



Sri Krishna Kathamrita Bindu

तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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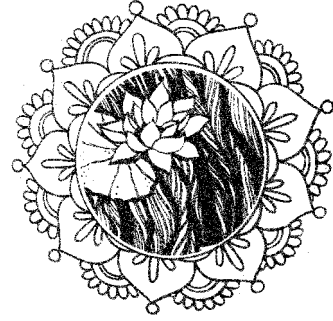
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DISCIPLE MEANS DISCIPLINE

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

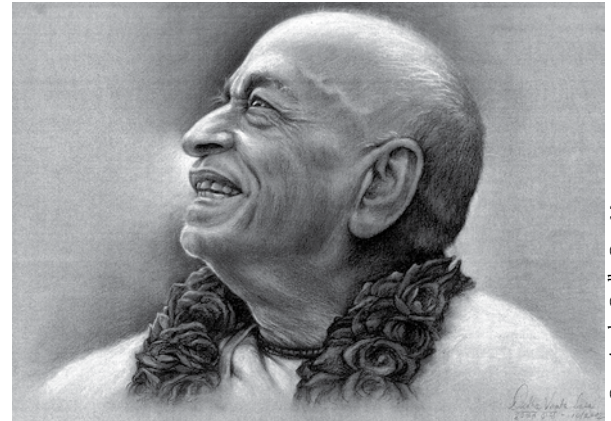
Disciple means discipline. The word discipline comes from disciple. Unless there is discipline, there is no question of disciple. The word śiṣya comes from the verbal root “śās”, which means “ruling”. From this root comes “śāsana”, which means “government”, “śāstra”, which means weapon, “śāstra”, scripture, and “śiṣya”, disciple. They have all come from the same root, śās-dhātu. There is a saying, “Obedience is the first law of discipline.” Unless there is obedience, there cannot be any discipline. And unless there is discipline there is no question of disciple. Disciple means one who follows discipline. ☞

— Morning walk in Mayapur, 8 March 1976.

BHAJANA IS NOT FOR SHOW

*Srila Bhaktisiddhanta
Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada*

The holy name of the Lord and the Supreme Lord are one and the same. While attempting to get rid of *anarthas*, those people who with their mundane conceptions discriminate between the holy name and the Supreme Lord should serve exalted souls that are expert in the art of *bhajana*. The associates of Sri Gaurasundara have explained these subjects, but if we simply repeat them like parrots, people will label us as *sahajiyās*. Since the *sahajiyās* are fallen into the mire of wretchedness, to show them the glories of *rāgānuga-*



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

Drawing by Drdha Das, Mayapur

bhakti one must personally become very expert in the art of *bhajana*. Therefore try to understand all these things very carefully. *Bhajana* is not something to make a show of. If we chant the holy name loudly, the enjoyment of idleness cannot devour us. ☞

— From *Patrāmṛta - Nectar from the Letters* (1.23). Touchstone Media. Kolkata. 2012.

WISDOM, PATIENCE AND SHELTER

Sri Vallabhacharya's Viveka-dhairya-āśrayaḥ

When devotees take up the process of bhakti they start out with a great amount of initial enthusiasm. In many cases, this initial enthusiasm helps them progress a great distance in their sojourn on this path. However, soon enough, most devotees find themselves experiencing difficulties, doubts and obstacles on their path. These hindrances may occur due to various reasons and can in some cases severely discourage devotees from whole-heartedly pursuing bhakti.

Thus, sometimes a devotee may become morose and think that he or she should not invest time and efforts in progressing on the path of bhakti. In this age of Kali, when devotees see the despicable situation of the material world, or when they see devotees criticising each other or behaving in an unworthy way, and when good association is not available, it is easy for them to lose faith. For such devotees, the grave voice of Sri Vallabhacharya acts as a soothing balm, as he gives us these precious seventeen instructions to help devotees develop an attitude that will help them sustain their bhakti in a mature way throughout their lives. Various commentaries in Sanskrit and Gujarati have been written on this small booklet and a summary of these commentaries is being presented with each verse.

Wisdom and Patience

*viveka-dhairye satataṁ rakṣaṇīye tathāśrayaḥ
vivekas tu hariḥ sarvaṁ nijecchātaḥ kariṣyati (1)*

In order to attain the shelter of the Lord, a devotee should carefully cultivate and preserve the qualities of *viveka*, wisdom, and *dhairya*, patience. *Viveka* is the capacity to understand that Lord Hari, he who snatches away all distress, will arrange everything for the devotee according to the Lord's desires.

Summary of Commentaries: For the devotees, it is of utmost importance to cultivate and preserve the two qualities of wisdom and patience. If these are lost then the shelter of the Lord cannot be attained. Thus, *viveka* and *dhairya* are the cause and *āśraya* is the effect. Protecting the cause will help in producing the effect.

The first thing to understand is *viveka*. *Viveka* is the mature wisdom to understand that whatever is required for a devotee, materially and spiritually, will be arranged by the Lord according to the Lord's independent desires. Thus, a devotee should not give up his service to the Lord and endeavour independently. This is the first type of wisdom that a devotee requires.

The Supreme Lord knows the heart of his devotees, and hence he does not need to be reminded by the devotee about what the devotee needs materially. The devotee should thus never ask any material favor from the Lord, not even the favor of bestowing liberation. This is the second type of wisdom that a devotee requires.

In the next verse, Sri Vallabhacharya gives some more reasons for not praying for such useless favors, especially if the devotee is doubtful about the will of the Lord.

Useless Prayers

*prārthite vā tataḥ kiṁ syāt svāmy abhiprāya-saṁśayāt
sarvatra tasya sarvaṁ hi sarva-sāmarthyam eva ca (2)*

What is the use of prayers offered with a doubtful nature? [It is better to realize that] everything here in this entire world belongs to the Lord and he carries the complete power to carry out any task.

Summary of Commentaries: Sri Vallabhacharya opines that it is utterly useless for a devotee to pray for some favor from the Lord while being uncertain whether the Lord will fulfil it or not. The Lord says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.40), *saṁśayātmā vinaśyati* — “A doubtful soul perishes.” It is better to not pray at all than to pray in such a way. Gajendra had memorized prayers for deliverance in his previous life, but he could not be delivered in that life even though he prayed for it. Only when the Lord desired his liberation did Gajendra get delivered. If prayers were the reason for Gajendra's deliverance, then his liberation should have been attained in his previous life. Thus it is proven that even after hearing the devotee's prayers the Lord does what he wants to do when he wants to do it. Prayer in itself is not bad, but praying for material benefits or praying with a doubtful mind is rejected herein by Sri Vallabhacharya. This is the third type of wisdom that a devotee requires.

Instead of praying doubtfully, a devotee should realize that everything in this world belongs to the Lord,



Nāma-tattva

EVEN DRUNKARDS AND BRAHMIN KILLERS

Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa

*hanan brāhmaṇam atyantam kāmō vā surām piban
kṛṣṇa-kṛṣṇety aho-rātram saṅkīrtya śucitām iyāt*

Even those who have murdered an exalted Brahmin or voluntarily drunk liquor will become purified if day and night they chant, “Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!”

— Quoted in Sanatan Goswami's *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 11.494. English translation by Kusakratha Das. Krishna Library. Culver City, California. 1992.



and the Lord is fully capable of bestowing anything and carrying out any impossible task. He knows what his devotee needs and will bestow anything that is needed at the correct time. This is the fourth type of wisdom that a devotee requires.

If a devotee intensely desires something and the Lord does not fulfil that desire, then the devotee should not become angry against the Lord and think that he or she will now give up the practice of worshiping the Lord. Such a negative attitude towards the Lord is called *abhimāna*, pride, and it should be given up by the mature devotee. This is specified in the next verse.

Give up False Pride

*abhimānaś ca santyājyaḥ svāmy adhīnatva-bhāvanāt
viśeṣataś ced ājñā syād antaḥ-karaṇa-gocaraḥ (3)*

Feeling completely dependent on the Lord, one should give up false pride and material desires. Great endeavours should not be undertaken unless there is a specific order directly from the Lord, ascertained after serious deliberation.

Summary of Commentaries: The devotee should give up the false pride that the Lord did not fulfil his or her desires and therefore think, “Let me give up his service and go back to material enjoyment.” In all circumstances, one must feel completely dependent on the Lord. This feeling of dependence should be favourable and not unfavourable.



Photo of an unknown vaiṣṇavi. C. 1940's.

Prayer should be done in a mood of full dependence on the Lord



Unknown artist

Sri Vallabhacharya

Feelings of false pride come due to thinking of oneself as the controller of circumstances. Sri Vallabhacharya therefore advises that one should not overindulge in efforts to obtain material benefits. One should carefully consider (*antaḥ-karaṇa-gocaraḥ*) whether it was really an instruction from the Lord or whether it was simply one's cheating mind. Only after careful deliberation and firmly concluding that it is the Lord's desire should a devotee endeavour for the material result. This is the fifth type of wisdom one should have.

What if a particular order given by the Lord is unrelated to one's material life but favorable for his service? How far can we go in executing such tasks? Sri Vallabhacharya replies in the next verse.

For the Service of the Lord

*tadā viśeṣa-gatyādi bhāvyaṁ bhinnam tu daihikāt
āpad-gatyādi-kāryeṣu haṥhas tyājyaś ca sarvathā (4)*

If a particular service which is unrelated to one's worldly affairs has been ordered [by the Lord], then one should perform it by all means. In situations of emergency or extreme distress [in executing such services] one should give up false ego [and accept the circumstances as they are].

Summary of Commentaries: If a particular service has been ordered directly by the Lord, but that service does not pertain to one's material life,

then by all means one should endeavour to perform it. This is the sixth type of wisdom one must have.

Sometimes it is seen that the Lord orders a devotee to take care of a deity or to construct a temple. If one has been ordered in this way, one should try his best to fulfil such orders and should depend on the Lord for the provision of facilities and not go too much out of one's way to fulfil such orders. The sum and substance of this verse is that big projects for the Lord, which will bring about big trouble as well as big egos, should be completely given up at all times. Instead, if a service has been ordered by the Lord, one should execute it to the best of one's capacity while ensuring that one does not fall into any other miseries or troubles in life. The commentators say here that the mentality of, "I will take a loan and thereby complete my service," is incorrect and should be given up. This is the seventh type of wisdom one must have.

Now, if someone asks that since the Vedas are the direct word of the Lord, should one perform all the duties given in the Vedas? Sri Vallabhacharya replies in the next verse.

Detachment and Discrimination

*anāgrahaś ca sarvatra dharmādharma-gra-darśanam
viveko 'yaṁ samākhyāto dhairyaṁ tu vinirūpyate (5)*

One must keep a spirit of detachment while performing Vedic duties [that are not related to the Lord]. Also, while



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performing duties [which are unrelated to the Lord], one must keep *dharmā* and *adharmā* in one's mind. Wisdom has thus been explained by me, and now I will begin the explanation of the second quality — *dhairya*, patience.

Summary of Commentaries: Vedas are the word of God. All devotees following the rules of *varṇa* and *āśrama* should respect the word of God given in the Vedas. In the previous verse it was said that one must carry out the direct orders of the Lord but not necessarily those which are related to one's material life. The Vedas are the direct order of the Lord, and there are many prescribed duties related to material life given in the *śrutis* and *smṛtis*, especially for householders. How should one perform them? Or should one not perform them at all?

[**Note:** The point here is that many times the Vedas recommend worship of various demigods and goddesses for material prosperity that do not directly harm one's *bhakti* [although in a subtle way they may cause harm to one's development of devotion.] If performed, they should be done with detachment. Aside from that, there are some rituals in the mode of ignorance which involve meat eating and alcohol. These directly harm one's *bhakti* and must be avoided.]

Sri Vallabhacharya says that if one has to perform Vedic duties which are related to one's material life but which do not directly harm one's *bhakti*, one must execute them in a spirit of detachment (*anāgrahaḥ*). This is the eighth type of wisdom one must have.

Some Vedic duties might go directly against the principle of *bhakti*. In such cases, one must have a clear knowledge of *dharmā* (religiosity) and *adharmā* (irreligiosity) and one must not perform those Vedic duties which are against the principle of *bhakti* to the Lord. If, however, a Vedic duty is favorable to the Lord's *bhakti*, it must be performed by all means. This is the ninth type of wisdom that one must have.

In this way, Sri Vallabhacharya has described nine types of wisdoms that a mature devotee must have. In the next verse he will describe the principle of *dhairya* (patience) and the ways of tolerating the various difficulties in this world. [To be continued.] 🌸

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the *Viveka-dhairya-āśraya* with the commentaries of Sri Raghunath Charan, Sri Gopisha Goswami, Shri Gokulotsava and Sri Vrajaraya Charan. Unknown date.

