krishna’s devotee. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. (*madhya* 11.28) and *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (2.6) quote *Ādi Purāṇa*:

*ye me bhakta-janāḥ pārtha na me bhaktās ca te janāḥ
mad-bhaktānām ca ye bhaktās te me bhakta-tamā matāḥ*

[Lord Krishna told Arjuna:] “Those who are my direct devotees are actually not my devotees, but those who are the devotees of my devotee are factually my devotees.”

Therefore, Lord Shiva says in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 24.313):

*aham vedmi śuko vetti vyāso vetti na vetti vā
bhaktyā bhāgavatam grāhyam na buddhyā na ca ṭikayā*

I know *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Sukadev Goswami, the son of Vyasadev, knows, and Vyasadev himself may know or may not know *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* can only be understood through *bhakti*, devotion. It is not possible to understand it by dint of one’s material intelligence nor by taking help from commentaries.

Srila Prabhupada writes in his purport to this verse:

According to the Vedic injunction, *yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau* [*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23], all Vedic literatures maintain that *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* has to be learned from the person *bhāgavata*, and to understand it one has to engage in pure devotional service. *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* cannot be understood by so-called erudite scholars or grammarians. One who has developed pure Krishna consciousness and has served the pure devotee, the spiritual master, can understand *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Others cannot. 🍌 — MD

(To be continued)