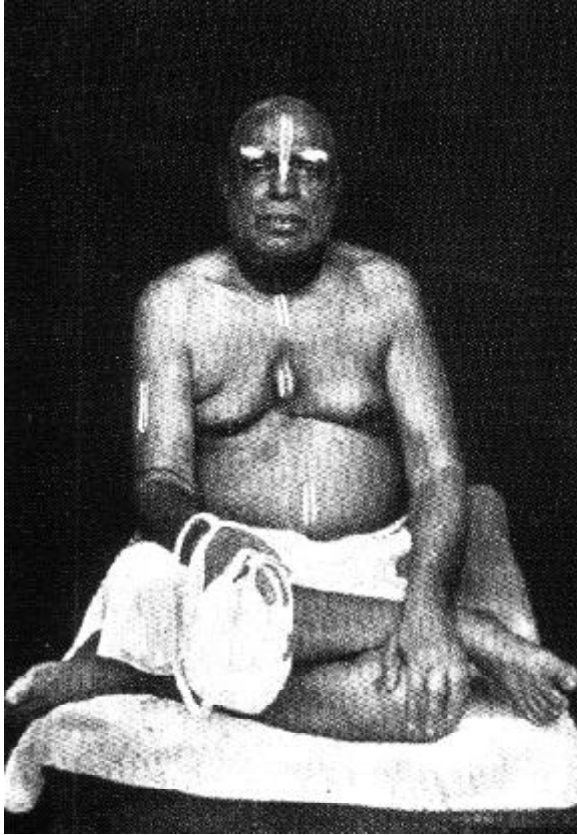


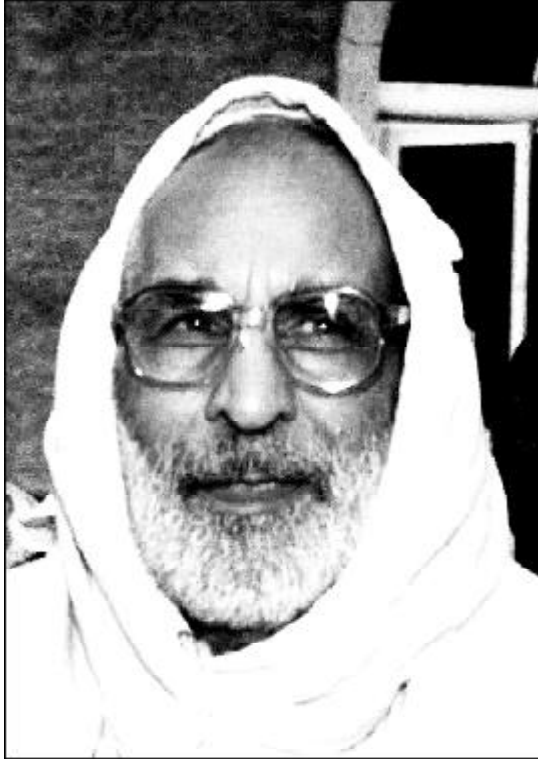
CONFIDENTIAL SECRETS OF BHAJANA



**AN OVERVIEW OF
SRILA BHAKTIVINODA THAKURA'S
SRI BHAJANA-RAHASYA**

Lectures given during Kartika in Vrindavan;
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INTRODUCTION

During these next few morning classes I will explain some helpful points from *Bhajana-Rahasya*. This is a wonderful collection of verses and instructions by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. First, we will read the introduction by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada writes, "I have seen Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura doing *bhajana* day and night." He knew how Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura used to do *bhajana*, because his eyes were not like ours. Our eyes can only see the material world, but Srila Prabhupada's eyes were transcendental, and he could see the unmanifest, spiritual world as well. So he is telling us a little about how Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura used to do *bhajana*. We cannot understand these things by ourselves, but if Prabhupada and our Guruji have mercy on us, we can understand something.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Thakura is bestowing his mercy through this introduction. He was always with Bhaktivinoda Thakura, and he writes, "This *akincana* has seen Bhaktivinoda Thakura in Svananda Sukhada Kunja in Godruma, and also in Jagannatha Puri. I have seen him doing his *bhajana* in a very grave and deep mood, with *astasattvika bhava*." While performing his *bhajana*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura would always remember the *slokas* that he collected in this book. Srila Prabhupada will explain these *slokas* and something about the moods contained in them.

ARCANA AND BHAJANA

First of all, Srila Prabhupada explains the difference between *arcana* and *bhajana*. Nowadays, about ninety-five percent of devotees think that *arcana* and *bhajana* are the same. But Srila Prabhupada explains that *arcana* and *bhajana* are not one and the same; there is a great deal of difference between them. We

can compare them to different levels of education. The education that we get in the lower classes of school is not the same as the education we get in the graduation classes, although both come in the category of education. So we see that there are different sorts of education; it's not all the same. In the same way, there is a difference between *bhajana* and *arcana*.

To understand the difference, we must first understand the relationship between them. *Bhajana* means *samagra-bhajana*, the aim and object of the whole practice of *bhajana*. *Arcana* is *bhajana anga*, a limb of *bhajana*, and it is also a limb of *uttama-bhakti*, pure *bhakti*. Most devotees do not know all these deep meanings, and they think that *bhajana* and *arcana* are one and the same. The difference between *bhajana* and *bhajana anga* is the difference between the whole and one of its parts. Srila Prabhupada explains so many very deep things. We should try to understand this *siddhanta*, because unless we do, we cannot progress in *bhajana*.

THE KANISTHA-ADHIKARI

How can we tell whether devotees are performing *arcana* or *bhajana*? It depends on their qualifications. You know that there are three levels of devotees—*kanistha*, *madhyama* and *uttama*. Devotees are classified differently according to their *adhikara* or qualifications. First of all, Srila Prabhupada says that *kanistha-adhikaris* perform *arcana*. That is what has been prescribed for them.

In order to qualify even as a *kanistha-adhikari*, we must first have *sambandha-jnana*, knowledge of the essential *tattvas* and the relationship between them. Someone may think that he is performing *arcana*, but if he doesn't have *sambandha-jnana*, it is not *arcana*. In fact, unless he has *sambandha-jnana*, he is not performing *bhakti* at all. Someone may be chanting *harinama*, doing *sravanam*, *kirtanam*, *visnu-smaranam*, *arcanam*, *vandanam*,

dasyam, sakhyam, atma-nivedanam. Still, unless he has *sambandha-jnana*, he is not even *kanistha-adhikari*. One is *kanistha-adhikari* as soon as he has a little *sambandha-jnana*, even if it is not full. Then he can perform *arcana*, but not *bhajana*.

Srila Prabhupada now explains more about the *kanistha-adhikari*. We have mentioned the difference between the *prakata* (manifest) world and the *aprakata* (unmanifest, spiritual) world. A devotee has *kanistha-adhikara* as long as he has no actual *aprakrta* realisation. That is to say, the paraphernalia that he uses in his service are all of this world, and he is also in this world, and his mind is also in this world. He has some *sraddha* (faith) by *sadhu-sanga*, by associating with pure devotees, but his realisation has not deepened yet. At this stage, his offerings and all his various types of service are in the category of *arcana*.

There are different ways of offering worship. We may use eight different articles, twelve different articles, or sixteen different articles: for instance *padya* (washing the feet), *arghya* (offering auspicious substances), *acaman* (offering sips of water), *asana* (sitting place), *snana* (bathing), *vastra* (clothes), *bhusana* (decorating), *malya* (offering garlands), and then *arati* by *dhupa* (incense) and *dhipa* (lamps), and offering *naivedya* (foodstuffs) and *puspanjali* (handfuls of flowers). When the *kanistha-adhikari* makes offerings of this sort, it is called *arcana*.

SERVICE IN AN INTIMATE MOOD

Srila Prabhupada writes, *maryada mule bhagavata seva-arcana*. *Maryada* means acting with reverence, according to regulations and standards, and not transgressing the laws. Generally, in the beginning a devotee worships Krsna with *sambrahma-jnana* or *aisvarya-jnana*. That means that he knows about Krsna's opulences, and therefore has great respect for Him. He thinks, 'Krsna is so high, and I am so low. I should have reverence for Him. He is our *upasya*, our worshipful

Deity. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and He has so many opulences, especially the six chief opulences. His form is *saccid-ananda vigraha*, and He is *sarva-karana-karanam*, the Cause of all causes. As for myself, I am a very little, insignificant particle of Him, always sinking in the ocean of *maya*. So how can I serve Him?

Akanistha-adhikari has the same reverential attitude towards his Gurudeva. He serves his Gurudeva thinking, 'He is our Gurudeva. He so high, and I am so low.' Sometimes he thinks, 'I am doing service, and this is *seva*.' He may be massaging his Gurudeva's feet, giving him *prasadam* and everything, performing so much service for him. But actually this is not *seva*. Properly speaking, the *kanistha-adhikari* only has the *adhikara* to perform *arcana*, not *bhajana*. Sometimes we refer to that *arcana* as if it were *bhajana*, but it is not; it is *arcana*.

Next Srila Prabhupada talks about *visrambha-seva*, or service in an intimate mood. As the devotee progresses and realises more *siddhanta*, his sense of awe and reverence becomes less prominent it is still there to some extent, but he now has a more intimate sense of relationship with his Gurudeva and with Krsna. This becomes more important and more prominent than his awe and reverence. Now he can perform *visrambha-seva*, which is the highest stage. Service in awe and reverence is like the rays of the sun, but in *visrambha-seva*, the glaring intensity of those rays has been reduced. *Visrambha-seva* is like cool and refreshing moonlight; service in that mood is so pleasing and lovely. Those who are in *visrambha-bhava* serve with great affection, rather than with a sense of reverence. They think that they are on an equal level to their Gurudeva or Krsna. Service on that level is very high, much higher than the service of those who have more reverence. The third item in Srila Rupa Gosvami's list of sixty-four kinds of *bhakti-anga* is *priti-purvaka-guru-seva*, to serve Gurudeva with a sense of intimate affection, free from awe and reverence.

WHEN BHAKTI BECOMES BHAJANA

Srila Prabhupada now explains more about the important difference between *arcana* and *bhajana*. *Arcana* is performed with the gross, physical body and the subtle, mental body. That means that the particular mood and mentality connected with the gross and subtle bodies are still more or less there. But in *bhajana*, the devotee's particular mentality and physical conditioning are diminishing, and his *sambandha-jnana* and *aprakata* mood are becoming more prominent. Finally, when devotees like Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami perform *bhajana*, all connection with the gross and subtle body has disappeared. The *sarira* or body with which they are serving Krsna and His associates is the spiritual body. It is identical with the *atma* or soul.

This is the real difference between *arcana* and *bhajana*. In *arcana*, the gross and subtle material bodies are prominent, but in *bhajana* it is the spiritual body, the *atma*, which is serving Krsna.

Srila Prabhupada explains the same thing in a different way. In *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu* (1.1.12) (from *Sri Narada-Pancaratra*), we read:

*sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam tat-paratvena nirmalam
hrsikena hrsikesa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

“Being completely freed from all *upadhis* or material desires for designations, and being completely devoted to the service of the Lord, and pure of the clouds of *jnana*, *karma*, *yoga* and so on, one is able to serve Hrsikesa, the Lord of all senses, with all one's senses-this is called *bhakti*.”

Sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam: when all the *upadhis* (material designations) go away, then *bhakti* actually becomes *bhajana*. We can see this in the moods of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Gaurakisora dasa Babaji Maharaja, Srila Vamsidasa Babaji Maharaja and other great devotees. Outwardly they were

collecting flowers, and behaving just like ordinary devotees, like Vamsidasa Babaji Maharaja performing *arcana* to his Deities.

Srila Prabhupada established many *mathas* and established *arca-vigraha*, Deities, in them. He instructed his devotees to perform *arcana*, and sometimes he performed *arcana* himself.

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami also performed *arcana*. But we shouldn't think that their *arcana* is like the *arcana* of the *kanistha-adhikari*. No! They did not have any physical or mental conditioning. Their *arcana is seva*, and it comes directly from Krsna's associates in Goloka Vrndavana. That is called *suddha-sattva*. When we receive this *suddha-sattva*, then we can do *bhajana* fully, and then we can refer to our service as *seva*. And as long as we do not have this *suddha-sattva*, all the activities we perform are bound to be *arcana*.

Srila Bhaktinoda Thakura has written *Bhajana-Rahasya* for those who want to perform *bhajana*. In his introduction to the book, Srila Prabhupada also explains how to enter into *bhajana*, and how to perform *bhajana*. He explains the *rahasya*, the hidden secrets and confidential instructions regarding *bhajana*. He has tried to give everything. Unfortunately, he can't give us everything, because we are unable to understand. Still, at least we can understand something about the beginning of *bhajana*, and that will help us to enter into it. We should also understand that Srila Prabhupada is explaining how to enter into *bhajana* from *arcana*.

BHAJANA AT THE END OF THE NIGHT

We have heard of *asta-kaliya bhajana*, remembering Radha and Krsna's pastimes during the eight periods of the day and night. Srila Prabhupada now begins to talk about *nisanta-bhajana*, but we have to understand what he actually means when he talks about *nisanta-bhajana*. The Gosvamis have described the *asta-kaliya-lila* in Vraja. The first part of *asta-kaliya-lila* is *nisanta-*

lila, the pastimes at the end of the night, when Radha and Krsna are waking up. But these topics are too high for us to enter immediately. When Srila Prabhupada talks about *nisanta-lila*, there is a deep meaning behind his words. He means that we are conditioned souls, sleeping in illusion.

We were asleep, full of all kinds of *anarthas* and offences. In this condition we don't know anything, but now we are waking up. This is what Srila Prabhupada means when he talks about *nisanta-lila*. By good fortune, we may receive *ahaituki-krpa*, the causeless mercy of some qualified Vaisnava and of Gurudeva, as well as the causeless mercy of Krsna. By that causeless mercy we may obtain the association of a bona fide, qualified Vaisnava. Then the mood of serving Krsna will come into our heart. That is called *seva-vasana*, and it is given by guru. When it comes into our heart, we receive *sraddha* at once.

We have read in Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's *Siksastaka* that *sraddha* is of two kinds. The first brings about the desire to follow the rules and regulations of scripture. The second type gives rise to the desire to follow the spontaneous service of the residents of Vrndavana. This is what Srila Prabhupada means when he talks about *nisanta bhajana*; it is the end of the dark night of our material illusion.

If we receive *sraddha*, but we do not have good association, our *sraddha* will not develop further; it will dry up instead. That is why we should try to have good association in the beginning, the middle and the end of our devotional service. Unless we have *sadhu-sanga*, the holy name that we are chanting will also dry up. As our *sraddha* dries up, we will become less and less inclined to perform *bhajana*. This principle of having *sadhu-sanga* is essential for all kinds of *bhakti*.

In *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu*, Srila Rupa Gosvami has given a list of sixty-four kinds of *bhakti-anga*, limbs of *bhakti*. The first, item is to take shelter of a bona fide guru, and the second is to receive *diksa* from him. The third item is *visrambhena guru-seva*, serving the guru with intimate affection, and the fourth

is *sadhu-vartmanuvartante*: following the path established by the *acaryas*. Srila Prabhupada emphasises this item in particular. It means that we have to understand how Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Srila Narottama Thakura, Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Prabhupada and our Gurudeva have performed *bhajana*. That is the path which must be followed; we will have to follow it.

LEAVING WORLDLY DESIRES

Srila Prabhupada has explained all these matters in this introduction, so we should listen patiently and attentively. Those who want to do *bhajana* like this should follow the instructions and example of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and all the previous *acaryas*. Now Srila Prabhupada explains that, to perform constant *bhajana*, we must become *niskincana*. A *niskincana* devotee is one who doesn't have any worldly desires. *Kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *matsarya* have all gone. *Niskincana* devotees completely follow the first *sloka* of Srila Rupa Gosvami's *Upadesamrta*: *vaco vegam manasah krodhah-vegam*. They have controlled anger, the urge to speak, and the demands of the tongue, the belly, the genitals, and the mind. They follow all the *slokas* of *Upadesamrta*. They also follow Sriman Mahaprabhu's *sloka* (4):

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagadisa kamaye
mama janmani janmanisoare
bhavatat bhaktir ahaituki tvayi*

These Vaisnavas are called *niskincana*, *akincana* Vaisnavas. *Niskincana* Vaisnavas will understand all these instructions. And if we want to be *niskincana* Vaisnavas and follow the path which the *niskincana* Vaisnavas have followed, then we should understand all these instructions as well.

Our first business is to try to give up all bad *sanga*. That means we have to give up the associations of *mayavadis*, *sahajiyas* and all kinds of *abhakta* (nondevotees). We should especially avoid those who are diving into sense gratification, worldly desires and worldly activity. We must give up their association, otherwise their worldly desires will enter our hearts, and we will go down again. If we act according to these standards, then we can perform *asta-kaliya-sadhana* and *bhajana*.

Otherwise it is not possible. No one can perform *bhajana* twenty-four hours daily unless he has left his worldly desires; has completely followed the first, second and third *slokas* of *Upadesamrta*; has followed *Manah-Siksa* from beginning to end; and is not an *akincana* Vaisnava. We can only perform *asta-kaliya-bhajana* when all kinds of desires and offences and *anarthas* have been removed.

If we want to serve Krsna, if we want to follow the disciplic path or way established by our gurus, we will have to give up all kinds of *bhoga* (material enjoyment), *tyaga* (false renunciation), and the association of all kinds of *abhaktas*. If we don't give up this association, it will become an obstacle to achieving our aim and object, which is to serve Krsna. Those who are *jnanis*, *karmis* and *yogis*—even those engaged in *misra-bhakti* rather than pure *bhakti*—cannot have even a little *ruci* (taste) in their *bhajana*, so they cannot honour this book. But those of us who want to enter into *Bhajana-Rahasya* must honour it, and follow its instructions. This is what we have come for.

Some of you are here because you heard the teachings of your Gurudeva, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. We have come here because we heard from our Gurudeva, Srila Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Maharaja. Some of you have come here after hearing from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. In any case, we have not come to fulfil our worldly desires. We have come for one purpose only, and that is to

serve Krsna. So if we want to serve, to engage in actual *seva*, we will have to give up all the unfavourable things that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura will explain later. We should read this book, and we should understand and practise everything that he is telling us. How can you preach, if you do not know all these things? You may try to preach, but what kind of preaching can you do?

WHAT IS OUR AIM AND OBJECT?

First try to understand all the instructions in this book. We must know what is the aim and object of our *sadhana-bhajana*. We must know whether we are only performing *arcana*, or whether we are actually trying to enter into *bhajana*. We may think that we are engaged in so much devotional service and so much preaching work, but we must be careful. If we are not trying to do *bhajana*, if we are not trying to enter into the realm of real *bhakti*, then all of these activities are *karmanga*. They are actually material activities.

We should learn all these very deep and secret meanings of *bhajana*. Only then should we try to help others. Otherwise, instead of helping others, we will sink down to their level.

DEEPER MEANINGS IN THE MAHA-MANTRA

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura points out that the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* consists of sixteen names in eight pairs. These eight pairs of names correspond to the eight *slokas* of *Sri Siksastaka*. The significance of the first pair of names 'Hare Krsna,' is defeating ignorance and performing *harinama* with faith (*sraddha*). If one performs *harinama* with *sraddha*, *avidya* will go away. *Avidya* is the opposite of *vidya*. *Vidya* means to know Krsna, and *avidya* means to forget Krsna. This is expressed in the first *sloka* of *Sri Siksastaka*. The second pair of names is also 'Hare Krsna.' The meaning of this second pair

of names is that Krsna has manifested in His names all the power and potencies which are in His *svarupa*. If one takes shelter of Krsna's name, and chants His name in *sadhu-sanga* (the association of pure devotees), he will develop attachment for *bhajana*. This will not happen otherwise. It is necessary to have past impressions (*samskara*) in order to start on this path. These past impressions are the result of activities in the past which have created faith, and which lead to *bhakti*. If we have those past impressions, it is possible to have *sadhu-sanga*, the association of pure devotees. As a result of this *sadhu-sanga*, the devotee may receive *harinama* and *diksa* from a qualified guru. Then he receives instruction, *siksa*. After that, his *anarthas* will go away if he performs *bhajana* with *sraddha* and *sambandha-jnana*, but not otherwise. If we chant *harinama* in this way, after most of our *anarthas* have gone, we reach the stage of *nistha*, firm faith and steadiness in devotional service.

The third pair of names is 'Krsna Krsna.' In this third stage, we consider the quality or character of our *sadhana*. *Caitanya Caritamrta* explains that there are some obstacles in *sadhana*, so our *sadhana* should be pure, not loose or impure. There are two things which are very much opposed to *bhakti-sadhana*. The first is *stri-sangi*. men being attracted to women, and women being attracted to men. The second obstacle is association with those who are *abhakta: mayavadis*, materialists, and everyone else who is opposed to pure devotional service. We must develop a very chaste character, and give up all these ideas, activities and bad association.

TASTE

If we continue to chant *harinama* with *nistha*, then the fourth stage comes, and we begin to chant *harinama* with *ruci*, taste. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that there are two kinds of *ruci*: *vastu-vaisisty-apeksini*, and *vastu-vaisisty-anapeksini*. When we have the first sort of *ruci*, *vastu-vaisisty-apeksini*, then

if Thakuraji is decorated, we think, 'Oh! Very good decoration!' and we feel so happy. But if Thakuraji is not nicely decorated, then we don't have so much taste. If a *kirtana* is going on without a nice rhythm and sweet tune, we will not have so much *ruci* for it. But if the rhythm and melody are good, and the *mrdanga* and *karatalas* are being played nicely, we appreciate it very much. This *ruci* is called *vastu-vaisisty-apeksini*.

The second type of *ruci* comes when we continue to chant *harinama* in *vaisnava-sanga* with *sradha* and *nistha*. This stage is called *vastu-vaisisty-anapeksini*. At this stage, we are not so concerned whether Thakuraji is decorated or not decorated. If a *kirtana* is without good rhythm and melody, then we think, 'No harm!' And if the playing and singing are expert, then 'Very good!' We can say that Srila Gaurakisora dasa Babaji Maharaja's *ruci* was like *vastu-vaisisty-anapeksini*. The same is true for Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He did not see Jagannatha Deva in the way that we see Him. We see Jagannatha Deva as being not so much like Krsna. He has two round eyes, no beautiful hands, no flute, no crown and no peacock feather. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu did not see Him like this. When He saw Jagannatha Deva, He ran after Him, without external sense, to catch hold of Him. We will see that Jagannatha has two big round eyes, and that He is not so very beautiful, but Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu saw Him as *saksad* Vrajendra-nandana, directly Sri Krsna, the son of Nanda Maharaja. On another occasion, He heard a *deva dasi* singing *Gita-Govinda: srita kamala kuca mandala e, jaya jaya deva hare*. I can't say whether the singer was a pure Vaisnava like Madhavi Devi; maybe she was, and maybe she was not. In any case, she was singing in the forest and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ran after her. This is *ruci*. Of course, we can't compare Mahaprabhu with ourselves. He not only has *ruci*, but *mahabhava* and all the other ecstasies as well. I'm just giving this as an example of the difference between the two different types of *ruci*.

The fifth pair of names is 'Hare Rama' and at this fifth stage, *smarana* is also added. *Smarana* means remembering the pastimes of Krsna. In remembering these pastimes, we should know that there is an important difference between the pastimes in Vraja and the pastimes elsewhere. In Vraja, there is no *suddha dasya-rasa*, and no *suddha santa-rasa*. There is *santa-rasa*, but it is always covered. And *dasya-rasa* is also always mixed with *sakhya* or *vatsalya*.

The sixth pair of names is also 'Hare Rama.' At this stage, our *ruci* for the material world will decrease. Our worldly desires will go away and our *ruci* towards Krsna will become solid, and very strong.

Now for the seventh pair of names, 'Rama Rama.' There is no Hare here; only Rama: 'Rama Rama.' This is *vipralambha*. The devotee will feel the mood of separation (*vipralambha-bhava*) here: 'When will I have the service of Radha and Krsna?' That desire will come at this stage. Then the eighth pair of names is 'Hare Hare.' At this eighth stage, *suddha-sattva* will manifest itself, and that gives *gopi-bhava*. *Gopi-bhava* will come.

ACARYAS AND SAHAJIYAS

This is a very brief summary of the regular and systematic way of progressing on the devotional path. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is giving us the instructions that he has collected from *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu*, *Ujjoala-Nilamani* and all the other important books. He has also collected teachings and realisations from Srila Svarupa Damodara, from Srila Raya Ramananda and from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu at the Gambhira. Srila Svarupa Damodara personally instructed Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, who in turn gave these instructions to Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has collected all of these instructions, and is passing them on to us. This is the regular way to develop *gopi-bhava* and that type of *seva* to Radha and Krsna in

Vraja. As long as we follow the *acaryas* and practise in this way, we are on the regular, approved path. We want to go on like this. It is not *sahajiya* to have greed to develop in this way, and to have that *gopi-bhava*, service to Radha and Krsna in that mood. Not at all it is those who are not following this systematic process who are *sahajiyas*. Our aim and last goal is Srila Rupa Gosvami's mood.

If a devotee has a greed for this, it doesn't matter in what condition he is at present, or whether he is following rules and regulations; if he follows this path, then he will surely achieve his goal. But we should know dearly that this can only be achieved by the association of *arasika* and *tattva-jna* Vaisnava. Then the whole process will be managed by Krsna Himself and His associates. Our success depends on our having past impressions. Without them, we cannot realise these things.

Although this is the path Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura has given, many people ask me, "Why do you read *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu*, *Ujjvala-Nilamani*, and the books of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura? All of these books must be written by *sahajiyas*, because those who read them are all *sahajiyas*. So why do you read them?" Actually, this belief is false. The *acaryas* who wrote these books-Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami-are certainly not *sahajiyas*. They are the most authorised devotees, and they have described and explained our ultimate goal it is also not true that all those who read these books are *sahajiyas*. This is nonsense. Why should we not read these books?

Those who are qualified to read these books should read them. Qualified devotees will read *Vilapa-Kusumanjali*, *Vraja Vilasa-Stava*, "*Catu-Puspanjalih*" (from *Sri Stava-Mala*) and many other important works by the Gosvamis and other bona fide authors. We do not become *sahajiyas* by reading these books. The *sahajiyas* are those who gallop through all these states and stages, without hearing from authorities, without

understanding properly, and without being qualified. And if someone comes to them, they at once give that person so-called *siddha-deha*, spiritual body, whether he is qualified or full of *anarthas*. These are the *sahajiyas*, not those who pass step by step through the various stages which Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has described, and which are laid out in *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu*. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is not a *sahajiya*, and neither is Srila Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati, although he himself declared that he is Nayana Manjari. It is simply false to say that all those who read these literatures are *sahajiyas*.

Those who are qualified, and who progress systematically, step by step, should read all these literatures. This is the only way. The *sahajiyas* are those who do not follow the guidelines and the systematic path established by the *acaryas*. This is the main difference between *sahajiyas* and *suddha* Vaisnavas. We should try to be *suddha* Vaisnavas.

THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

At this point someone may ask why Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has described the results of chanting in this way. His reply is that it has been given like this in *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu* (1.4.15-16):

*adau sraddha tatak sadhu-sango 'tha bhajana-kriya
tato 'nartha-nivrttih syat tato nistha rucis tatak
athasaktis tato bhavas tatak premabhyudancati
sadhakanam ayam premnah pradurbhave bhavet kramah*

This is the step-by-step process. *Adau sraddha*; it all begins with *sraddha*, and that faith makes it possible to have *sadhu-sanga*. Then we may ask, "From where has *sraddha* come?" The answer is that *sraddha* comes from past impressions, which are the result of coming in touch with *tadiya*: people, places and things which have a direct relationship with the Lord.

Past impressions may have come from hearing about His name, His form, His qualities and His pastimes. Or we may have come in contact with Tulasi, Yamuna, Ganga, Giridhari, or the holy *dhama* – Vraja-dhama or Navadvipa-dhama. The contact may be knowing or unknowing, intentional or unintentional. In any case, coming in touch with any or all of the *tadiya-vastu* produces *sukrti*, and it is this *sukrti* which creates *sraddha*.

After *sraddha* comes *sadhu-sanga*. We will develop a taste to follow Vaisnavas, *sadhus*. But those who have no *sukrti* will not develop such a desire. I am speaking *hari-katha* here, and you are listening. But if someone has no past impressions, or they are making offences, or acting against the rules and regulations of *bhakti*, they will avoid this *hari-katha*. Even if they come and sit down here, they will either sleep, or they will be distracted by other concerns. The body may be sitting here, but the mind will be wandering here and there, thinking about so many problems. Only those with past impressions can appreciate *sadhu-sanga*. Actual *sadhu-sanga* means hearing and seeing how that *sadhu* is following the *bhakti* process, and trying to follow him internally and externally. When we have real *sadhu-sanga*, we will automatically practise all the nine kinds of *bhakti*, beginning with hearing: *sravanam*, *kirtanam*, *visnu-smaranam*, *pada-sevanam*, *arcanam*, *vandanam*, *dasyam*, *sakhyam*, *atma-nivedanam*. We will also automatically practise the five essential forms of *bhakti* that Lord Caitanya has particularly recommended: *sadhu-sanga* (associating with devotees), *nama-kirtana* (chanting the Lord's holy names), *bhagavata-sravana* (hearing from qualified Vaisnavas), *mathura-vasa* (living in holy places such as Mathura), *sri murti-sraddhaya-sevanam* (serving the *arca-vigraha* with faith). If someone is reading *Caitanya-Caritamrta* with any qualified Vaisnava, if he is hearing and doing *anusilanam*-cultivating Krsna consciousness by following his teacher and previous *acaryas* – I think that he is sure to have *lobha*, greed. It will surely come.

Then *bhajana-kriya* comes. The devotee watches how Gurudeva and the Vaisnavas are performing their *sadhana-bhajana*. Then he will develop a taste to follow by performing *sadhana-bhajana*, not only for one or two hours, but for eight hours. In the end, he will try to perform *sadhana* and *bhajana* twenty-four hours daily. Then *anartha-nivrtti* comes.

DEVELOPING ATTACHMENT

If someone who is not free from *anarthas* comes to me, it would be absurd to reveal his *siddha-svarupa*, or *siddha-deha* (spiritual body). That is *sahajiya*. Those who are following these rules of Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, who are trying for this in the proper way, will not be considered to be *sahajiya*. But if anyone is not following the rules and regulations, and not passing through all these stages, then they are bound to be *sahajiya*. When *nistha* has developed, the mind does not go here and there. It has been established in *sadhana-bhajana*, and it is no longer fickle. *Nistha* means *sthira-buddhi*, steady, fixed intelligence. When *nistha* has developed, the devotee is not disturbed even when so many opposing elements appear. We can see this in Srila Haridasa Thakura's life. The prostitute came to seduce him, but he remained fixed in his chanting and service. The Kazi ordered his servants, "Kill Haridasa Thakura by beating him in twenty-two market places." They were trying to kill him, but he said, "Even if I am cut into hundreds of thousands of pieces, I cannot forget *krsna-nama*. I will have to chant, no matter what happens. I will certainly keep on chanting."

This is *nistha*. No matter what kind of problem comes, the devotee remains steady. When Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was a young married man, he kept trying to escape from his home to join Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. His mother wanted his father to tie him up, but his father said, "It's useless, No one can check a devotee whose heart has been taken

by Kṛṣṇa. “ This is called *nistha*. We will have to judge by our barometer in what stage we are. Do we have *śraddha*, or has actual *śraddha* not appeared yet? Or are we at the stage of *nistha*, or *ruçi*? Have our *anarthas* gone, or are they still with us? We can easily know what stage we have reached by the symptoms. We’ll have to try to come at least to the stage of *nistha*. After this stage, *ruçi* appears, and after that *asakti* comes.

There are two kinds of *asakti*. One is attachment to *sadhana*, and the second is attachment to *sadhaniya*, the object of our *sadhana*, namely Kṛṣṇa and His associates. There are no hard and fast rules regarding which comes first, but usually the devotee develops attachment for *sadhana*. Mahāprabhu asked Śrīla Haridāsa Thākura, “What is your sickness? Why are you not taking *mahāprasāda*?” Haridāsa Thākura replied, “I am sick, certainly. But my sickness is that I cannot complete my three lakhs of *harināma*. My body is healthy. The trouble is with my mind and heart. And that’s why I’m not completing my three lakhs of *hari-nāma* daily.” Can we try like this? We should fulfil our vow to chant with a strong spirit, “I must complete my chanting. Whether I remain alive or I lose my life, I will have to complete my chanting.” If we are chanting with this determination, first of all *namābhasa* will come, and after that gradually, little by little, we will come to the stage of *asakti*.

After this *bhava* will come. To achieve *bhava*, we have to receive *suddha-sattva* from the hearts of *ragatmika-kṛṣṇa-jana*, the associates of Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. That *bhava* can be in *dasya-rasa*, or in *sakhya-rasa*, or in *vatsalya-rasa*. Or, if the devotee has greed for *madhurya-rasa*, and is performing the appropriate *sadhana* for it, then *suddha-sattva* will come from some *gopi*.

Next is the stage of *prema*. But this cannot appear in this body. It can only come in our next life, somewhere in the material world where *prakāta-līla* is going on. Then the *sadhaka* will take birth in the womb of a *gopi*. *Prema* can be achieved in that body, through the association of *nitya-siddha* devotees. Otherwise it is not possible.

ASSOCIATING WITH DEVOTEES

Those who are not following this process are the actual *sahajiyas*. Srila Rupa Gosvami has described this process, and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is illuminating it further. Later on, we will try to translate Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's book into English. It will be very, very useful, like *Madhurya Kadambini*, *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu-Bindhu*, and *Ujvala Nilamani*. It seems to be no more than a short booklet, but it's very forceful. Those who want *bhajana* will have to go through it.

Those who have no *sraddha* cannot have a taste for *sadhu-sanga*. A *sadhu* may come to someone who has no *sraddha*, and say, "Oh come on! Come on! I will give you everything. I will give you all my mercy." But that faithless person will pay no attention, even if Brahma himself or Srila Sukadeva Gosvami comes. If Srila Rupa Gosvami came and said, "Listen to me. I will teach you *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu*." The faithless person would say, "Who is he? He's cheating me." But those who have *sraddha* will have so much *ruci* for *sadhu-sanga*. They will put everything aside, and they will come at once to hear, as you are doing.

You are giving up your countries; you are giving up your families; you are giving up all kinds of comforts and material happiness. You are doing *parikrama* without shoes, without so many conveniences, and coming here at four o' clock. This is a good sign. It means that you have some *sraddha*. If you did not have *sraddha*, then you would not have come. There may be *anarthas*, but still, some taste has come. *sraddha* has come. So don't be hopeless. This is a very hopeful sign that we will be successful in the end. We must have *asa-bandha*, hope. We should have very firm and very strong faith that we will have this one day. Until that time, we will continue our *sadhana-bhajana* without stopping, and we will try to follow these steps very strongly. *Sadhu-sanga bale haya bhajanera siksa*. If we associate with *sadhus* who have a taste for *bhajana*,

then we will get *bhajana-siksa*, instructions on how to perform our own *bhajana*. If the *sadhu-sanga* is not bona fide, then kick it out “I want *bhajana*.” This must be our determination. So *sadhu-sanga bale haya bhajanera siksa*. If we are getting the association of some guru or Vaisnavas, but we are not receiving *bhajana-siksa*, and we are not learning how to surrender our heart to Krsna, then we cannot go on. That is why *bhajanera siksa sange namamantra-diksa*.

THE HOLY NAME AND DIKSA-MANTRAS

If we associate with a Vaisnava who gives us *bhajana-siksa*, the next stage is *nama-mantra-diksa*. Here *nama* means ‘Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna’ and *sri krsna caitanya prabhu nityananda* – these names, And *nama-mantra* means *guraya svaha*, or *klim krsnaya*, or *govindaya*. This is what we mean by *mantra*. It means *nama*, and *nama-mantra* both. *Nama* refers to the *maha-mantra*, and that can be chanted at all times, but there are some rules and regulations and *maryada* for chanting *mantra*. Its purpose is simply to purify our chanting of *nama*. That’s all. It is to increase our taste, and to help us develop our realisation of the *svarupa* of *nama*.

Chanting *nama-mantras* will help us to realise how Krsna’s holy name is *rasamaya*, pure *rasa*; how *nama* is *suddha*, completely pure; how *nama* is full of all kinds of pastimes of Krsna with the *gopis*, and with Yasoda Ma and the *sakhas*. Everything is there, but don’t think that we can realise all this by chanting *krsna-nama* alone. We must chant *nama-mantra* as well, if we want full understanding and realisation of what is in the Hare Krsna *mantra*. We can explain Krsna to some extent, but what about Hare Krsna? We can give thirty-two different explanations of the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*. Someone says, “Eighty-four different explanations?” Maybe. If Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came, He could explain it in eighty-four different ways, or even more than that. Everything is in

the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*: every aspect of *sadhana* and love of Krsna, *milana* (meeting) and *viraha* (separation). Everything is there, from the beginning stage of *sraddha*, to the last perfection of *maha-bhava*. And *nama* also contains all the varieties of *prema*, like *sneha*, *mana*, *pranaya*, *raga*, *anuraga*, *bhava*, *mahabhava*, *modana* and *madana*. Everything is there. All the pastimes of Krsna are also present in His name. That is why Srila Svarupa Damodara and Srila Raya Ramananda were tasting everything by chanting.

Here Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura summarises all the steps. He tells us that if we follow all these rules and regulations in our *bhajana*, and if we pass through all the stages that he has described, *anarthas* will go away and *bhava* will come in our hearts. Suppose that we are doing *bhajana* like this, and *bhava* has not yet manifest. If in the meantime we are engaged in *asat-sanga*, then *pratistha* (desire for name and fame) and *kutinati* (hypocrisy) will appear, and we will fall down. It is not that we will just fall down; these obstacles will make us fall down. So we must try to be very careful about this.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT - AVOIDING BAD ASSOCIATION

In *Bhajana-rahasya*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has shown very systematically how a *sadhaka* can achieve *krsna-prema*. No one can achieve *krsna-prema* unless they adopt this way, and proceed step by step along the path that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has shown us. He has just quoted this *sloka*:

*adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sango 'tha bhajana-kriya
tato 'nartha-nivrttih syat tato nistha rucis tatah
athasaktis tato bhavas tatah premabhyudancati
sadhakanam ayam premnah pradurbhave bhavet kramah*

(BRS 1.15-16 & *Caitanya-Caritamrta*, *Madhya* 23.14-15)

A devotee may be close to achieving *bhava*, but if he has association with *stri* or *stri-sangi*, then he will fall down. *Stri* does not only refer to women. For men it refers to women, and for women it refers to men. Men and women are both restricted from associating with the opposite sex. If we have the desire for women (or for men), for wealth, or for name and fame, then we can fall down even from the stage of *bhava*; so we must be very careful. If we want to ascend on this regular path, beginning with *sraddha*, and progressing to *nistha*, *ruci*, *asakti* and *bhava*, then we should try to avoid these impediments very carefully from the very beginning.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura instructs us to be very careful to give up all material association (*asat-sanga*). We should also give up the bad association of our materialistic mentality. This is most essential. Even if other people don't understand the dangers of bad association (*kusanga*), we should avoid it very carefully.

Sastra explains dearly how carefully we should avoid *kusanga*. Suppose you had to choose between *kusanga* on the one hand, and lions, tigers and crocodiles on the other hand. Which would you prefer? Or suppose that on one side there is the worship of demigods, and on the other side a huge fire. Ramanujacarya warned his followers strictly against demigod worship. He said, "If you were about to perish in a great fire, but you could take refuge in a nearby temple where people were worshipping the demigods, don't try to protect your life. Don't enter that temple. It would be better to die in the fire." We should prefer to die, rather than accept bad association. We should prefer snakes, or lions and tigers, because they are less dangerous than *kusanga*. We should try to be very careful to avoid all bad association.

The same warning applies to all sorts of *kusanga*: the desire for name and fame, the association of lusty people, the desire for wealth, or any material association or desire. There is no permanent harm if you are dying in a fire, or being eaten by

tigers, snakes and wild beasts; this will not destroy our impression of *bhakti*. But the association of lusty women or men, or *pratishta*, or wealth and material desires can uproot our impression of *bhakti*. So this *kusanga* is most dangerous.

The difficulty is that these different forms of material association are very sweet. Or rather, externally they seem to be very sweet. Actually they are not sweet at all; they are very dangerous, like slow poison. So we should try to avoid them very carefully.

Sometimes, many male and female devotees gather together in association of Vaisnavas just to select husbands and wives. This spirit is also very dangerous. By some good fortune, after *lakhs* and *lakhs* of births, we have now come into the association of Vaisnavas to practise *bhajana*. We shouldn't spoil this opportunity for ourselves, or distract other devotees and try to pull them away from their *bhajana*. Some devotees have special abilities which make them particularly vulnerable: for example, those who sing very sweetly, those who can give class very nicely, and speak very *rasika-katha*, and *pujaris* who can worship and dress the Deities very beautifully. They should be very careful, otherwise they will go down at once.

It is Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura who is giving all these instructions. If we want to do *bhajana*, we must follow him, because he is the Seventh Gosvami. He is instructing us from his experience of his own *bhajana-sadhana*, and he is telling us that we should do *bhajana*, without showing others that we are doing *bhajana*.

FOCUSING ON SADHANA-BHAJANA

Even *namabhasa*, the reflection of the pure holy name, can burn to ashes all kinds of sinful reactions, and all kinds of *anarthas*. Try to take the name of Krsna very purely and very affectionately, without any worldly desires. Follow this *bhakti-sloka* of Rupa Gosvami (BRS 1.1.11):

*anyabhilasita-sunyam-jnana-karmady-anavrtam
anukulyena krsnanusilanam bhaktir uttama*

Emphasise *sadhana-bhajana* and stay focussed on it. If you are always preaching, but not practising *sadhana-bhajana*, then your preaching will be like *karma*. Instead of making progress on this path, you will go down. When you have understood and realised all these teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the *gurus* in our disciplic succession, then you can preach something. You must be able to give it to others as a postman delivers a letter, without changing it, and you must not be involved in *avidya* or material activities. Then you can preach. But if you don't know anything, what can you preach? Certainly we must try to fulfil Mahaprabhu's instruction to do good for others: *janma sarthaka kari' kara para-upakara*. But first you should realise something in your own heart, and then you should preach if you are qualified for preaching. Otherwise your preaching will only be *karma*, and it will drag you down. A devotee may establish twenty centres throughout the world, and always be going here and there to manage them. But what will all his preaching and management accomplish if he is not doing any *sadhana* and *bhajana* at all, if he has no time to read all these Vaisnava literatures, and if he has no time to associate with advanced Vaisnavas? We should try to follow Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and preach as he has preached, as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura has preached, and as Srila Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja and our Guru Maharaja have preached. We should follow them and act as they have acted.

CLEANSING THE MIRROR OF THE HEART

We should follow the instructions of *Siksastaka* as Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is explaining them. We should do this sincerely, with great respect and honour, and with all our heart.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura now explains that the eight *slokas* in *Siksastaka* correspond to the eight periods of Krsna's daily pastimes. In Krsna's *asta-kaliya-lila*, there are eight different kinds of pastimes: *nisanta-lila* at the end of night; *pratah-lila* in the morning; *purvahna-lila* before noon; *madhyahna-lila* at midday; *aparahna-lila* in the afternoon; *sayahna-lila* in the evening; *pradosa-lila* before mid-night; and *nakta-lila* in the middle of the night. These eight different kinds of *lila* correspond to the eight *slokas* in *Siksastaka*.

If we are performing *sadhana-bhajana* but we see that we are not making proper advancement, then we should admit that there is some fault, and we should see where this fault lies. The fault may be in ourselves, or it may be that our association is faulty. We have to see where the difficulty is and act accordingly. If we think that the fault is ours, then we should try to reform. Or, if we see that we are not progressing further because our association is not good, then we must give up that association. We need the association of pure Vaisnavas. Sometimes our false ego prevents us from having the association of qualified Vaisnavas, and in that case we should give up that false ego as well.

We should begin by trying to do *bhajana* according to the first *sloka* of *Siksastaka*:

*ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava-mahadavagni-nirvapanam
sreyah-kairava-candrika-vitaranam vidyavadhu-jivanam
anandambudhi-varadhanam prati-padam purnamrtasvadanam
sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate sri krsna sankirtanam*

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains the significance of this first *sloka*. *Ceto-darpana-marjanam* means that by performing *bhajana* and chanting *harinama*, our *anarthas* go away. Then *maha-bhava-davagni-nirvapanam*: chanting the holy name removes all *klesas* (sufferings), including all stages of development of sinful reactions: *prarabdha*, *aprarabdha*, *kuta* and *bija*, as well as the ignorance (*avidya*) which is the root cause of

sinful activity. *Thensreyah-kairava-candrika-vitaranam*: all kinds of auspiciousness (*subha*) begin to appear. After that, Krsna's name is realised in the form of *vidya-vadhu-jivanam*. Krsna's name is non-different from Krsna, who is Himself the beloved of Srimati Radhika. Srimati Radhika is the final, topmost *vidya*: *mahabhava svarupini sri radha thakurani* (*Caitanya-Caritamrta, Adi 4.69*). *Vadhu* means wife or consort, and Srimati Radhika is also the topmost *vadhu*. This means that *vidya-vadhu* is Srimati Radhika Herself. Then who is *vidya-vadhu-jivanam*? *Jivanam* means life and soul, and Radhika's life and soul is Krsna. *Vidya-vadhu-jivanam* is therefore Krsna Himself, and *krsna-nama* is also the beloved of Srimati Radhika. One of Her forms is *bhakti*. This explains why Krsna's name is seen as *vidyavadhu-jivanam*.

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura presents a doubt which should be resolved. If a devotee adopts all these practices, then his *jiva-svarupa* manifests its *sampurna rupena nirmalam*, completely pure spiritual form. Now, the *jiva* is extremely minute, so we may think that his *svarupa-dharma* and his *ananda* must also be very minute. But Mahaprabhu says, *anandambudhi-varadhanam*: "*sankirtana* increases the ocean of bliss." How can this be? The answer is that, as long as the *jiva* has not taken full shelter of the lotus feet of Krsna, then his *dharma* and *ananda* are minute. However, when the *jiva* takes shelter of the Lotus feet of unlimited Krsna, then his *dharma* and *ananda* also become unlimited and infinite. So it is correct to say *anandambudhi-varadhanam*.

At that time, by the mercy of Krsna's *svarupa-sakti*, a pleasure-giving potency (*hladini-ortti*) comes into the heart of the *jiva*: *hladini-sara-ortti*. By the help of that potency, the ocean of *krsna-prema* expands in ever fresh and new ways, and the *jiva* relishes *rasa*: *prati-padam purnamrtasvadanam*. He tastes *dasya*, *sakhya*, *vatsalya* and *madhurya-rasa*. Don't think that only Krsna's *ananda* is unlimited, and that only He tastes all the *rasa*. No. The *jiva* also tastes *rasa*, as Krsna does. He is part of

Krsna, so he can also taste the *seva-rasa*. He can relish the beauty of Krsna. Even though the devotee doesn't want any *ananda*, still *ananda* comes, *lakhs* and *lakhs* of times more than he wants. If we have some musk, the aroma will come into our nose, even if we don't want to smell it. We are bound to smell it. And just as musk always spreads its perfume, similarly there is always pleasure in Krsna's association, so how can we avoid pleasure when we are with Him? Pleasure will come, even though it is not our intention to have it.

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura presents another doubt to be resolved. Any desire (*anyabhilasa*) other than *bhakti* is an obstacle. But if the *jiva* tastes pleasure while performing *bhakti*, then that *bhakti* will go away; so how can a *jiva* taste the pleasure of *bhakti*, either here or in Goloka Vrndavana? It seems that the pleasure of devotional service opposes the purity of devotional service. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura resolves this doubt as follows. It is true that we find pleasure in serving Krsna. However, *sarvatma-snapanam*. *Krsna-prema* is so pure, and purer than pure, that there is actually no sense gratification in it. For example, we see that the *gopis* meet with pleasure, even when they don't want it. Some of the *gopis*, like Rupa Manjari and Rati Manjari, don't want to meet with Krsna and play with Him, or to have *vilasa* with Him. But Srimati Radhika wants this to happen, and She arranges their meeting with Krsna. They don't want any pleasure, but the pleasure comes automatically, and they can't avoid it.

THE SPIRITUAL BODY

Try to practise *bhajana* following the first *sloka*, *ceto-darpana marjanam*, in the way that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has told us. Then we should follow the instructions of the second *sloka*, *namnam akari*; and then the third *sloka*, *trnad api sunicena*. After that we should practise *bhajana* according to the fourth

sloka, and then in the fifth stage—corresponding to the fifth *sloka*, *ayi nanda-tanuja*—our *siddha-svarupa* or *siddha-deha* will appear. Those who are trying to develop their *siddha-deha* without following this process are *sahajiya*; and those who are following this process are not *sahajiya*.

The fifth *sloka* describes the appearance of the *siddha-deha* at this stage (*Siksastakam* 5):

*ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram
patitam mam visame bhavambudhau
krpaya tava pada-pankaja
sthita-dhuli-sadrsam vicintaya*

What is that *siddha-deha*? In this fifth stage, the devotee may not see it vividly, but he can realise it to some extent by the grace of his Gurudeva. “This is my original spiritual form, this is my name, this is my eternal service,” and so on. Some people deny that we should follow this process: “Oh, my Guru Maharaja told me that we should stay as we are, and continue doing book distribution and our other services. We shouldn’t bother ourselves about *siddha-svarupa*, and *bhava* and *prema*.” This denial is completely against Gaudiya Vaisnava *siddhanta*. If someone thinks in this way, and does not try to attain the perfectional stage, then he is not following the process of *bhakti* as Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has presented it. And if any newcomer goes to a *babaji* Gurudeva, and the *babaji* at once gives him *sahajiya-bhava*, his so-called *siddha-svarupa*, then he is a *sahajiya*. Both these courses of action are completely wrong.

What is our *siddha-deha*? It is *radha-palya-dasi*, the form of a maidservant of Srimati Radhika. This is the best *siddha-deha*. And we will attain it by following all these principles. We can’t make progress on this path—what to speak of reaching the goal—if we don’t understand these instructions, and we don’t follow this process; or if we have another understanding and we follow some other process.

When we reach the sixth stage, which Mahaprabhu describes in the sixth *sloka*, it means that we have come to the platform of *bhava-avastha*. *Suddha-sattva* comes at that stage. This is actual *siddha-deha*. Don't pretend that you have come to this stage before it manifests itself naturally. If an unqualified person artificially imagines that he is in his *siddha-deha*, he will fall down. Some people simply imagine that their *siddha-deha* has appeared, without following this authorised process, and without coming up to this stage of real *siddha-deha*. They are *sahajiya* and they are falling down. If we want to be *siddha*, then we have to develop the qualities and character of a *siddha*. We must try to follow in the footsteps of devotees like Srila Haridasa Thakura, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Bilvamangala Thakura.

When our *siddha-deha* has appeared, we will first know our name, then our form, and then our qualities and associates. If we go on chanting and remembering, and keeping the association of bona fide Vaisnavas, then Krsna's name will appear as Krsna Himself. At that time we will realise Krsna's form, and our own form as well. All the qualities of Krsna and Srimati Radhika and Their associates will become manifest, and so will our own qualities. After that, all of Krsna's pastimes will appear within our heart automatically, like a garland, one pastime following after another, without any effort on our part.

First of all, we should remember the *slokas* of *Siksastaka* and perform *kirtana* and *smaranam*. Then *asta-kaliya-lila* will gradually appear in our heart. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that if we follow these steps systematically, in order, *krsna-prema* will develop automatically. That is why we should try to understand these instructions and follow them carefully. If we do, then we will lose all our desire for the goals of material existence: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksa*. We will completely lose interest in any kind of liberation or material happiness.

THE GOAL OF SADHANA AND BHAJANA

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has explained something very important in connection with this first period of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes: we must know what is the aim and object of our life of *sadhana* and *bhajana*. We must have greed, a strong desire, to do *bhajana*. Only then will our *bhajana* start. If we don't intend go anywhere in particular, then where will we go? If I sit on a train or an airplane without a ticket, not knowing where I want to go, where will I end up? We must know the aim and object of our *bhajana*, and then *sadhana* can begin. Otherwise, it is not possible. We cannot achieve the *sadhya*, the final goal, if we have no idea what it is, or what is the *sadhana*, the means to attain it. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that the aim of our *sadhana* and *bhajana* is *radha-dasyam*. There are many kinds of *radha-dasyam*, so he explains more specifically. We especially want *radha-dasyam* in the service of Srila Rupa Gosvami, and under his guidance. That is the *radha-dasyam* that we want. Now that we understand what our goal is, we can take up the process to achieve it. And the process is to practise *bhajana-sadhana* as we have been describing it.

There is a great deal of difference between *sadhana* and *bhajana*. I have already explained something about this in previous classes. First I explained about *arcana* and *bhajana*. *Arcana* is different from *bhajana*, but *arcana* also makes us think of *bhajana*, and leads to the practice of *bhajana*. Therefore we must give up any practice of *arcana* which does not lead us to *bhajana*. Similarly, if we practise *sadhana* without knowing what the ultimate goal is, or without desiring to attain it, that type of *sadhana* cannot take us to *bhajana*. So our practice of *sadhana* should also lead us into *bhajana*.

There are three stages of *bhakti*: *sadhana-bhakti*, *bhava-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti*. Even when we are practising *sadhana-bhakti*, we should know that the goal is *bhava-bhakti*. *Bhava-bhakti*

begins when *suddha-sattva* comes into our hearts by the mercy of Radha and Krsna and Their associates and pure devotees. On the platform of *bhava*, we will just get a faint glimmer (*abhasa*) of *prema-seva*. When we come to the stage of *prema*, then it will develop in full, through the progressive stages of *prema, sneha, mana, pranaya, raga, anuraga* and *bhava*.

CHANTING THE HOLY NAME

In *Bhajana-Rahasya*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains the hidden content of *Sri Siksastaka*. The daily pastimes of Krsna take place in eight periods (*yama*), which together make up twenty-four hours. These eightfold pastimes are all contained in the eight *slokas* of *Siksastaka*. So also are *sambandha, abhidheya*, and *prayojana*. The eight stages of *sadhana-bhajana* (*sraddha, sadhu-sanga, anartha-nivrtti, nistha, ruci, asakti, bhava*, and *prema*) are also to be found in the eight *slokas* of *Siksastaka*.

Those who have not yet achieved *bhava* cannot yet realise their *siddha-deha*, spiritual body. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura tells us that we should try to practise *sadhana*. He explains that there is a difference between *arcana* and *sadhana*, and a gain between *sadhana* and *bhajana*. We must understand this and realise what the difference is. If we do not realise this difference, and if we do not adopt the proper procedure, we will not be able to give up our offenses and progress nicely. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura now gives some guidelines to follow while chanting Hare Krsna *nama*. For example, he explains what we should think while we are chanting. I want to try to explain this, because so many devotees have asked many questions about how to chant.

KRSNA AND HIS HOLY NAME

The *Upanisads* and *Vedas* tell us that Krsna is unmanifest (*avyakta*) and beginningless (*anadi*). We also know that *omkara*

is identical with that *nirguna-brahma* aspect of Krsna, but that Krsna Himself is far superior to *omkara*. Krsna is:

*janmady asya yato 'nvayad itaratas carthesv abhijnah svarat
tene brahma hrdaya adi-kavaye muhyanti yat surayah*

(*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.1.1)

There are three aspects of that Bhagavan, or Parabrahman. They are Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan. Krsna is Svayam Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Paramatma is a part of the *sat* and *cit* aspects of Krsna, and Brahman is only *cit*, and is a reflection of Krsna. In the syllable *om* there are three letters: *a*, *u* and *m*. The letter *a* represents three names: Hare, Krsna and Rama. This letter *a* is Krsna; the letter *u* is Srimati Radhika, His potency; and *m* is the *jiva*. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura gives some explanation of the meaning of the Hare Krsnamaha-mantra. When we chant *Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare, we are calling out, Hey Hare! Hey Krsna! Hey Hare! Hey Krsna! Hey Krsna! Hey Krsna! Hey Hare! Hey Hare! Hey Hare! Hey Rama! Hey Hare! Hey Rama! Hey Rama! Hey Rama! Hey Hare! Hey Hare!*

As I explained yesterday, the *maha-mantra* contains eight pairs of names and thirty-two Sanskrit letters in all. Each name that we chant has its own separate and distinct meaning. In fact, each Sanskrit letter of each name has its own separate meaning. We should always try to remember the different meanings and guidelines that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Rupa Gosvami have given us, and which we find in the *Agni Purana*. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura especially have given very deep explanations, through which we can realise all the varieties of Krsna's pastimes.

When we chant *Hare Krsna*, it is like chanting: *Hey Radhe! Hey Krsna! Hey Radhe! Hey Krsna! Hey Krsna! Hey Krsna! Hey*

*Radhe! Hey Radhe! Hey Radhe! Hey Radha-Ramana! Hey Radhe!
Hey Radha-Ramana! Hey Radha-Ramana! Hey Radha-Ramana!
Hey Radhe! Hey Radhe!* Hare means Radhe, Krsna means
Krsna, and Rama means Radha-Ramana. Srila Bhaktivinoda
Thakura has explained what we can think and remember
when we chant the name Radha-Ramana. We should always
remember all these meanings and guidelines. And there is
one thing that we should particularly remember at all times:
nama nami abhinna - there is no difference between the name
and He who is named. Krsna's name is Himself Svayam
Bhagavan. We should not think that the name Rama or the
name means this or that. The name Krsna is Krsna Himself.
The name Rama is Rama Himself. The name Radha-Ramana
is Radha-Ramana Themselves.

Once Vallabhacarya came to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu
in Puri, and asked the meaning of Krsna's name. There
were so many elevated devotees in Mahaprabhu's assem-
bly at that time, including Sri Svarupa Damodara, Sri Raya
Ramananda, Sri Advaita Acarya, Srila Nityananda Prabhu,
Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya, Srila Rupa Gosvami, Sikhi
Mahiti and many others. But Vallabhacarya thought that
he was superior to all these associates of Mahaprabhu.
There was a reason for this. Previously he had defeated
all the *mayavadis* in India, and as a result, many learned
Vaisnavas had performed his *abhiseka*. (Later on, in
Vrndavana, he met a young boy called Srila Jiva Gosvami,
and Vallabhacarya had to admit that this boy was more
learned than he was.)

Anyway, all of Mahaprabhu's devotees were assembled
there, and Vallabhacarya asked, "What is the meaning of
Krsna's name?" He kept on asking this question, because he
wanted to present his own scholarly interpretation.
Mahaprabhu replied, "I don't know the meaning of the Krsna
name. I only know that Krsna is Yasoda-nandana and
Syamasundara. I don't know any other meanings at all."

THE GLORIES OF HARINAMA

The *sastras* explain that we may remember and meditate on *mantras* and *harinama*, but it will go in vain if we don't understand the meanings of the *mantras* and the prayers contained in them. Of course, it will not go completely in vain. There will be some result, such as liberation from birth and death, *samsara-mukti*, but we will not get *krsna-prema*. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura also reminds us of this important point.

When we are chanting the holy name, we should try to remember the glories of *harinama* which Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Jiva Gosvami have written in their books. When we chant *Hare*, we should remember that it means the Personality who steals Krsna's mind. Srimati Radhika steals the heart and mind of Krsna, and controls Him. And we should remember how She controls Him. When She goes to cook at Nanda-bhavana, Krsna always follows Her. We can remember the sweet pastimes that take place then, and how Srimati Radhika takes the mind and heart of Krsna and controls Him in all Their various pastimes. And we can remember how our Gosvamis have described and explained these pastimes. So when we chant *Hare Krsna* in this way, all these pastimes can come into our hearts.

When we chant *Krsna*, we can remember how Krsna attracts the heart and mind of Srimati Radhika, and we can remember all the pastimes in which this has been shown. This is for advanced devotees. Those who are not so advanced should pray, "Oh, I am so offensive! I'm so wretched! I cannot conquer all my offence and *anarthas*." They should pray like this and weep, and after that, they should chant as I've described.

REGULATIONS FOR CHANTING

In his *Harinama-Cintamani*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has quoted Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami's instructions and

realisations. We should try to know and understand all these things, remember the meanings that they have given, and follow their instructions. This is called *nirbandha*, following the rules and regulations for chanting. I have told you that the *harinama maha-mantra* is taken from *Caitanya-Bhagavata*. Srīman Mahāprabhu instructed all the devotees in Navadvīpa. All of his students assembled before Him and said, “We will not study again with any other teacher. If you are just going to chant *harinama*, then we will follow You and practise in the same way as You.” Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu then said, “You should chant and remember this *mantra* with *nirbandha*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.” *Nirbandha* means that there are some rules and regulations for chanting. We should try to understand all these principles and practise them, otherwise *kṛṣṇa-nama* will not give all the fruits that He can give. That *nama* cannot lead us to Goloka Vrndavana if we chant without knowing and understanding fully. It will only check birth and death, and give *mukti*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told the devotees that they should have four particular qualities:

*trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna
amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih*

We should be as humble as a blade of grass, and as tolerant as a tree. We should not want honour for ourselves, but we should offer all respects to others. And then Mahāprabhu also gave some *nirbandha* (regulations for chanting). If we follow these instructions, we can develop our *sadhana-bhakti* into *bhava-bhakti*, and then into *prema-bhakti*. After that, we can go to *prakata* Vraja, the place where Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes are going on in the material world. There we can associate with the *nitya-siddha gopis*, and then that *prema* can develop further to *sneha*, *mana*, *pranaya*, *raga*, *anuraga*, *bhava* and *mahabhava*. To achieve this, we must be in Vrndavana, under the guidance of a

vaisnava-guru like Srila Rupa Gosvami, or someone in his line, and we must follow these regulations while we are chanting.

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains these regulations. The first is that our beads (*mala*) should be made from real *tulasi*, and the *mala* should have the shape of a serpent. This means that the biggest bead should be at the beginning, and the beads should gradually get smaller and smaller. This is called *sarpakrtih*, the shape of serpent. Or we can say that the *mala* is like the shape of a cow's tail. We shouldn't touch the beads with the second finger. Some devotees shake their beads or swing them while they're chanting, but we shouldn't do that.

Here are some simple directions that we have to follow while we are chanting. Chant from the biggest bead to the smallest bead, and when you come to the end of a round, turn the beads around and chant back again from the smallest bead to the biggest bead, and so on. Don't cross over the head bead, and don't touch your beads with the left hand.

While we are chanting, our minds should not be going here and there. Don't allow your mind to be fickle, always thinking of one thing after another. No. Just think of Krsna, and Krsna's pastimes, and the meanings of Krsna's names. If you cannot do that, then in your mind you can do *parikrama* of Govardhana, Vraja-mandala, Vrndavana Dhama, or other holy places.

There is a special type of regulation called *manasa-sanga-harinama*. This means that at the time of chanting, our mind should be fixed, not on zero, but on Krsna's name, the meanings of Krsna's names, and Krsna's pastimes. All of Krsna's pastimes are in His name. *Mana-samyoga-sauca-pavitra*. *Pavitra* means being pure inwardly and outwardly. It is easy to purify ourselves externally by bathing, but we cannot purify our hearts with water. This is only possible by always remembering *krsna-katha*, *hari-katha* in the association of pure devotees. Our hearts and minds will become pure when all kinds of worldly desires go away. This takes place through constant chanting and remembering, and through *mauna*, not

talking about worldly matters. This happens especially when we are in *sadhu-sanga*, and under the guidance of *guru* and Vaisnavas. Gradually, our mind will become free from unwanted things. There will be no disturbance at all, and no obstacles in our chanting and remembering.

THE GAYATRI-MANTRA

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura also explains that we should meditate on the meaning of the *diksa-mantra* (which is sometimes called the *nama-mantra*). We should understand this as well, at least in the more advanced stages. Many different groups of people in India chant *gayatri*: *smarta brahmanas*, *mayavadi sanniyasis*, *bhaktas* and *suddha-bhaktas*. They all chant the same *mantra*, but they understand *gayatri* or *omkara* in different ways. Some think that the sun-god himself is Bhagavan, and they remember the sun in their meditation: *om bhur bhuvah svah tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi*. *Dhimahi* means that they are meditating, and their meditation is: "The sun is the greatest of all He is the supreme personality, Parabrahman. He is *tad-vastu*. May he become manifest within our heart."

This is the understanding that the *mayavadis* and *smarta brahmanas* have when they chant the *gayatri-mantra*. The Saivites understand it in a different way. They think that Siva is Parabrahman and that *savitur* refers to Siva, so they meditate on Siva, and pray that he should come into their hearts. All Indians chant this *gayatri-mantra*, whether they are Saivites, *mayavadis*, *smarta brahmanas* or *bhaktas*, but they all understand it in different ways.

We should hear and accept the meaning of *gayatri* from Srila Jiva Gosvami. *Savitur varenyam*. The sun is worshipful, but who is the sun? Here it is Krsna who is addressed as the sun, and *bhargo devasya* means *krsnasya bhargah*, the power of Krsna. This is a prayer to *para-sakti*, *hladini-sakti-sara*, Srimati

Radharani Herself. So *bhargo devasya dhimahi* means that we are meditating on Srimati Radhika, and praying that She will come into our heart as She is. But Srimati Radhika is always with Kṛṣṇa, and with all Her *sakhi* friends: Lalita, Visakha, and all the others. Sridama and Subala and the other cowherd boys are also there, but somewhere far away. Nanda and Yasoda are in their homes. So everything is contained in this *mantra*.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura gives these guidelines on how to chant our *mantras*, how to chant *harinama*, and how to remember Radha and Kṛṣṇa, and Their associates and pastimes. This is called *nirbandha*. We may already be practising like this, but not regularly and systematically. We should try to adopt all the processes that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has given us if we want to advance in our *sadhana* and *bhajana*.

AVOIDING DISTRACTION

When you are chanting and remembering the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra* or your *diksa-mantras*, don't be restless, thinking, "I have to go there. I have to do this. This person has come from very far away, so I want to see him before he goes away again. Let me chant very quickly to get my rounds finished, and then I will take care of all this business." Don't be restless like this. Don't chant with your mind on business, in Chicago, in Calcutta, or in Bombay. Don't chant like this. You should set aside at least some time to chant and remember Kṛṣṇa's names, qualities, associates and pastimes very quietly and calmly. We have left everything for Kṛṣṇa's name, so we should try to develop our realisation of Kṛṣṇa's name. This is the main and most important problem. If we have any other problems, they can all be solved in this way. I think we should have only one problem: "How can I have *kṛṣṇa-prema*, *vraja-prema*?"

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that if we are attached to any worldly things, we cannot be peaceful and steady — which means that we cannot fix our minds on our chanting. So we

need *asakti*. We should have no *asakti*, no attachment to worldly things of any sort. We should aspire to be like Srila Haridasa Thakura. He was chanting and remembering Krsna's *nama*, and following all these regulations. A king sent a very beautiful young woman, about sixteen years old, to disturb him, but Srila Haridasa Thakura was *avyagra*, undisturbed. He had no attachment to beauty, wealth, reputation or anything else. The young woman heard him chanting *harinama* for three days and three nights, and then she also became like Haridasa Thakura. This is an instance of being *avyagra*.

We cannot allow our mind to be attracted to anything else if we want to do *bhajana*. Suppose you have a family, and you are attached to your child. Then if your child is so sick that he may die, you cannot do *bhajana*. That is why Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, and many others became *akincana* (free from all material desires) and *niskincana* (without material possessions). Srivasa Pandita was a householder with a home, a wife and children. But do you know how he acted? Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His associates were chanting and dancing one night at Srivasa Pandita's house. During the *kirtana*, Srivasa Pandita's son died. His wife and family members were grief-stricken, but he told them, "If you weep now and disturb Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's *kirtana*, I will jump into the Ganges and drown myself." Can you act like this? If you can, then *krsna-prema* will come. Unfortunately, we are not like this. We desire so many things, and our minds are always fickle.

BECOMING STEADY

King Janaka was also steady, like Srivasa Pandita. Once he was practising *bhajana* when someone came and set fire to his palace. Everything was burning, and a minister came to Janakaraja and said, "Come on! Come on! You must run away from here. Everything is on fire. Come on, if you want to save

yourself". He heard the warning, but he was chanting and remembering, and he didn't pay any attention. He thought, "I will have to die at some time, so why should I be disturbed?" Later on, the fire died down. His ministers came back and found him still sitting there and doing his *bhajana*. Pariksit Maharaja was the same. When the serpent came, Pariksit Maharaja fixed his mind on Krsna's pastimes and Krsna's *svarupa*, and the serpent could not even touch him. These devotees were not at all flickering or unsteady in their practice. We must aspire to chant *harinama* like this.

Our Gaudiya Vaisnava practice depends on chanting both the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* and the *gayatri-mantras* or *diksa-mantras* (*nama-mantras*) as well. We must chant *brahma-gayatri*, *guru-mantra*, *guru-gayatri*, *gaura-mantra*, *gaura-gayatri*, *krsna-mantra* (*gopala mantra*) and *kama-gayatri*. When we chant these *mantras*, we must know Their meanings. On whom are we meditating? To whom are we offering the *mantras*? Who is Gurudeva? We chant *krsnanandaya dhimahi*. This means that he fulfills the desires of Krsna and of Krsna. Krsna means Srimati Radhika, so our Gurudeva is fulfilling the desires of both Krsna and Srimati Radhika. How does he do this? When we know all these things, we will be successful in chanting and remembering these *mantras*. Otherwise, our mind will always be distracted by thoughts of other things, and it will be moving restlessly here and there.

We should find that devotee whose mind is controlled in this way, and we should try to take shelter of him. Then we should practise this whole process in his association, and under his guidance. In this way we can progress in Krsna consciousness. It is not possible otherwise. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains how we should chant. Sometimes while we are chanting Krsna's names and remembering His pastimes, a worldly person may come, and we start chattering with them about worldly matters here and there. Sometimes devotees have their hands in their beadbags for the whole day,

and yet at the end of the day, they haven't chanted a single *mantra* properly. We may chant *Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna* with our hands in our bead bags, and still not make any real progress at all. We should not chant like this. If we do, we will not get *krsna-prema*, even if we chant for *lakhs* and *lakhs* of births. We won't even get *bhava*, and what to speak of *krsna-prema*. In fact, we won't even come to the level of *nistha* if we chant like this. We should try to come to the level of *nistha*, and then *ruci* and *asakti*. And when at last we come to the level of *bhava*, we can chant and remember without disturbance.

Don't chatter so much about worldly things. You have given up so much enjoyment and convenience in order to chant *krsna-nama*. Now you have come here, but you are chattering here and there while chanting: "She did this. He did that. He is a bogus person, because he did this." Devotees who are talking like this are not thinking, 'Who am I? How is my Krsna consciousness?' and they are not chanting *harinama* continuously. Devotees who are always criticising others cannot have anything, no matter how much they chant. They won't even get free from birth and death. We should chant without being disturbed, and with tolerance. We should keep chanting continuously, remembering the meanings of the holy names. *Hare* means that Radhika steals the heart and mind of Krsna. The name Krsna has so many different meanings. *Rama* means Radha-Ramana. The name *Govinda* is full of meaning too. All of these names are so full of many, many pastimes. We should try to learn them, understand them and realise them. If any sickness comes, or if any problems come, be fixed. Don't be perplexed. Remember Krsna's name.

FOLLOWING AUTHORITIES

Srila Gopala Guru has written a very short book about the meanings of the holy name and the *nama-mantras*. In this book he has given the process for chanting *nama-mantra*, and he

has also explained how to perform *arcana*. He has combined the *pancaratrika-vidhi* with *bhagavata-vidhi*. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura has also written instructions on how to perform *arcana* and *sadhana*. At the same time, we also have the instructions of Srila Svarupa Damodara, Srila Raya Ramananda, all the Six Gosvamis and Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami Their *paddhati*, the path or process that they have given us, is *bhava-paddhati* and *bhagavata-paddhati*. They have shown how to combine these paths according to our qualification. At our present level of Krsna consciousness, we should always try to follow all the guidelines and regulations that these authorities have given us. There is a great deal of difference between *bhava-seva* and *arcana-paddhati*. In the beginning we must perform *arcana*. Later on, when we have some realisation of our spiritual form, *bhava-seva* will be more prominent. The emphasis changes as we progress. In the beginning, performing *arcana* is more important, and later on, when we have developed more, our *seva* through *bhava* will be more important. We should try to follow Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami in all these matters.

We can perform *arcana* to Radhaji, Gadadharaji, Gauraji, Nityanandaji, and Lalita, Visakha, Citra, Campakalata, Rupa Manjari, Yamuna-devi, and Giriraja Govardhana. We can perform *arcana* to any or all of them, and when we do so, *bhava* will develop. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Rupa Gosvami and all the other *acaryas* performed *bhava-seva*. *Bhava-seva* is actually preferable in Kali-yuga. If we are worshipping *sri vighraha*, someone can steal the Deity, but no one can steal the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, or any other *mantra*. People can disturb our worship of the Deity, but no one can disturb our performance of *harinama*.

In conclusion, we should try to follow Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, especially by reading this *Bhajana-Rahasya* in the association of Vaisnavas, and by performing our *bhajana* according to his instructions. This book gives *bhajana-paddhati*, the proc-

ess for performing *bhajana*, and it is part of *Harinama-Cintamani*. If we follow this process, it will be easy to become free from *anarthas*. Then *nistha* will come, and after that *ruci* and *asakti*. It may be that in this birth we can also have *bhava*, but not *prema*.

SRI SIKSASTAKA AND OUR BHAJANA

We are all servants of Krsna. This is our *svarupa*, the original nature of every *jiva* in this world. This truth is stated in the *Vedas*, in *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, in the *Upanisads*, in the *Vedanta-sutras*, and in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Our Srila Rupa Gosvami has explained it in his books, and so have Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Srila Jiva Gosvami and all their followers. Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami has presented the same conclusion in his *Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta*. They have all explained that we have come from Krsna's *tatastha-sakti*, His marginal potency. Some people maintain that we have fallen down from Goloka Vrndavana or Vaikuntha, but this is not true.

We can understand that the seed of a tree contains the trunk, branches, flowers and fruits of a new tree. Similarly, our *svarupa* contains all aspects of our eternal form and service: our name, our form, dress, personality, and what type of service we can offer to Krsna. Actually, the example of a seed is not exactly right. It is better to say that all these aspects of our original nature are present within our *svarupa* as potency. They are covered at present, but when *maya's* covering is cleared away, then the *jiva's svarupa* appears, along with his spiritual name and service to Krsna. Everything becomes clear. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains how this takes place.

THE DESIRE TO SERVE KRSNA

The first *sloka* of *Siksastaka* tells us about the first period of Radha and Krsna's daily pastimes, and this corresponds to

the first stage of *bhajana*. To come to the point of performing *bhajana*, we must have performed some auspicious activities (*sukrti*), either knowingly or unknowingly. As a result of that *sukrti*, we gain the association of bona fide Vaisnavas. When we have that association, the desire or tendency to serve Krsna (*krsna-seva-vasana*) may develop. However, in order for this to take place, we must have impressions in our heart, either from past lifetimes, or else by our present association. By *sadhu-sanga*, by the association of bona fide *rasika* Vaisnavas, this potency to serve Krsna may come in the hearts of even drunkards and other fallen and wretched persons.

All *sastras* explain that we cannot achieve this through reason, logic or any kind of mental exercise. Krsna Himself has told us this, and so have His associates, such as Srila Vyasadeva, Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, and Srila Narada, and then later Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, and all the other *acaryas*. So we must accept this fact, without any logical argument, and without any mental exercise.

Krsna-seva-vasana, the desire to serve Krsna, may appear in someone's heart even while the heart is still full of so many *anarthas* and offences. Then we develop faith (*sraddha*) in *sadhu*, *guru* and *sastra*. After that, we become eager to know, "How may I have *krsna-bhakti*? How may I serve Krsna?" This is *vasana*. *Vasana* means the tendency to serve Krsna, and the development of faith in *sastra*, *guru* and Vaisnava. That is the significance of the first *sloka* of *Sri Siksastaka*.

KRSNA'S DIFFERENT NAMES

The second *sloka* of *Siksastaka* is:

*namnamakari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis
tatrarpita niyमितah smarane na kalah
eta drsi tava krpa bhagavan mamapi
durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah*

“O my Lord! Your holy name alone can render all benediction upon the living beings, and therefore You have hundreds and millions of names, like Krsna and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies, and there is no hard and fast rule for chanting these holy names. O my Lord! You have so kindly made approach to You easy by Your holy names, but unfortunate as I am, I have no attraction for them.”

Namnamakari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis. Caitanya Mahaprabhu is praying to Krsna, “O Bhagavan! It is Your name alone can bestow His mercy on the *jivas* so that all kinds of auspiciousness (*mangala*) may appear.” We see this is so when we consider the lives of great devotees like Ajamila, Bilvamangala, Valmiki, and Jagai and Madhai. At first they were very wretched, but by good fortune they heard Krsna’s holy name from the mouths of qualified devotees. Srila Haridasa Thakura and Srila Nityananda Prabhu saved Jagai and Madhai by chanting the holy name in their ears. The *visnudutas* came to Ajamila, and made him a great devotee. Naradaji taught Valmiki how to chant the name of Rama, and it was Narada’s mercy which enabled Prahlada Maharaja to become a great devotee, although he was the son of a very great demon.

The fallen *jivas* have turned away from Krsna, but Krsna’s holy name has all the necessary potency and power to turn them towards Him again, and to give them His *seva*. It is for this reason that Krsna has manifested Himself in so many *svarupas*, all with their various names. *Namnamakari bahudha.* He is called by so many names: Brahman, Paramatma, Allah, Jagannatha, Narayana, Visnu, Rama and many more. We Gaudiya Vaisnavas call Him Krsna, and even in His Krsna aspect He has so many names: Radha-Vallabha, Radha-Govinda, Radha-Kanta, Radha-Ramana and so many more. Why are there so many different kinds of names? Because Krsna is unconditionally and causelessly merciful. He has seen

that there is no one name that everyone can accept, because the living entities are not all on the same spiritual level. For example, there are many people who cannot accept the names Radha-Ramana, or Gopijana-Vallabha. Many *karmis* (fruitive workers) are pious or religious, but they misunderstand the pastimes of Radha and Krsna, and they think that Krsna is not a chaste person. Besides that, there are many *smartas* (caste *brahmanas*), as well as drunkards and other wretched persons. There are many different kinds of people who want to worship the Supreme Lord, and they may accept the name Bhagavan.

Whatever stage people are in, there is a corresponding aspect of Godhead whose name they can accept. Some think that Bhagavan has no shape, attributes or qualities, and that He is *nirvisesa, nirakara brahma*. For these people, Krsna presents Himself as Brahman. They cannot have faith in names such as Rama, Krsna, Hari, Radha-Ramana and Radhanatha, because they think that these names are related to *maya*: 'Oh, *nirakara brahma* is now covered by *maya*. That means that Rama and Krsna have appeared through the action of *maya*.'

Krsna has manifested many names and many varieties of pastimes according to the different stages of spiritual development of all the various kinds of living entities who have turned their face from Him (*bahirmukha jivas*). What would have happened if He had only taken the form of Krsna, and manifested His pastimes with Radha and all Their associates in Vraja? I think that out of many *lakhs* and *lakhs* of people, only a few rare souls would take this name. We can look round us here, and think, 'Oh! There are so many persons chanting *Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna*.' But in the context of the whole world with its *crores* and *lakhs* of people, we are a tiny minority. And even in this tiny minority, not everyone is bona fide. It is only rarely that someone will chant in a bona fide way. That is why Krsna has manifested such a variety of names.

AUSPICIOUS POTENCY

Nija-sarva-saktih. Mahaprabhu tells us that Krsna has invested all of His potency in His names. But we should understand that Krsna has not invested all of His power in all of His names. He has invested the qualities of Brahman in the name Brahman. In Rama's name He has invested the qualities of Rama, but not all of the power of Krsna Himself. Similarly, the potency of the names of Vamana, Varaha, Matsya, Kurma and Parasurama are like the potency of their *svarupa*. These names are not invested with all of the potencies of Krsna's name.

Niyamitah smarane na kalah. There are no rules and regulations in taking Krsna's name. This means that there is no instruction not to chant at night, or when we are going to sleep, or while taking *prasadam*. There is no rule that only very elevated, rich people can take the name, and poor people cannot. There is no rule that only *brahmanas* can take the *nama*, and no one else can. You can take *hari-nama* when you are going to school; there is no restriction. You know that there are certain religious activities which are performed at the *sandhya* (sunrise, midday and sunset), and then only after taking bath. There is a special time reserved for these rituals. You cannot perform them at eight or nine at night, or without taking bath. But there is no such restriction regarding the time that we take *harinama*.

Durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah. Unfortunately, we have no taste for chanting. We have no *anuraga*, no *sraddha*, *nistha*, *ruci*, *asakti*, *bhava* or *prema*, what to speak of *sneha* or *mana*. We have nothing. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is praying, "I am so fallen that I have no *ruci*. But You are all-powerful. So please bestow Your mercy on Me." We should understand what our *durdaivam* (misfortune) actually is, and then we should try to give up all the *anarthas* and obstacles to our devotional service. There is another point that we must also understand. Even though we talk about giving up *nama-aparadha* and *seva-*

aparadha, we cannot do so by our own power. We are helpless. We have no power to become free from offences by our own effort. We can only do so through *bhakti*, through the power of Krsna's name, or by the mercy of Krsna's associates. Still, we should know what these *anarthas* are, and what effect they have on our service.

SAMBHANDHA, ABHIDHEYA AND PRAYOJANA

Not everybody knows that we have a relationship with Madana-mohana. Perhaps you know this now through *sadhusanga*. That Madana-mohana is Krsna, and knowledge of the relationship is called *sambandha*. The relationship is that we are servants of Krsna. When we serve Krsna according to this relationship, and He accepts our service, He is called Govinda. The process of serving Govinda is called *abhidheya*. *Abhidheya* means process or means, and there is no process superior to the service of Govinda.

The ultimate result of devotional service is pure love for Krsna. This is *prayojana*. Krsna is controlled by pure love, and when He is controlled by the *gopis' prema*, He is called Gopinatha. Common devotees think that Gopinatha is the Lord of the *gopis*. But the name Gopinatha really means that the *gopis* are Krsna's *natha*. He is controlled by the *gopis*. The *gopis* are Krsna's *prana*, His life and soul; that is why He is Gopinatha. I am just giving some hints about this. It is like Siva's name Ramesvara. Some people think this means that Siva is the Lord of Rama, but actually it is the other way around. Rama is the *isvara* of Siva. And when Siva appears he is not the controller of the *gopis*. Rather, *gopis* are the *isvara* of Siva. In the same way, the *gopis* are Krsna's life and soul and everything. Krsna's life and soul is called His *natha*. The *gopis* are the *natha* of Krsna, and therefore He is called Gopinatha. Our *prayojana* is to offer service which will control Krsna in this way. But if we do not give up our *anarthas*, we

cannot have a very strong relationship with Madana-mohana. Without that relationship, we cannot have the service of Govinda, and then we cannot make Gopinatha our Gopinatha.

The beginning of this process is to take shelter of Sri Sacinandana Gaurahari and Sri Nityananda Prabhu by worshipping Them, and by chanting the names Sacinandana, Gaurahari and Gauranga Hari. Then, when our *sadhana* is matured, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu will give us His *darsana* as conjugal Radha and Krsna combined. All this is possible only in our *sampradaya*, and not in any other. It is only by Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mercy that we are coming in the line of Srila Svarupa Damodara, Srila Rupa Gosvami and all Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's other associates. They are telling us that we should worship Mahaprabhu as Sacinandana Gaurahari. Why Sacinandana? Because Sacinandana is the son of Mother Sacidevi, and He is as soft and merciful as she is. That is why we should worship Him and chant the name of Sacinandana Gaurahari. By His mercy we can enter into *sadhana* and *bhajana*.

We all have *anarthas* to a greater or lesser degree. However, as long as we have *anarthas*, our relationship with Madana-mohana will not be strong. Then we cannot serve Govinda, and what to speak of controlling Gopinatha with our service. For this reason, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is kindly and mercifully telling us to be careful and to avoid all these *anarthas*. He explains that there are four kinds of *anarthas*: *svarupa-bhrama*, *asat-trsna*, *hrdaya-durbalya* and *aparadha*. Anyone who does not understand all these *anarthas* is bound to make offences to *bhakti*, to Krsna's name, to *sadhus*, to Vaisnavas, and to their *guru*. It is sure to happen, so we must be careful.

KNOWING TATTVA

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura goes into more detail about the first type of *anartha*, which is *svarupa-bhrama*, misconcep-

tion about *tattva*. There are four essential *tattvas* which we must know to take up devotional service. These are *para-tattva* (the Supreme Absolute Truth), *jiva-tattva* (the living entities), *maya-tattva* (the illusory energy) and *sadhya-sadhana tattva* (the supreme goal and the means of obtaining it). *Svarupa-bhrama* is the combination of all the misconceptions about these four *tattvas*. First of all, *para-tattva* refers to the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Reality, who is Krsna Himself. It is essential that we know who is *para-tattva*. So many people are confused and ignorant about this. Is *para-tattva* Brahman, Paramatma, Visnu, Rama, or Krsna? They don't know. Some people say that Sankara is *para-tattva*, or that Durga is *para-tattva*. They have no conception that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Actually, there are so many stages of *para-tattva* and the highest is *krsna-tattva*.

The next aspect of *svarupa-bhrama* is the misconception about who we are and what is our *svarupa*. We have to know who we are. That is *sva-tattva*. We are *jivas*, individual living entities. So *sva-tattva* is *jiva-tattva*. The next question is, "Who am I? Who is *jiva*?" Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that *jiva* is *krsna-dasa*, the servant of Krsna. This is our *svarupa*. We are eternal servants of Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

We must also know *maya-tattva*. Sometimes we become confused as to what is *maya*, and what is *bhakti*. We are ignorant. We may say, "Oh, Haridasa Thakura was chanting three *laks* of *harinama*, so I should follow him and do the same." But there is a difference between his chanting and ours. All of his chanting was *aprakṛta* (spiritual). If we chant three *laks* of names, I think that one or two names will be *namabhasa*, and the rest will all be *namaparadha*. Sometimes we are in *maya*, yet we think that we are out of *maya*. But we should not be hopeless. Always be hopeful, because we have taken the *asraya* (shelter) of *harinama*, *guru* and Vaisnavas. As long as we have *sadhu-sanga*, and continue to chant Krsna's names and remem-

ber His pastimes, all of our *anarthas* can be vanquished in time.

Now we come to *sadhya-tattova*, which is the ultimate goal, and *sadhana-tattova*, the means by which we attain the goal. We must understand what is our *sadhya*, because until we do, we cannot know what is the *sadhana* by which we can attain the *sadhya*. The goal is service to Radha and Krsna. This is the supreme goal, and it is far superior to any other. And the top-most service to Radha and Krsna is *gopi-prema*, service in the mood of the *gopis*. If the *gopis* mercifully give their *krpa*, then we can enter into Vraja, and serve Radha and Krsna in the mood of the *gopis*. Without their mercy, no one can attain this goal.

OUR ACARYAS GAVE RAGANUGA-BHAKTI

In order to know *sadhya* and *sadhana-tattova*, we must first take shelter of Srila Sanatana Gosvamipada, to whom Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has given all these *tattovas*. Then, in order to gain more and more superior knowledge, we must take shelter of Srila Raya Ramananda Prabhu. Otherwise we cannot know what is *sadhya* and what is *sadhana*. Mahaprabhu asked Sri Raya Ramananda to explain the perfection of life. Sri Raya Ramananda first began from *varnasrama-dharma*. Then, going beyond *varnasrama-dharma*, he spoke about being situated on the platform of Brahman: *brahma-bhutah prasannatma*. Then he recommended *bhakti* mixed with *karma*, then *bhakti* mixed with *jnana*. After that he came to the point of *suddha-bhakti*, and then he discussed different levels of spontaneous love of God or *raganuga-bhakti*.

Devotees often misunderstand these topics. They think that it very rare to find anyone qualified to be a devotee on this level. "In the whole future of the world, there will never be anyone who is qualified to take up *raganuga-bhakti*. And certainly, no one will be qualified in this birth." They offer

pranamas to *raganuga-bhakti* from very far away, thinking it very removed from any devotional service that we can possibly perform. But this is not correct. Srila Raya Ramananda and Srila Svarupa Damodara come after Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in our *parampara*. They are *raganuga* devotees, and so are all those who follow in their footsteps. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and all the *acaryas* in our disciplic succession have followed Srila Rupa Gosvami, who is a *raganuga-bhakta*. They all gave *raganuga-bhakti*. All the *acaryas* following in the line of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu have come only to bestow their mercy by giving *raganuga*. Our *acaryas'* mission was not to give *vaidhi-bhakti*, because that had already been given by previous *acaryas* like Ramanuja, Madhvacharya, Visnusvami, Nimbaditya and so many others. Krsna Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has come in the form of Caitanya Mahaprabhu to give *bhakti-rasa*, and there is no question of *bhakti-rasa* without *raganuga-bhajana*. The *acaryas* in our disciplic line before Srila Madhavendra Puri taught *vaidhi-bhakti*. After Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, devotional service means *raganuga*.

If anyone reads *Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta*, or any of the books of Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami and Srila Rupa Gosvami, greed for *vraja-bhakti* will surely develop. It is sure and certain. We know that the personified Vedic *mantras*, the *sruticaris*, all had greed for that. That is why they performed *raganuga-bhajana*, and became like the *gopis*. This is the highest *sadhya* (goal): to have the *asraya* (shelter) of the *gopis*, and to serve Krsna like them. Among the *gopis*, Lalita and Visakha are most important, but we cannot have their mood. The very highest *sadhya* for us is to have the mood of Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, and to serve Radha-Krsna Yugala-Kisora, following in their footsteps. We can only have this by developing the mood of Srila Rupa Gosvami, by his mercy. That is *sadhya* and *sadhana*.

This is how Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains *svarupa-bhrama*: it is a combination of all these different misconceptions about *tattva*.

WORLDLY DESIRES (ASAT-TRNSA)

The next type of *anartha* is *asat-trnsa*, which means *anyabilasita*, the desire for something other than Krsna's service. We will fall prey to *asat-trnsa* as long as we are deviated from Krsna and His service, and as long as we have no *tattva-jnana*. There are four kinds of *asat-trnsa*, namely: (1) desires for material enjoyment in this world; (2) desires for enjoyment in the higher planetary systems; (3) desires for mystic perfections and (4) the desire for liberation. Sometimes devotees become confused and think that they are performing service for Krsna, when they are actually acting on their own behalf. For example, we may want to be rich. A confused devotee may think, 'I am so poor that I cannot worship Krsna. A pair of Radha-Krsna Deities costs at least two thousand or three thousand *rupees* in the market place. But I am too poor to pay that much money, so how can I worship Krsna? Let me pray to Krsna that He will mercifully give me wealth so that I can serve Him nicely.' Or he may think, 'I would like to give a very big feast for four hundred people, but if I have no money how can I serve the Vaisnavas?' People with this mentality cannot understand how to serve Krsna, or how to serve the Vaisnavas. Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Sanatana Gosvami served all the Vaisnavas, as well as Krsna and His associates. But they were *akincana*, without any worldly possessions. They served without a single *paisa*. We cannot really please anyone with money. Even so, we want money, a beautiful wife, beautiful and intelligent children, and big, big palaces. We hanker after so many worldly possessions.

We also want *siddhis*. There are eight kinds of mystic perfections. For instance, Durvasa Muni had these *vibhuti*, mys-

tical opulences. Whatever he told anyone would become a reality. If he told someone they would die, they would die at once. If one had already died, and he told them, "Get up, get up - they would immediately come to life. Many *sadhus* have different *vibhutis*. They can walk over water, fly in the air, and perform many other miracles. Citraketu had no sons, but Narada Muni blessed him to have a son, and he had one. Such *sadhus* can satisfy whatever desire you may have, even up to the point of *mukti*, liberation from this world of birth and death.

OFFENCES

There are also four kinds of *aparadhas*. First of all, there are ten kinds of *krsna-nama aparadha*, offences against Krsna's holy name. Then there is *sevaparadha*. This includes the thirty-two kinds of offences against the Deity, as well as offences to our Gurudeva and to the holy *dhama*. There are many kinds of *dhamaparadhas*. The third category is offences to *cit-kanesu*, other living entities. All *jivas* are *krsna-dasa*, so we should not make any kinds of offence to them. Lastly, there are offences to *tadiya*, which means *bhaktas*. If we want *bhakti*, we should be very careful not to make any offences to any devotee. Actually, this doesn't just apply to devotees; it applies to all *jivas*. Try to avoid offences to any *jiva*. Don't criticise any *jivas*, even if they are not performing *bhakti*. Don't even criticise people who are actually opposed to *bhakti*.

We have to be very careful. Some people think, 'I am a very good servant, but the devotees around me give me so much trouble. I am alright; they are the ones who are making so many problems, and that is why I want to give up their *sanga*. I don't want their association any more.' This attitude is not correct. If troubles come, or if problems come in our *bhajana*, we should think 'It is not due to others. It is due to my own fault, or else to my past impressions and activities.'

We must learn to be very tolerant. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu

teaches us to be *sahisnuna*, as tolerant as a tree. We cannot achieve *bhakti* if we are not tolerant. We must tolerate the behaviour of others. We may think, 'Oh, I want to go to the forest. Then other people will not bother me any more.' But there are difficulties everywhere. If you go to the forest to get away from everyone else, then wild animals will come. Tigers will come to trouble you. Maybe there won't be any tigers, but you will be sitting under a tree and a branch will fall on your head. What will you do?

BHAVA AND PREMA – SVARUPA-SAKTI

In the fifth *sloka* of *Siksastaka*, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu says:

*ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram
patitam mam visame bhavambudhau
krpaya tava pada-pankaja
sthita-dhuli-sadrsam vicintaya*

Here Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that if we have *sadhu-sanga* somehow or other, either knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, then we will get *sraddha*. As a result of *sadhu-sanga* we engage in devotional activities: *sravanam*, *kirtanam*, *smaranam*, *pada-sevanam*, *arcanam*, *vandanam*, *dasyam*, *sakhyam*, *atmanivedanam*. After that we may realise our *atma-svarupa*, our spiritual form. "Who am I? Who is Krsna?" We already have some idea who we are; we are *krsna-dasa*. Then at the stage described in this *sloka*, we will find out what type of *krsna-dasa* we actually are, that is to say, in which *rasa* we are eternally situated: *dasya*, *sakhyia*, *vatsalya* or *madhurya*. We will also realise all the aspects of our identity which are needed for our service: our name, form, *siddha-svarupa*, *siddha-bhava*, where we live, what our service is, what our relationships are with the other eternal servants and so on. All of this becomes manifest to us. And when we realise it, even to a small extent, all kinds of *anarthas* disappear.

Krsna's pleasure-giving potency is called *hladini-sakti*, and the essence of this *hladini-sakti* is *bhakti*. All of the activities that we perform in *bhakti* are possible only by the grace of *svarupa-sakti*. *Svarupa-sakti* is the potency which manifests the real form of Krsna and of the living entity, as well as all of Krsna's pastimes and our own devotional activities. All of our chanting and remembering—everything that we are doing—is all a manifestation of *svarupa-sakti*. Now, in this fifth *sloka* of *Siksastaka*, we hear about the appearance of the *svarupa* of the *jiva*, by which the *jiva* can perform his eternal service to Krsna. This is the essence of the *hladini-sakti*.

THE SYMPTOMS OF BHAVA

If a *jiva* is fortunate enough to reach the stage of *bhava* by performing *sadhana*, his pure condition manifests itself. *Bhava* is also known as *rati*, and there are symptoms by which we can tell that *rati* has appeared:

*ksantir avyarthakalatvam viraktir mana-sunyata
asa-bandhas samutkantha nama-gane sada-rucih
asaktis tad-gunakhyane pritis-tad-vasati-sthale
ityadayo 'nubhavah syur jata-bhavankure jane*

(*Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu* 1.3.25-261)

It is the appearance of these symptoms which shows that *rati* has appeared, at least to some extent.

The first symptom is *ksanti*, forbearance or tolerance. When *rati* or *bhava* comes in the heart, the devotee remains calm and quiet, even in the face of suffering and opposition which would disturb an ordinary person. We should judge our condition by the symptoms we exhibit. At our present stage of development, if we meet any opposition we become furious, so we can see that we do not have this *rati* yet. When we have *rati*, or *bhava*, we will remain undisturbed no matter how

many obstacles there are. Hiranyakasipu and his demonic servants created so much trouble and disturbance for Prahlada Maharaja, but Prahlada remained quite peaceful. Srila Haridasa Thakura was beaten in twenty-two market places, and he was tormented so much by others; yet he continued to perform his *bhajana* calmly and quietly.

Avyarthā-kalātvaṁ means that the devotee will not waste even a moment of time. He is always chanting, remembering and performing service for Hari, *guru* and Vaisnavas. That is called *avyarthā-kala*.

Virakti: he is detached from worldly things. Very sweet and charming worldly things may present themselves, but the devotee is completely detached from them. Even if he is offered the very best of worldly beauty, charm and enjoyment, with great reputation and wealth, still the devotee is not charmed by them, and he has no attraction or attachment for them.

Mana-sunyata: the devotee has no desire personal reputation, and doesn't want others to praise him. *Asa-bandhah* means to have a very strong hope to have *prema-bhakti* to see Kṛṣṇa, and to serve Kṛṣṇa. "In this life, or in some other life, I will surely have the *darsana* of Kṛṣṇa and serve Kṛṣṇa. I will achieve this, and I will not allow any obstacle to stop me. This is *asa-bandhah*. However, this does not mean that the devotee is passive and quiet. On the contrary, he has *samutkantha*, great eagerness: "When wilt I have this? What should I do?"

Nama-gaṇe sādā rucih: he is always very attracted to do *harināma*. Even if he is doing *sraoanāma-kīrtanāma* twenty-four hours daily, he will not be at all sleepy or lazy. Then *asaktis tad-guṇakhyāne* means that he has a very strong taste for speaking *hari-kathā*. He always likes to glorify Kṛṣṇa and His associates, such as Sukadeva Gosvami, or the associates of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, such as Srila Rupa Gosvami. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvatī Prabhupada was always speak-

ing *hari-katha*. He used to speak *hari-katha*, *krsna-katha* and *mahaprabhu-katha* even to a dry stick. And I have seen a Vaisnava who was praying, “*gopinatha, mama nivedana suno,*” even when he had a fever and a temperature of 104 or 105 degrees. That was Narottama Prabhu, who later became Bhakti Kamala Madhusudana Maharaja. Instead of moaning and groaning, he continued to pray continuously, and recite so many *stavas* and *stutis*.

Pritis tad-vasati-sthale: the devotee always wants to live in the *dhamas* such as Vrndavana, Navadvipa or Srila Puri-dhama, where *Bhagavata* pastimes have been performed. There are so many places in Vraja. Sometimes the devotee likes to be at Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda or at Giriraja-Govardhana; sometimes at Manasa-Ganga or Kusuma-sarovara; sometimes at Mana-sarovara or Bandiravana. Sometimes he likes to be in Vrndavana at Seva-kunja, or Dhira-samira, or Vamsivata, or Gopisvara-Mahadeva. Sometimes, like Srila Rupa Gosvami, he wants to be in Nandagrama or Varsana. And there are so many other pastime places besides.

These are the nine different *anubhavas*, or symptoms which show that someone has reached the stage of *bhava*. If anyone claims to have reached the stage of *bhava*, but he is not showing these symptoms, no knowledgeable devotee will take him seriously. We should try to develop these symptoms ourselves, but not artificially. We will only come to this stage if we stay in the association of Vaisnavas, and always hear *hari-katha*. Then it may come. However, if we do not stay in the association of devotees, our *anarthas* will not go away, and we will not come to this level.

SADHU-SANGA

We have lived here for the whole of the month of Kartika, going here and there to so many places of Krsna’s pastimes. But some of the devotees have not been listening like this.

They have been with us, but they have not been listening to the *hari-katha*, or hearing nicely. They have been sitting with the other devotees, but their minds have been going here and there. This is not the way to have the association of Vaisnavas. *Sanga* means that we always follow the devotees, to see how the *sadhu* is performing his activities, how he thinks, how he worships, and how he meditates. We want to adopt his way of doing things, and we want to chant and remember like him. This is *sadhu-sanga*. Are we listening to his *hari-katha*, and his teachings, and are we following them? If not, then it is not *sadhu-sanga*. Those people who have not listened very attentively and respectfully, have not actually had *sadhu-sanga*; that is my opinion.

We should try to have the association of devotees by acting in the way I have described. Sometimes we may not be near any *sadhu*. In that case, we should read the books of our Gosvamis and think that we are associating with Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Srila Svarupa Damodara, Sri Raya Ramananda and the other great personalities. And I am sure that they will be very kind, and bestow their mercy on us. We should never allow our minds to be fickle, never.

SVARUPA AND SVARUPA-SAKTI

After this, *bhava* appears:

*suddha-sattva visesatma prema-suryamsu-samyabhak
rucibhis-citta-masrnya-krd asau bhava ucyate*

(CC, *Madhya* 23.5 & BRS 1.3.1)

“*Bhava-bhakti* is a special manifestation of *suddha-sattva*. In other words, the constitutional characteristic of *bhava-bhakti* is that it is a phenomena entirely constituted of *suddha-sattva*. It is like a ray of the sun of *prema* and it softens the heart by various *rucis* or tastes.”

We can tell whether *bhava* has developed fully by observing whether the symptoms of *bhava* are fully present. If they are not, then we can understand that *bhava* has not yet fully developed.

Now we need to understand something about the nature of *visuddha-sattva*. It is *visuddha-sattva* which allows us to feel something of the moods of the *sakhas* and other associates of Krsna, to feel something of *vatsalya-bhava*, or *madhurya-bhava*. Suppose we are performing *raganuga-sadhana*, and the mood of one of the *Vraja-vasis* comes into our heart. It may be the mood of Yasoda, or the mood of Nanda Baba, or the mood of one of the *sakhas* like Subala or Sudama, or the mood of one of the *gopis* like Rupa Manjari or others. This is *visuddha-sattva* acting in our hearts.

When this happens, there are two things working. On the one hand, we have our *svarupa*, our eternal, spiritual identity, which is in our *atma*, our very self. On the other hand, something is imparted to us by Krsna's *soarupa-sakti*, or *hladini-sakti*.

Our *svarupa* contains all the potencies of *prema*. Everything is there in seed form, like the seed of a banyan tree. A banyan seed contains all the potency to become a very big tree, with fruits and flowers. Everything is there in the seed. At the same time, the seed also needs earth, water, sunshine, warmth and air. These are all necessary if it is to grow. If the seed gets no water or air or rays of sunshine, it will not even sprout, and what to speak of developing into a full-grown tree. If the seed is to grow into a tree, both are needed: the potency from within the seed, and the right conditions outside. Similarly, to develop *bhava*, we need both the potency of the *atma-soarupa*, and also the action of *soarupa-sakti*.

STHAYI-BHAVA AND PREMA

In the next stage, *rati* or *bhava* becomes *sthayi-bhava*, when the devotee is firmly fixed in one of the five primary *rasas*. After

sthayi-bhava has appeared, other types of *bhava* or ecstasies also appear: *sattvika-bhava*, *anubhava* and *sancari-bhava*. These meet and mix together in proportion, and become *bhakti-rasa*. It is very rare to come to this stage.

When the devotee tastes *bhakti-rasa*, he always weeps:

*nayanam galad-asru-dharaya
vadanam gadgada-ruddhaya gira
pulakair nicitam vapuh kada
tava nama-grahane bhavisyati*

This sixth *sloka* of *Siksastaka* describes the stage of *bhava* or *rati*. If a devotee is weeping, but *bhava* has not yet developed, and the heart is not melting, then it is only imitation.

After the appearance of *bhakti-rasa*, *prema* comes.

*yugayitam nimesena caksusa pravrsayitam
sunnyayitam jagat sarvam govinda-virahena me*

Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu prays, “When will that day come when a moment will be like so many *yugas*, because of separation. Tears will always flow from my eyes, and the whole world will appear completely void and empty. When will that be?” We cannot come to the level of *prema* in this lifetime. It is only possible if we go to *prakata-lila*, where Kṛṣṇa is performing His pastimes in the material world. The definition of *prema* is as follows:

*samyam masrnita svanto mamatvatisayankitah
bhavah sa eva sandratma budhah prema nigadyate*

(CC, *Madhya* 23.7, BRS 1.4.1)

Samyam masrnita svanto. The heart melts, and the devotee feels intense *mamata* towards Kṛṣṇa and His associates. *Mamata* means ‘mineness’ or possessiveness. There is so much possessiveness in relationships between worldly people, between husband and wife, mother and son, father and son, or between beloved friends.

Similarly, when *prema* appears, the devotee feels this *mamata* very strongly towards Krsna and His associates. At that time, the *prema* becomes thicker and thicker, and the devotee feels more and more *ananda*, blissful ecstasy.

*asliya va pada-ratam pinastu mam
adarsanam marma-hatam karotu va
yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato
mat-prana-nathas tu sa eva naparah*

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recited all these *slokas* in the mood of Srimati Radhika. This is now the last *sloka*. Srimati Radhika says, "Krsna may embrace me, or He may give me up forever. Of course, He cannot give Me up forever. But He may embrace another *gopi* in front of Me. He may act as *lampatah*, a debauchee, or whatever He chooses. In any case, He is still my *prana-natha*. He and no other is always My beloved, and will always be so."

WHY MAHAPRABHU APPEARS

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura glorifies *Siksastaka*. He explains that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appears in this world only once in a day of Brahma, in the same *divya-yuga* in which Krsna appears. Krsna comes first, followed by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. I have already explained that there are four reasons for His appearance. First of all, *yuga-dharma-prati*, He establishes the *yuga-dharma*. The second reason is to preach the chanting of the holy name. Thirdly, *anarpita-carim cirat*: Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu comes to bestow *vraja-prema* on the *jivas*. The fourth reason is to taste (CC, *Adi-lila* 1.6):

*sri-radhayah pranaya-mahima kidrso vanayaiva-
svadyo yenabhuta-madhurima kidrso va madiyah*

These are the four reasons for which Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared, but His special purpose was *radhayah pranaya*

mahima, to taste the moods of Srimati Radhika. This is why Krsna came as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, assuming the mood and beauty of Srimati Radhika to taste Her love Himself, and to give *krsna-prema* to all the *jivas*. And the medium by which He gave all of this was *krsna-sankirtana*. In other *yugas*, the *yuga-avatara* gave *harinama*, but not *vraja-prema*, not the highest moods of *madhurya-bhava*. This is the speciality of this *yuga*, the special purpose for which Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared.

THE GLORIES OF SRI SIKSASTAKA

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu comes only once in a day of Brahma. He appeared only about 500 years ago, in 1486 AD, on Phalgun Purnima, when everyone was chanting the Lord's holy names. His father was Jagannatha Misra, and His mother was Sacidevi. He performed so many pastimes in His childhood. In His *paugandya* age, He went to Sanskrit school, and after that He defeated Kesava Kasmiri, a very learned person from Kasmira. In His *kisora* age He married Laksmipriya, and then Visnupriya. After receiving *harinama* from Isvara Puripada in Gaya, He began to chant the holy name with everyone, and performed *nagara-sankirtana* here and there, especially in Srivasangam. All of Bengal was full of *harinama-sankirtana*. It was like a flood.

At the age of twenty-four, Mahaprabhu went to Katva, accepted *sannyasa* from Kesava Bharati, and gave up all His worldly relations and connections. For six years He walked throughout the whole of India-Bengal, Orissa, Maharastra, Mathura, Vrndavana, Kasi and Bihara – and preached. After that, He took up residence at the Gambhira in Puri. He cut down all false philosophical conclusions (*kusiddhanta*), and He established the philosophy of *acintya-bhedabheda-tattva*.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu remained in Jagannatha Purl for eighteen years. As time passed by, His *prema* became thicker

and thicker. He fulfilled His three desires in Gambhira with Sri Svarupa Damodara, Sri Raya Ramananda and some others, and in so doing, He preached all over In He did not write any books Himself, but He inspired and empowered Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Srila Jiva Gosvami, Sri Kavi Karnapura, Srila Svarupa Damodara, Srila Raya Ramananda, Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami and many other devotees to write many, many books.

In the end, He wrote these eight *slokas* of *siksastaka*, and He used to taste these eight *slokas* with Sri Svarupa Damodara and Srila Raya Ramananda in the Gambhira – always weeping. Sometimes He used to become like a tortoise, with His limbs withdrawn into His body. At other times, His body would become very long. He always used to think that He was in Vrndavana. Sometimes He would jump into the sea, thinking it to be the Yamuna. Sometimes He moved here and there in the very deep forest, seeing it as the forest in Vrndavana, and when He saw the sand dune named Cataka Parvata, He thought it was Govardhana.

We should try to hear this *Siksastaka* daily. We should always chant and remember and try to pray to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to bestow His mercy on us so that we can understand all these truths and principles.

CONCLUDING INSTRUCTIONS

Those who are very fortunate will take the essence of our whole *parikrama*, namely *hari-katha*. Please do not return with empty hands and empty hearts. After today we will go to our various destinations. I request you not to go away empty-handed. Please take all these teachings with you and try to perform *bhajana* like this every day. I know that when you return to your homes, you will have to engage in your worldly business. Still, please do not forget all this *hari-katha*, and all these teachings. I am praying to Radha-Krsna and to all the

gurus in our disciplic succession—to my *guru*, and to all the other *gurus*—to please bestow their mercy on us, so that we may be qualified to understand and realise all this.

Sri Gaura Premanande Haribol!

WELCOME !

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