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DEVOTION IN PASSION

Translation and purport to Bhāg. 3.29.9 by

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

*viṣayān abhisandhāya yaśa aiśvaryaṁ eva vā
arcādāv arcayed yo mām pṛthag-bhāvāḥ sa rājasah*

The worship of deities in the temple by a separatist, with a motive for material enjoyment, fame and opulence, is devotion in the mode of passion.



PURPORT

The word "separatist" must be understood carefully. The Sanskrit words in this connection are *bhinna-dṛk* and *pṛthag-bhāvāḥ*. A separatist is one who sees his interest as separate from that of the Supreme Lord. Mixed devotees, or devotees in the modes of passion and ignorance, think that the interest of the Supreme Lord is supplying the orders of the devotee; the interest of such devotees is to draw from the Lord as much as possible for their sense gratification. This is the separatist mentality. Actually, pure devotion is explained in the previous chapter: the mind of the Supreme Lord and the mind of the devotee should be dovetailed. A devotee should not wish anything but to execute the desire of the Supreme. That is oneness. When the devotee has an interest or will different from the interest of the Supreme Lord, his mentality is that of a separatist. When the so-called devotee desires material enjoyment, without reference to the interest of the Supreme

Lord, or he wants to become famous or opulent by utilizing the mercy or grace of the Supreme Lord, he is in the mode of passion.

Māyāvādīs, however, interpret this word "separatist" in a different way. They say that while worshiping the Lord, one should think himself one with the Supreme Lord. This is another adulterated form of devotion within the modes of material nature. The conception that the living entity is one with the Supreme is in the mode of ignorance. Oneness is actually based on oneness of interest. A pure devotee has no interest but to act on behalf of the Supreme Lord. When one has even a tinge of personal interest, his devotion is mixed with the three modes of material nature. ❀

A HUNDRED WARNINGS AGAINST MUNDANE MELLOWS

Prākṛta Rasa Śata Dūṣiṇī

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(continued from the previous issue)

*nāme-rase bheda āche, guru śikṣā deya nā
rasa lābha kori' śeṣe sādhana to' haya nā*

A bona-fide guru never teaches that there is a difference between the holy name of Krishna and *rasa*. Even after attaining actual *rasa*, the regulative principles of devotional service should not be abandoned. (12)

*kṛtrima panthāya nāme rasodaya haya nā
rasa haite kṛṣṇa-nāma vilomete haya nā*

Transcendental mellows can never arise from an insincere practice of chanting the holy name. The backwards conception that Krishna's name comes from *rasa* can never be accepted. (13)

*rasa haite rati-śraddhā kakhana-i haya nā
śraddhā haite rati chāḍā bhāgavata gāya nā*

Rasa, devotional mellow, will never be seen to develop into *rati*, transcendental attachment, and *śraddhā*, proper faith. The *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and the realized devotees never declare any opinion other than that *rati* develops from *śraddhā*. (14)

*rati yukta rasa chāḍā śuddha-bhakta bole nā
sādhanete rati rasa guru kabhu bole nā*

A pure devotee of Krishna never speaks of anything other than *rasa*, transcendental mellow, that is endowed with *rati*, loving attachment. A bona fide spiritual master never claims that *rati* and *rasa* are present within *sādhana-bhakti*, devotional service in practice. (15) **(To be continued)**

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TONDARADIPPODI ALWAR

In the *Śrī* or *Rāmānūja-sampradāya* there are twelve famous devotees who are considered to be incarnations of the Lord's energies. They are known as the Alwars or *divya-sūris*, divine persons. They appeared at different times prior to the advent of Srila Yamunacharya and Ramanujacharya. It is said that the earliest of the Alwars advented around the beginning of Kali Yuga, while most of them lived in the first millennium A.D. In chronological order of appearance, the eleventh of them is Tondaradippodi Alwar. He was born in a *brahmāṇa* family in South Indian with the name Vipra Narayan, and is described in the South Indian prayer *Divya-sūri-stotram*:

*kodaṇḍe jyeṣṭhā-nakṣatre maṇḍaṅguḍi-purodbhavam
colorvyaṁ vanamālāṁśa bhaktāṅghri-reṇum-āśraye*

I take refuge in that greatest of devotees know by the name Tondaradippodi (meaning "dust of the devotees feet"), who was born under the influence of the asterism *jyeṣṭhā* in the month of Agraḥayan (December-January) as a manifestation of Lord Vishnu's *vana-mālā* at Mandangudipura in the kingdom of the Cholas.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada mentions Tondaradippodi in his purport to *Cc. madhya* 9.79:

It is said that in the year 289 of the Age of Kali, the Alwar of the name Tondaradippaḍi was born. While engaged in devotional service he fell victim to a prostitute, and Sri Ranganath, seeing His devotee so degraded, sent one of His servants with a golden plate to that prostitute. When the golden plate was discovered missing from the temple, there was a search, and it was found in the prostitute's house. When the devotee saw Ranganath's mercy upon this prostitute, his mistake was rectified. He then prepared the third boundary wall of the Ranganath temple and cultivated a *tulasī* garden there.

The story of Tondaradippaḍi is elaborately described in the *Śrī* Vaiṣṇava tradition. There it is said that in his youth Vipra Narayan received all of the sacred *samskāras* such as the hair cutting ceremony and *upanayanam*, brahminical initiation. He was learned in all of the four Vedas and auxiliary literatures. Saintly from the beginning of his life, he was not interested in the vanities of this world and remained free from the entanglement of marriage. Once he went on a pilgrimage to visit the holy place of Sri Rangam. Seeing the beauty of Lord Ranganath, Vipra Narayan decided to stay there and dedicate the rest of his life to the service of the Lord. With this desire in mind he began cultivating a garden to supply flowers and *tulasī* to Lord Ranganath.

In the nearby town of Tirukkarambanar lived a prostitute named Deva-devi. She is said to have possessed matchless beauty, and in the *Śrī* Vaiṣṇava tradition she is considered to have been Divyangana, a heavenly damsel descended to this world. She was a favorite of King Chola. On one occasion while Deva-devi was returning from the palace accompanied by her sister and some companions, she came to the flower garden of Vipra Narayan. Feeling fatigued, she stopped to rest there under the cool shade of a tree.

While resting, Deva-devi and her sister noticed Vipra Narayan, who was engaged nearby in his service. His hair and beard were long and thick. He was dressed in milk-white garments, he wore *tulasī* beads on his neck, and his body was effulgent with the markings of *vaiṣṇava tilaka*. Vipra Narayan was wholly absorbed in his service of tending to the plants and creepers in the Lord's flower garden. Not even for a moment did he lift his eyes from his work. He did not even seem to be aware of Deva-devi and her

companions and if he was he was obviously not interested in them. This conduct excited Deva-devi's curiosity. She had never before come across a man who was oblivious to her beauty. She inquired from her sister whether the man was mad or if he was actually not a man at all. Her sister said, "No, Deva-devi, he is neither mad nor lacking in masculinity. He is a saint. His whole consciousness is fixed in loving service to the Lord. He is not interested in your charms and smiles, curves and curls. If you could attract his heart towards you then I would consider that you were truly the most attractive of ladies. I make a wager that if you can succeed in this then I will become your slave for six months."

"Agreed," responded Deva-devi, "and if I fail then I will become your slave for the same period." Then taking off all of her jewelry and personal ornaments, Deva-devi gave them to her sister and companions to take home, bidding them to wait for further events.

After her companions left, Deva-devi placed herself directly in front of Vipra Narayan in such a way that he could not help but see her. She then fell at his feet crying piteously. "Who are you, daughter?" Asked Vipra Narayan. "Why are you crying like this?"

"O my lord," she replied, "due to my past sins I have taken a fallen birth. For the sake of making money, my mother has made me an instrument for the satisfaction of the lust of every man. I want to be free from my grievous sins and renounce my wicked mother once and for all. Hence I am taking shelter at your lotus feet. I beg you to deliver me. I am helpless and have nowhere to go. Please glance upon me, and shower your grace on me. Please accept me as your humble servant. All I simply ask of you is that every day when you take flowers to Lord Ranganath please let me look after the garden in your absence."

Simple as he was, Vipra Narayan could not refuse a willing helper in the service to his beloved Lord. He was unaware of the guile that lay behind her plea. His unsophisticated nature admitted a servant and his kindness to all creatures prompted him to share with her his frugal meals after they were offered to the deity of his *āśrama*.

For six long months Deva-devi patiently served in Vipra Narayana's garden, performing every menial service. She was working one day in the rainy season when a heavy downpour came. Although she was soaking wet and shivering, she

would not cease from her gardening work. Vipra Narayan was sitting in his cottage sheltered from the rain. When he saw her condition he felt pity and asked her to take shelter in his hut. She obeyed and was soon standing at his side in her dripping wet sari. Seeing her discomfort he gave her some of his own dry garments to wear. She obeyed and finding herself alone with him, she thought, "There is rain outside, and here we are snug and secure. His mind is unoccupied, could a better opportunity than this present itself?" "My lord," she said meekly, "may this slave massage your weary limbs?" In all innocence, the saintly Vipra Narayan expressed willingness.

As she massaged his limbs she began speaking sweet words, flashing charming smiles and casting such furtive glances that Vipra Narayana's shyness was finally banished to zero. Lust took hold of him, and forgetting his service and bhajan he accepted her embrace. Deva-dasi lost no time in teaching him the higher lessons in the arts of Cupid. She immediately sent for all of her jewels and opulent dress and displayed her personal charms to such advantage that he was now her slave.

Deva-devi had won the wager with her sister. Finally, after stripping her lover of all of his worldly possessions she deserted him and went home. Vipra Narayan ran after her, sat at her doorstep, and quietly tolerated all of the injuries and indignities a rejected lover is subjected to by unchaste women.

After several days of this, Lord Ranganatha and His consort the Goddess of fortune happened to pass by that street on procession. When Lakshmi Devi saw Vipra dejectedly sitting by Deva-devi's door, She asked the Lord, "Who is this?"

Lord Ranganath said, "You don't recognize our old servant Vipra Narayan? He daily brought us so many flowers and garlands. Just see how the poor soul is now penniless and spurned by his lover!"

"My Lord," said Lakshmi, "will you cast away your devotees in their suffering? Even if he has sinned, still it behooves You to redeem him and bring him back to Your service."

"Yes." the Lord consoled her. "Watch and see how I will accomplish this."

A few hours later a knock came at Deva-dasi's door. Vipra Narayan's knocks had been ignored up to now, but somehow this knock sounded different. Deva-dasi opened the

door. "Who are you?" she inquired.

"I am the humble servant of Vipra Narayan. My name is Ranga. He has directed me to bring you this golden plate."

These words were like music to the greedy prostitute's ears. She gladly received the plate and asked where her dear lover Vipra was. "Here he is by your door waiting to see you." The messenger stepped down to where Vipra Narayan was sitting morosely. "Here is Deva-dasi. She is waiting for you with open arms. Go to her and enjoy as you did before." Vipra Narayan leapt up, and to his great happiness found himself once more embraced in the arms of Deva-dasi. After reuniting Vipra with Deva-dasi the messenger suddenly disappeared.

The next morning when the doors to Lord Ranganath's temple were opened, the priests found that a valuable golden plate was missing from the altar. This created an uproar, and the matter was reported to the king. He ordered an immediate arrest of the priests and attendants who were most closely connected to the lost item. One of the maidservants of Deva-dasi happened to pass by the place where those men were being detained. Seeing among them a lover of hers, she inquired what had happened and was informed about the lost plate. The maidservant at once revealed that Vipra Narayan had brought such a plate as a gift to her mistress and

that she was hiding it under a pillow. Acting on this information the temple manager went to the home of Deva-dasi and found the missing gold plate. He then arrested both the prostitute and Vipra Narayan and brought them before the king. The king angrily asked Deva-dasi how she could stoop so low as to steal the deity's plate.

The frightened prostitute said, "O lord, I am your abject slave. I did not know that this plate belonged to the deity. This man here, Vipra Narayan, sent it with one of his servants named Ranga. Unaware of the circumstances, I accepted it."

"What do you say to this, Vipra?" roared the king. Vipra Narayan denied any knowledge of the plate. Finally, the king locked Vipra Narayan in jail. That night Lord Ranganath, who is famous as *bhakta-vatsala*, the lover of His devotee, came to the king in a dream and told him that it was He personally who took the plate and went to the prostitute on behalf of His dear devotee Vipra Narayan. He told the king, "I did this to rectify my devotee. You should immediately release him from prison and reinstate him in his previous service, which is so dear to him and to us."

The king immediately ordered Vipra Narayan's release, begged his pardon for any unintentional offence he may have committed, showed him every honor, and gave him leave to go. When Vipra Narayan realized the wonderful compassion the Lord had shown him, he began crying in great remorse. Rejecting his lusty desires, with redoubled intensity Vipra Narayan again resumed his practices of bhajan and service to the Lord. He soon became his previous self again and due to the depth of his devotion and humility he became known as Tondaradippodi or "the dust of the devotees feet".

It's said that when Deva-devi heard about the change in her old lover she became astonished. Her association with the saintly Vipra Narayan then bore its fruit. She renounced her sinful profession and donated all of her possessions to the deity and the *brāhmaṇas*. She dedicated herself to chanting the holy names and performing menial services in the temple of Lord Ranganath. In a short time she also became a saintly person.

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