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Highlights

• ASSOCIATION AND HEARING

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• PREDICTION OF RELIGIOUS UNITY

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

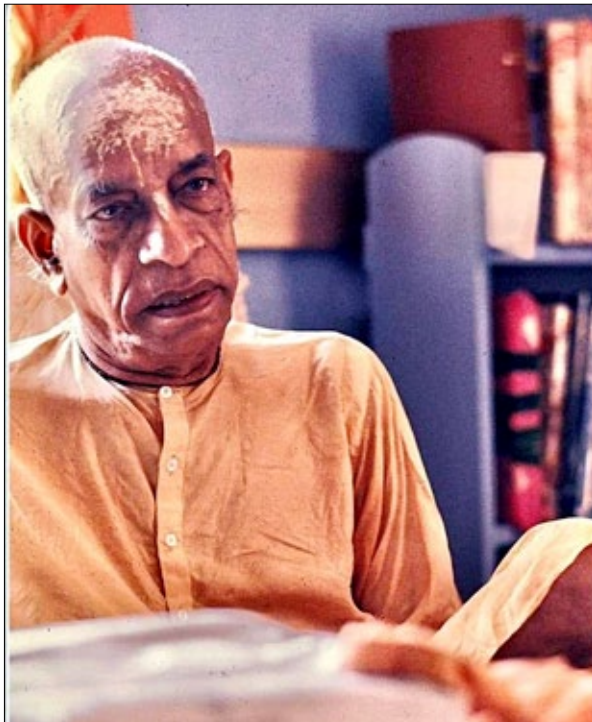
• WHY NO ADVANCEMENT?

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

• NAMA-TATTVA: DARSHAN THROUGH CHANTING

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

• FROM THE LIPS PART 2



ASSOCIATION AND HEARING

Comments from His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

Association

So although a physical body is not present, the vibration should be accepted as the presence of the spiritual master, vibration. What we have

heard from the spiritual master, that is living. (Lecture, 13 January 1969.)

Krishna and his representative are the same. Similarly, the spiritual master can be present wherever the disciple wants. A spiritual master is the principle, not the body. Just like a television can be seen in thousands of place by the principle of relay monitoring. (Letter to Malati, 28 May 1968.)

Hearing

The *Purāṇas* are also parts of the Vedas. And histories like the *Mahābhārata* or *Rāmāyaṇa* are also parts of the Vedas. The *ācārya* or the *gōsvāmī* must be well acquainted with all these literatures. To hear and explain them is more important than reading them. One can assimilate the knowledge of the revealed scriptures only by hearing and explaining. Hearing is called *śravaṇa*, and explaining is called *kīrtana*. The two processes of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* are of primary importance to progressive spiritual life. Only one who has properly grasped the transcendental knowledge from the right source by submissive hearing can properly explain the subject. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 1.1.6.)

Manu said that since he was advised and instructed by Kardama Muni, he was very much favored. He considered himself lucky to receive the message by aural reception. It is especially mentioned here that one should be very



Unknown photographer

Lord Nityananda Prabhu and his two wives Vasudha and Jahnava at Srivasanga in Mayapur

inquisitive to hear with open ears from the authorized source of the bona fide spiritual master. How is one to receive? One should receive the transcendental message by aural reception. The word *karṇa-randhraiḥ* means “through the holes of the ears.” The favor of the spiritual master is not received through any other part of the body but the ears. (Purport to *Bhāg.* 3.22.7.) 🌸

PREDICTION OF RELIGIOUS UNITY

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

Thakur Bhaktivinode has predicted the consummation of religious unity of the world by the appearance of the only universal church which bears the eternal designation of the Brahma Sampradaya. He has given mankind the blessed assurance that all theistic churches will shortly merge in the one eternal spiritual community by the grace of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Chaitanya. The spiritual community is not circumscribed by the conditions of time and space, race and nationality. Mankind had been looking forward to



Nāma-tattva

DARSHAN THROUGH CHANTING

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode

*yabe nāma-rūpe aikya hayata sādhanē
nāma laite rūpa āise citte sarva-kṣaṇe*

When the Lord’s name and form become one in a devotee’s practice, he then sees the Lord’s form in the heart constantly as he chants.

— Śrī *Harināma-cintāmaṇi* 15.44. English translation by Jan Brzezinski. Unpublished manuscript.



this far-off divine event through the long ages. Thakur Bhaktivinode has made the conception available in its practicable spiritual form to the open-minded empiricist who is prepared to undergo the process of enlightenment. The keystone of the arch has been laid which will afford the needed shelter to all awakened animation under its ample encircling arms. Those who would thoughtlessly allow their hollow pride of race, pseudo-knowledge, or pseudo-virtue to stand in the way of this long hoped for consummation would have to thank only themselves for not being incorporated in the spiritual society of all pure souls. 🙏

— Excerpted from an article titled, “Thakur Bhaktivinode”.
Published in *The Harmonist*, December 1931, vol. XIX no.6.

WHY NO ADVANCEMENT?

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

One may ask, “I have been hearing and chanting for many years. I have been carrying out the order of *sādhus*, gurus, *vaiṣṇavas* for many years. Why am I still not making any advancement on the path of devotional service?”

In answer to this, Jiva Goswami has said in his *Bhakti-sandarbha* that one may not be making advancement because in his heart there is duplicity and crookedness. It is in a subtle corner, not in a gross form. Although you have been performing *śravana* and *kīrtana*, hearing and chanting, and you may be offering some service, still you cannot make any advancement. Jiva Goswami also states that although for hundreds of lives you may offer worship to Lord Vishnu, but if you disrespect a *vaiṣṇava*, a dear devotee of Lord Vishnu, then Lord Hari will never be pleased with you.

You are duplicitous. You have not got complete faith, strong faith. Maybe you have a little faith — soft, pliable faith — but not unflinching faith. You have some desires other than *bhakti* and thus your attention is diverted to material objects, women, money, etc. You are not careful about your *bhajana*, you show laziness in your *sādhana*, and you are a very great, puffed-up fellow. “Yes, I am a seni or devotee. Don’t you know?” Such a big false ego you have. “I have done this and that. And that, and other things.” You have so much *dambha*, pride.

This is a great disease with you. Although you are hearing from a *sādhu*, a *vaiṣṇava*, the disease is not cured. Then you should understand that you have committed many, many offenses. 🙏

— Lecture, Bhubaneswar, 21 April 1995.

FROM THE LIPS PART 2

Levels of Sound

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.12.17), Krishna explains the various types of sound and the difference between gross and subtle forms of sound:

*sa eṣa jīvo vivara-prasūtiḥ
prāṇena ghoṣeṇa guhām praviṣṭaḥ
mano-mayaṁ sūkṣmam upetya rūpaṁ
mātrā svarō varṇa itī sthaviṣṭhaḥ*

The Supreme Lord said: I am the Lord who gives life to every living being. Manifesting in the various *cakras*, I enter the *mulādhāra-cakra* of Brahma along with *prāṇa* phase of subtle *parā* sound. I then rise to the *maṇipūra-cakra* in the mental phase as *paśyantī* and to (the *anāhata-cakra*, the intellectual phase) in subtle form as *madhyamā*. I then take the gross form of short and long sounds, different intonations, and the syllables of the alphabet.

In his *Bhāvārtha-dīpikā* commentary on this verse, Srila Sridhar Swami quotes *Ṛg Veda* (1.164.45):

*catvāri vāk-parimitā padāni
tāni vidur brāhmaṇā ye manīṣiṇaḥ
guhāyām trīṇi nihitāni neṅgayanti
turīyaṁ vāco manuṣyā vadanti*

Learned Brahmins know that there are four stages in the evolution of sound. Three of these remain hidden within the heart as imperceptible vibrations, while the fourth stage is what people ordinarily understand as speech or words.

In his *Sārārtha-darśini* commentary on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.12.19), Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur further explains these stages of sound:

Speech is measured in four phases. Three of the phases are called *parā* (or highest degree). They are situated in *prāṇa* at the base of the spine, *paśyantī*, in the mind in the navel, and *madhyamā* situated in intelligence in the heart. The sages do not reveal their forms. The fourth, called *vaikharī*, is [external] speech in the vocal organ.

When a pure devotee speaks, all the levels of sound are present and according to the level of receptivity of the listeners they purify on different levels. That purification only takes place when the sound is vibrated by the transcendental *prāṇa*, mind, intelligence and senses of the pure devotee. When the sound is recorded,

the machine captures only an imitation of *vaikharī* (gross sound) because a machine has no *prāna*, no mind, and no intelligence capable of recording the deeper levels of the vibration. The vibration may also be symbolically recorded in the form of letters on a page. Yet, again, the actual vibration is absent.

For this reason, in *Bhakti Sandarbha* (262) Srila Jiva Gosvami has explained that there are different degrees of power and benefit in different types of hearing.

atraiva vivecanīyam - śrī-bhagavan-nāmādeḥ śravaṇam tāvat paramam śreyaḥ. tatrāpi mahad-āvirbhāvita-prabandhādeḥ. tatra mahat-kīrtyamānasya tato 'pi śrī-bhāgavatasya.

Regarding hearing, the following should be considered: Hearing the names, forms, qualities, and pastimes of the Lord by one's own strength is the greatest benefit. Even in such hearing, there is even greater benefit in hearing the literature composed by great devotees. If these very literatures are sung by their respective authors, then that is even more beneficial. Compared to hearing literature composed by great devotees, there is even greater benefit in hearing *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* from such great devotees.

Srila Prabhupada also made a distinction between the efficacy of hearing via a recording, phone, or a “gramophone speaker”; and hearing from an authorized person:

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Unknown photographer

Footprints of Nityananda Prabhu at Ambika Kalna

We have to hear not from a telephone but from an authorized person, for it is he who has real knowledge. (Purport to Cc. ādi 7.107.)

The separated energy can be understood from a practical example. I compose books by speaking into a dictaphone, and when the dictaphone is replayed, it appears that I am speaking personally, but actually I am not. (Purport to Cc ādi 7.119.)

Unless one is *svānubhavam*, self-realized, [unless his] life is *Bhāgavat*, he cannot preach *Bhāgavat*. That will not be effective. A gramophone will not help. ... A gramophone will not help. If you want to read *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* you must approach a person who is living *Bhāgavat*. (Lecture in Rome. 27 May 1974.)

When you play back it will speak just like I am speaking, but I am not there. (Room conversation in London. 10 August 1971.)

If you simply become a gramophone speaker, then it will not be effective. Gramophone or tape recorder speaker, that will not be. You must be a live speaker. Your living condition should be spiritually what is called “surcharged”. So that means you must be trained up how to rise early in the morning, take your bath, cleanse yourself, chant *Hare Kṛṣṇa* mantra. Then you will be spiritually strong. When you are spiritually strong, if you speak something on spiritual subject matter, then it will be effective. Otherwise it will be just like a tape recorder playing. So this is required. (Room Conversation in Mauritius. 5 October 1975.) 🍌 — MD

(To be continued)

