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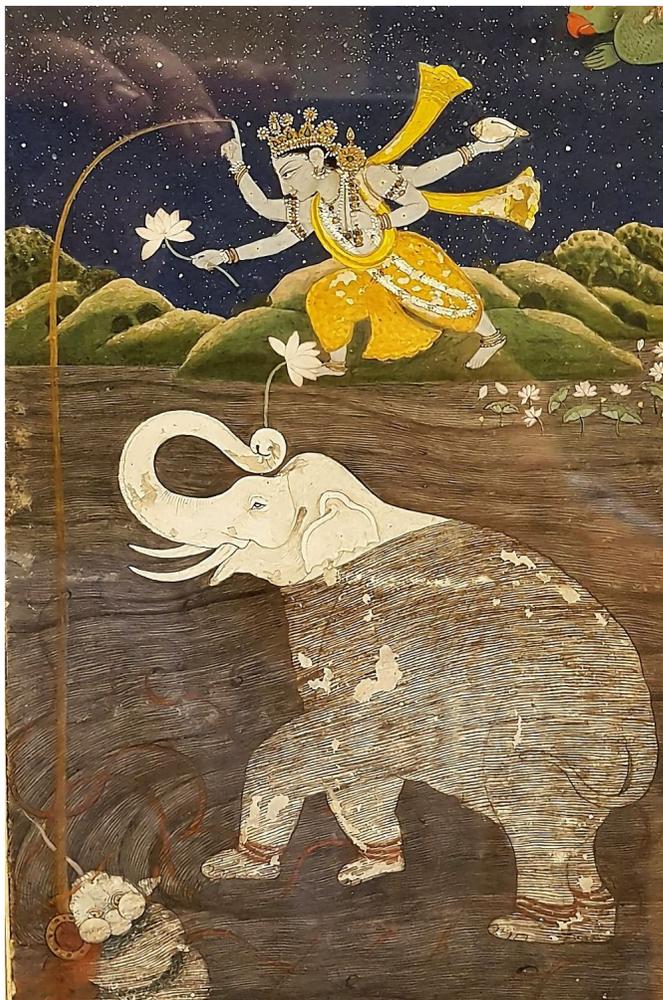
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GAJENDRA ENTERS THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

Sri Sukadeva Goswami

Sri Sukadeva Goswami said: When the Lord delivered Gajendra, King of the elephants, the demigods, sages and Gandharvas, headed by Brahma and Shiva, praised this activity of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and showered flowers upon both the Lord and Gajendra.

There was a beating of kettledrums in the heavenly planets, the inhabitants of Gandharva loka began to dance and sing, while great sages and the inhabitants of Caranaloaka and Siddhaloka offered prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Purusottama. The best of the Gandharvas, King Huhu, having been cursed by Devala Muni, had become a crocodile. Now, having been delivered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he assumed a very beautiful form as a Gandharva. Understanding by whose mercy he had resumed his former form, he immediately offered respectful obeisance by bowing his head. King Huhu also began chanting prayers just suitable for

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the transcendental Lord, the supreme eternal, who is worshiped by the most choice verses. Having been favoured by the causeless mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and having regained his original form, King Huhu also circumambulated the Lord and offered his obeisance. Then, in the presence of all the demigods, headed by Brahma, he returned to Gandharvaloka for he had been freed of all sinful reactions which brought him down to the earth.

Because Gajendra, King of the elephants, had been touched directly by the hands of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he was immediately freed of all material ignorance and bondage. Thus he received the liberation of *sārūpya-mukti*, in which he achieved the same bodily features as the Lord, being dressed in yellow garments and possessing four hands.

This personality known as Gajendra had formerly been a devotee of Lord Visnu and the king of the country known as Pandya, which is in the province of Dravida [South India]. In his previous life, he was known as the king Indradyumna. Indradyumna Maharaja retired from family life and went to the Malaya Hills, where he had a small cottage for his *āśrama*. He allowed his hair to mat and always engaged in austerities.

Once, while observing a vow of silence, King Indradyumna was fully focused whilst engaged in the worship of the Lord. Indeed he was absorbed in the ecstasy of love of Godhead. While Indradyumna Maharaja was engaged in this ecstatic meditation, worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the great sage Agastya Muni arrived there, surrounded by his disciples. When the haughty Muni saw that Maharaja Indradyumna, who was sitting in a secluded place, remained silent and did not follow the etiquette of offering him a reception, he became angry. Agastya Muni then cursed the King, “ This King Indradyumna is not at all gentle. Being low and uneducated, he has dared insulted a *brāhmaṇa* like myself. May he therefore enter the region of darkness and receive the dull, dumb body of an elephant.”

Sukadeva Goswami continued: My dear King, after Agastya Muni had thus cursed King Indradyumna, the Muni left that place along with his disciples. Since the King was a devo-

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tee, he accepted Agastya Muni's curse as welcome considering that it was the desire of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, although in his next life he got the body of an elephant, because of devotional service he remembered how to worship and offer prayers to the Lord. Upon delivering the King of the elephants from the clutches of the crocodile, and from material existence, which resembles a crocodile, the Lord awarded him the status of *sārūpya-mukti*. In the presence of the Gandharvas, the *Siddhas* and the other demigods, who were praising the Lord for His wonderful transcendental activities, the Lord, sitting on the back of His carrier, Garuda, returned to His all-wonderful abode, taking Gajendra with Him.

My dear King Parikṣit, I have now described the wonderful power of Krishna, as displayed when the Lord delivered the King of the elephants. O best of the Kuru dynasty, those who hear this narration become fit to be promoted to the higher planetary systems. Simply because of hearing this narration, they gain a reputation as devotees, they are unaffected by the contamination of Kali-yuga, and they never have to suffer bad dreams. Therefore, after getting up from bed in the morning, those who desire their own welfare -- especially the *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśyas*, and in particular the *brāhmaṇa* Vaisnavas -- should chant this narration as it is, without alteration, to counteract the troubles of bad dreams. O best of the Kuru dynasty, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul of everyone, being thus pleased, addressed Gajendra in the presence of everyone there. He spoke the following blessings.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Freed from all sinful reactions are those who rise from bed at the end of night, and fully concentrate their minds with great attention upon the following: My form; your form; this lake; this mountain; the caves; the gardens; the cane plants; the bamboo plants; the celestial trees; the residential quarters of Me, Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva; the three peaks of Trikuta Mountain, made of gold, silver and iron; My very pleasing abode [the Ocean of Milk]; the white island, Svetadvīpa, which is always brilliant with spiritual rays; My mark of Srīvatsa; the Kaustubha gem; My Vaijayanti garland; My club, Kaumodaki; My Sudarsana disc and Pancajanya conchshell; My bearer, Garuda, the king of the birds; My resting place, Sesha Naga; My expansion

of energy the goddess of fortune; Lord Brahma; Narada Muni; Lord Shiva; Prahlada; My incarnations like Matsya, Kurma and Varaha; My unlimited all-auspicious activities, which yield piety to all who hears them; the sun; the moon; fire; the *mantra omkara*; the Absolute Truth; the total material energy; the cows and *brāhmaṇa*; devotional service; the wives of Soma and Kasyapa, who are all daughters of King Dakṣa; the rivers Ganges, Sarasvatī, Nanda and Yamuna; the elephant Airavata; Dhruva Maharaja; the seven ṛṣis; and the pious human beings. My dear devotee Gajendra, I give an eternal residence in the spiritual world at the end of their lives, unto anyone who rises from bed at the end of night and offers Me the prayers offered by you.

Sri Sukadeva Goswami continued: After giving these detailed instructions, the Lord, who is known as Hṛṣikēśa, loudly sounded His Pancajanya conchshell, in this way pleasing all the demigods, headed by Lord Brahma. Then He mounted the back of His carrier, Garuda and departed for His abode of Svetadvīpa.

— Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 8: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creations » Chapter Four » Verses: 1-26.

THE UNIQUE POSITION OF A DEVOTEE

His Divine Grace

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

śrī-śuka uvāca

evam śaptvā gato 'gastyo
bhagavān nṛpa sānugaḥ
indradyumno 'pi rājarṣir
diṣṭam tad upadhārayan

āpannaḥ kauñjarīm yonim
ātma-smṛti-vināśinīm
hary-arcanānubhāvena
yad-gajatve 'py anusmṛtiḥ

This verse demonstrates the unique position of a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although the King was cursed, he welcomed the curse because a devotee is always aware that nothing can happen without the will of the Supreme Lord. Although the King was not at fault, Agastya Muni cursed him, and when this happened the King considered it to be due to his past misdeeds. *Tat te 'nu kampān susamīkṣamānaḥ* (Bhag 10.14.8).

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This is a practical example of how a devotee thinks. He regards any reverses in life as blessings of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, instead of being agitated by such reverses, he continues his activities of devotional service, and Krishna takes care of him and enables him to be promoted to the spiritual world, back to Godhead. If a devotee has to suffer the reactions of his past misdeeds, the Supreme Lord arranges for him to be given only a token of these reactions, and very soon he is freed from all the reactions of material contamination. One should therefore simply adhere to devotional service, and the Lord Himself will very soon see to one's promotion to the spiritual world. A devotee should not be disturbed by unfortunate circumstances, but must continue his regular program of devotional activities, depending on the Lord for everything. The word *upadhārayan*, “considering,” is very significant in this verse. This word indicates that a devotee knows what is what; he understands what is happening in material, conditional life. A devotee knows what is what; he understands what is happening in material, conditional life and why. Thus the King peacefully accepted the curse although he could have easily counteracted it.

— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa) » Canto 8: Withdrawal of the Cosmic Creations » Chapter Four » Verses :12, Purport.*

A DEVOTEE IS NOT RECOGNISED BY HIS EXTERNAL APPEARANCE

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

Whereas materialists are fond of sense gratification, dry renunciants are detached from material enjoyment, recognizing it as the source of misery. However, both materialists and dry renunciants are full of material desires and are therefore non-devotees. That is why they cannot understand the service attitude and spontaneous renunciation of the devotees. If one tries to discern a devotee by his external appearance—his high birth, opulence, education, beauty, or other material prosperity, or by his lack of these things—he is bound to be deceived. Even the most intelligent persons are unable to understand a Vaisnava's activities and behaviour. When material enjoyers and dry renunciants (*karmīs* and *jñānīs*) look at devotees through their gross, external vision, they do not see the devotee's true identity. A

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devotee who purely serves the Lord lacks no opulence, because the Lord Himself possesses all six kinds of opulence. Instead of enjoying their opulence, however, the devotees offer it to their worshipable Lord. Unlike materialists and renunciants, they neither enjoy the opulence nor renounce it. Therefore, when one sees a devotee either with opulence or with no apparent opulence, one should not disrespect him because that devotee knows perfectly well how to utilize everything in the Supreme Lord's service. A devotee is neither a sense enjoyer nor a renunciant. He is something other than either of these because he only gratifies his beloved Lord's senses.

It is only possible to develop this correct conception by the mercy of a devotee. Therefore, if one constantly engages in Sri Hari's service, whilst constantly chanting His names and giving up false ego, thus taking shelter of the Vaisnava guru's lotus feet, then one's improper attempts to measure both the Lord and His devotees, as well as one's material thirst, will definitely diminish and one will certainly attain eternal auspiciousness.

— *Amṛta Vāṇī: Nectar of Instructions of Immortality; His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada; Compiled by Sripada Bhakti Mayukha Bhagavat Maharaja; Adapted and Published by Isvaradasa; Translated from Bengali by Bhumipati dasa.*

ŚUDDHA-BHĀVA AND EVIL DEEDS

Srila Bhaktinoda Thakura

“In certain persons—even though they are not engaged in devotional service—the symptoms of spiritual sentiment (*bhāva*) may suddenly appear. From such an occurrence, it may be surmised that these persons have executed pure devotional service (*śuddha-bhakti*) in their previous lives, but because of impediments at that time *bhāva* could not mature and fully manifest. As soon as these unknown impediments were removed, symptoms of *śuddha-bhāva* irrevocably appeared. This kind of pure sentiment is indeed born of Lord Krishna's mercy, evokes reactions of wonder and amazement among the general public.

In the case where genuine *śuddha-bhāva* is reposed in a devotee, but certain faults and discrepancies are discernable in his character, the devotee should not be treated intemperately or intolerantly. This is because such a devotee is im-

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bued with *śuddha-bhāva* and is surely and increasingly lifted to sublime heights of spiritual success by this transcendental phenomenon. Thus, such a devotee with authentic spiritual sentiments (*śuddha-bhāva*) cannot perform evil deeds. However, if such discrepancies are noted, then there are two ways to see them. Firstly one may consider, “This elevated devotee has committed a sinful act by some providential arrangement, but this is not a permanent slur on his character.” Alternatively one may understand that the reactions of the devotee’s previous sins are still lingering on even after the advent of *śuddha-bhāva*, though they will very soon recede and cease. If any person insists on pinning blame and calumny on such a pure devotee, he invites the wrath of the holy name upon himself.

“Thus, the *Nṛsimha Purāṇa* declares:

*bhagavati ca harāv ananya-cetā bhr̥ṣa-malino’ pi
virājate manuṣyaḥ
na hi śāśa-kaluṣa-cchaviḥ kadācit timira-paro
bhavatām upaiti candraḥ*

“Just as the moon appears to have shadows and dark patches, but its glow is not shrouded because of them; similarly, devotees who possess single-minded devotion to the Supreme Lord in spite of having faults and blemishes—even those who have committed most abominable acts—keep on radiating devotion because of their love for the Lord.’

We must not mistakenly think that because of this injunction it is all acceptable for devotees to become compulsive sinners. The fact is that the very desire for committing sins is irradiated and expelled once the devotee becomes steadfast in *bhakti*. Yet, as long as the body is there, accidents may happen and thus a devotee may commit sins inadvertently. As soon as that occurs, *Bhakti-devi* instantly incinerates the devotee’s sins and admonishes the devotee against repeating such improper actions. A devotee who continuously commits sins has certainly not developed undivided devotion (*ananya-bhakti*) to the Lord, because a sincere devotee can never perpetrate devotionally detrimental acts shamelessly whilst relying on the absolving potency of *Bhakti-devi*. A sincere devotee could never commit this serious offence.

— *Jaiva-dharma*; Translated by Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Int. & Sarvabhavana dasa

THE ONLY DEFINITION OF BHAKTI

Sri Hari Bhakti Kalpa Latikā

The definition of *bhakti* is devotional service rendered to Lord Krishna with no expectation of remuneration or other self-centred interest. Such pure devotional service is said to bring the Lord under the control of His devotees. It is the mutual love between the Lord and His devotees that is the cause of bringing Him under their control. The true wealth of a devotee is hidden to those who are ignorant of this confidential fact. A devotee whose only wealth is Krishna is usually scorned by materialists who think of him as a social misfit. However, a devotee is fully satisfied, completely peaceful at heart, and he possesses a valuable asset that cannot be taken away, even at the time of his death. All the mystic perfections, the hosts of demigods, and even Laksmidevi, are forever waiting to serve a devotee of Krishna. However, a devotee has no aspiration other than the loving service of Krishna.

— *Sri Hari Bhakti Kalpa Latikā* - Author Unknown, Unsigned Manuscript;
Published by His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada

THE 3 FUNDAMENTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Srila Vishnvanath Chakravarti Thakura

The *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* gives three fundamental instructions: The first is that the devotee must immerse himself in remembering and discussing Lord Krishna. He should similarly speak about, remember and meditate upon those intimate associates of the Lord whom he finds deeply attractive and wishes to personally emulate and eventually follow. The devotee must also reside in the holy place of Vrindavan; if a devotee cannot be there in body, then he should be there in spirit.

The second instruction states that a practicing devotee (*sadhaka*) who has not yet attained perfection on the path of *raganuga-bhakti* must endeavour to serve Lord Krishna, particularly in His Vraja pastimes. The *sadhaka* should do this in the circumstances he presently finds himself. For progress on this path one must serve Krishna under the guidance of a pure devotee who is steeped in the mood of those intimate associates of the Lord whose feelings complement the *sadhaka*'s own spiritual, feelings. The perfected devotee

(*siddha-bhakta*), serves Lord Krishna in Vraja by internally absorbing himself in deep meditation. This is done by realising and accepting his perfected spiritual form suitable to his personal service. Intensely yearning for the same devotional mood that Krishna's beloved associates possess, such a devotee always follows in their footsteps.

The third instruction explains that in the stage of regulative *vaidhi-bhakti* all directives for the different processes of devotion, beginning with hearing and chanting, are listed systematically according to different grades of spiritual development. The *acaryas* have applied in principle the same devotional procedures in spontaneous *raganuga-bhakti*,

The first basic instruction that the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* gives, "remembering Lord Krishna", advocates that in spontaneous *raganuga-bhakti* the devotional aspect of remembering is of prime importance because *raga* is a state of mental discipline, or consciousness. In the Sanskrit for this instruction, the word *pretham* (most dear) refers to Lord Krishna, the Lord of Vrindavan, whose pastimes appropriately portray the devotee's own spiritual sentiments. The word used is *janancasya* which describes the Lord's eternally, surrendered associates. In order to remove any doubt regarding who they are, the word *nijasamihitam*, much desired persons, has been used. This refers to devotees such as the Queen of Vrindavan, Srimati Radhika, Lalita-devi, Visakha-devi, and Sri Rupa Manjari. Although Lord Krishna is the worshippable object for those pure devotees who experience the precious jewel of *bhava*, it is the Lord's intimate associates, Srimati Radhika and the Vraja gopis who possess the highest development of *bhava*. Therefore, the pure devotees situated in *bhava* want to serve and worship such intimate associates of the Lord.

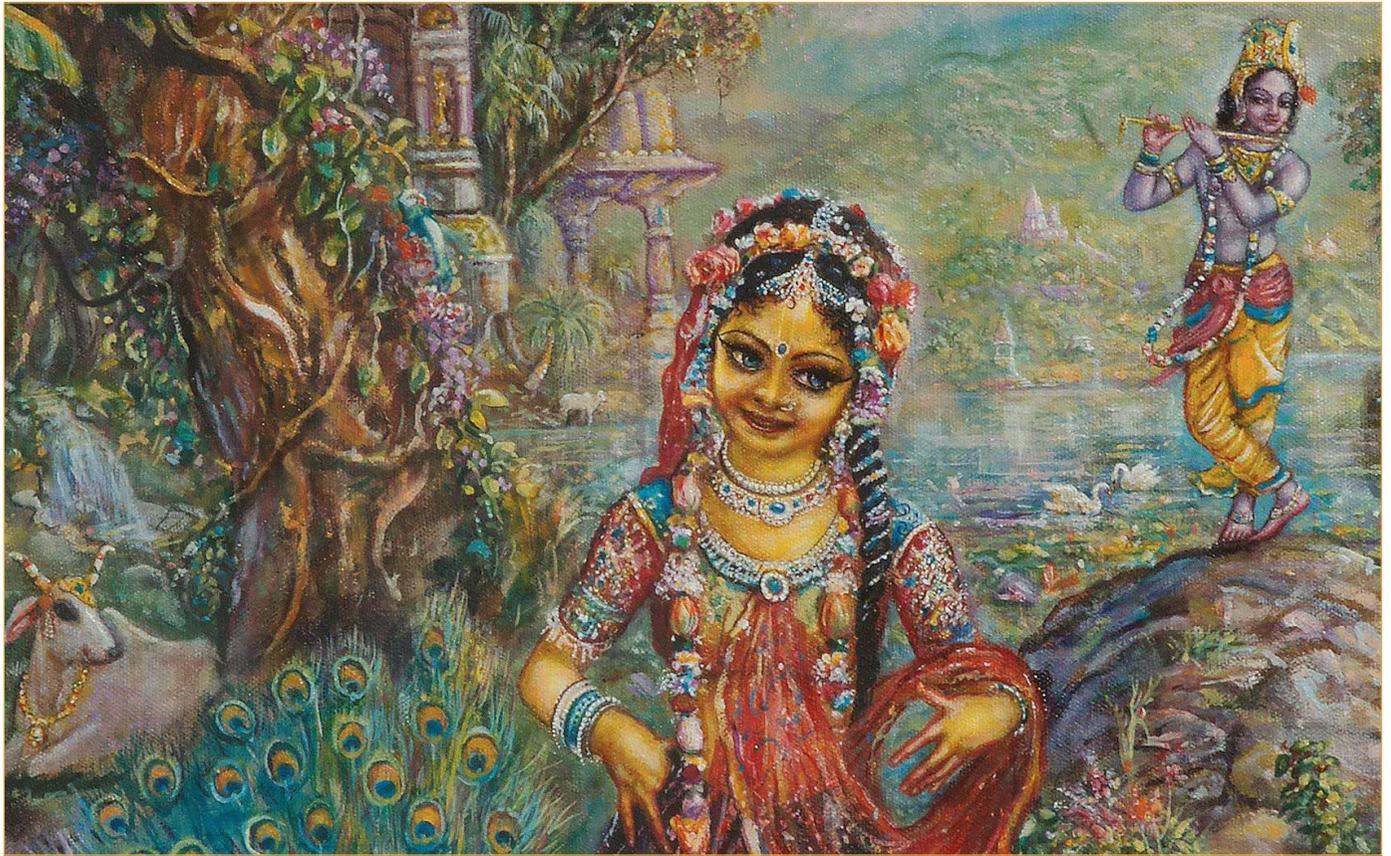
The next instruction "to reside in Vrindavan" means that if it is physically impossible to do so, then the devotee must be present there in spirit. In the second instruction, the terms *sadhaka*, practicing devotee and *siddha*, perfect devotee, with their different devotional attitudes and statuses, are explained. The *sadhaka* serves according to his level of advancement, and the *siddha* serves in his revealed spiritual form which matches his eternal spiritual relationship with Krishna. *Tad-bhava-lipsuna* means to take shelter of one's dearest form of Krishna, along with His associates and paraphernalia, and to foster the intense

desire to possess the deep devotional moods of Srimati Radhika and the other associates of the Lord. Both kinds of devotee should serve the Lord using appropriate ingredients, collected either mentally for meditative service or physically for practical service. As for the style of service, the term *vrajalokanusaratah* means that one must follow in the footsteps of the residents of Vraja. A *sadhaka* devotee must serve the residents of Vraja (*vrajabāsīs*) such as Rupa Gosvami, following his devotional mood. A *siddha* devotee, in his, eternal spiritual form (*siddha-deha*), must serve the *vrajabāsīs* like Sri Rupa Manjari, under the guidance of such Vaisnavas as Rupa Gosvami.

The *vrajabāsīs* whom the *sadhaka* devotee follows, must have a permanent relationship with Lord Krishna in Vrindavan. Devotees such as *Candrakanti* and the *sakhis* (girlfriends), the munis of Dandakaranya mentioned in the *Vamana Purāṇa*, and the personified *Śrutis* are in this category. They are good examples of *vrajabāsīs* because of their devotional behaviour.

The first two instructions dealt with *smarana* and *Vrajabāsa* (residing in Vraja), and now the third instruction deals with hearing about the Lord and chanting the glories of the Lord, and the other devotional processes. As the devotee sincerely performs this hearing and reciting, he deeply laments his personal inadequacy. By this humility, the devotee finds secure shelter in his guru and in the other devotional activities. The word *Mañṣibhiḥ* (according to the authoritative preceptors) reiterates the point that without diligently practising processes such as *śravanam* and *kīrtanam*, one cannot obtain the protection and guidance of a *Vrajabāsī* who is the key to a realm of new spiritual enlightenment. We can conclude that an intelligent *sadhaka* (*madhyamadhikārī* devotee), with his personal realizations and purified consciousness assisting him, analyzes and assesses his spiritual inclinations. According to such a *sadhaka's* conclusions, he then practises specific disciplines, carefully avoiding any activities contrary to his devotional predilection because they impede his advancement on the path of *bhava-bhakti*.

— *Ragavartma-Candrika - Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Ṭhakura, First Difussion, text 10 - 11; Translated by Sarvabhavana dasa*



THE BONDS OF LOVE
SriIa Jagadananda Pandita

Once the devotee captures Lord Krishna's lotus feet with the bonds of love, the Supreme Lord can never leave the throne of his pristine heart. A first-class devotee of the Lord is automatically free from all standard duties and responsibilities because he is wholly surrendered to the holy name of the Lord. Even in an unconscious state, he utters the Lord's name purely.

One who understands the temporary nature of material duties and responsibilities, and leaves all material activities to take complete shelter of Krishna's lotus feet is certainly a first-class, highly elevated devotee. Such a great soul is very rarely found. The devotee who is engaged in devotional service, whilst being fully cognizant of the transcendental truth about Lord Krishna's original spiritual form, His divine holy name, His pure devotees and the process of devotional service to Him, is indeed topmost amongst all the gradations of Vaisnavas.

One who worships the Supreme Lord and His holy name with undivided faith, knowing Them to be non-different, is also to be considered a very elevated, first-class Vaisnava, even if he does not

understand the intricacies of his personal spiritual identity. This is Lord Caitanya's opinion.

— Prema-Vivarta; –SriIa Jagadananda Pandita; Translated by Sarvabhavana dasa.

!! Sri Sri Nitai Gaurchandra Jayati !!

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