

Śaraṇagati

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THE MONSOON CLOUD OF LOVE OF GOD

For me as a *sādhaka*, a practicing devotee, focusing on the goal of spiritual life is important, but even more important is focusing on the path to reach that goal. As I focus my attention on the path, I notice that the goal comes closer to me as well. The way this happens can be understood by an analogy: Sometimes one sees a single cloud in the sky, but after some time more clouds appear and they merge to become one large cloud. Such a cloud formation can become so huge that when it finally rains, whole villages are swept away. The chanting of the Holy Name works in the same way: If one chants one Holy Name properly, after some time the Holy Name's influence in one's life grows, like a cloud formation, and will eventually bring about a monsoon shower of love of God. This is how the Holy Name works - provided this growth is not obstructed.

Aparādhā or offences against the Lord's devotees stop the gradual growth of the Holy Name's influence. Why is this so? The moment one commits an offence against a devotee of the Lord or the against the Holy Name himself, the Holy Name (being non-different from Kṛṣṇa) becomes displeased and takes away one's *śraddhā*, one's faith in the Holy Name. One loses the faith that chanting the Holy Name is the prime form of *bhakti* in this age of Kali, from which all other forms of *bhakti* come, like *śravaṇam* (hearing about the Lord) and *smaraṇam* (remembering the Lord) etc. One then perceives other *sādhana*s as being more important.



Śraddhā is very important. When the goddess *śraddhā* comes into our heart, we feel a natural distaste for our material desires which are based on false conceptions of 'I' and 'mine'. We just don't want them anymore and thus they disappear. When *śraddhā* comes, we want to free ourselves totally from all illusion and fully surrender to Kṛṣṇa.



But are we not all sometimes afraid of surrendering unto Kṛṣṇa? We feel, 'What will happen if I surrender? Not doing what I want? Especially in spiritual life I want to do what I want! No one will take care of me! I have seen it in my own life - I have to rely on my own arrangements. This fear of surrender is very common, even amongst older practitioners. This is because the faith that 'all other things are taken care of, if I surrender to Kṛṣṇa' is not strong enough.

But - and this is so good - when we chant and invest some *śraddhā* in the Holy Name, we lose all desires that lead to offenses and our tendency to criticize others. Thus the 'cloud' of the Holy Name will gain momentum and will eventually become a monsoon cloud of love of God. Therefore let us place our faith in the Holy Name as the body of *bhakti* from which the other limbs of *bhakti* grow in this age of Kali.

from a lecture by Śacīnandana Swami at Govardhana hill, India, November 27, 2012



WORSHIP WITH AFFECTION

When we worship a deity, we must have some friendliness, some love in our heart. We should think, 'Oh, if Kṛṣṇa doesn't eat, he will be hungry. And he has to drink also. Otherwise, how can he digest properly in this dry climate?!' On the other hand, if we do what many negligent 'rasikā'-bhaktas do, who think that the deity is anyway transcendental and doesn't need us - as an excuse for their laziness - we will never learn to love Kṛṣṇa. Affection towards a person causes an apprehension that something inauspicious might happen to that person. So we have to learn to think 'If I don't take care of my deities then something inauspicious may happen to them.'

We have to care for our deities. This is very, very important. The Goswamis of Vṛndāvana taught us to offer sweets to the deity. The Goswamis were renounced, they didn't want to eat sweets, they offered sweets to the deity because he wanted sweets. If we don't prepare nice offerings due to laziness and strange spiritual understandings, this is not friendship. It is laziness and ignoring Kṛṣṇa.

from a lecture by Śācīnandana Swami at Govardhana hill, India, November 16, 2012

RAISING HIS ARMS

FAIR-COMPLEXIONED LORD GAURĀṄGA
DECLARED TO THE ENTIRE WORLD,

bāhu tuli' jagatere bale gaura-dhāma
"anindaka hai' sabe bala kṛṣṇa-nāma

anindaka hai' ye sakṛt 'kṛṣṇa' bale
satya satya muṇi tāre uddhāriḥa hele"

"Renouncing criticism of others, everyone please chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's name. I will personally deliver anyone who avoids criticizing others and who once chants 'Kṛṣṇa!' I vow that this is the truth."

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya-khaṇḍa, Ch. 19, v. 213-14



MEET ŚĀCĪNANDANA SWAMI

upcoming seminars & events:

Feb. 21st-24th Vyāsa-pūjā, Zagreb, Croatia

Mar. 10th- 15th Kīrtana Melā, Śrīdhāma Māyāpur, India

Apr. 11th-14th Yoga Expo, Stuttgart, Germany

May 3rd-5th Sacred Space retreat, Switzerland

Read more: www.sacinandanaswami.com



Photo by Mickey Shah